

Simonside Primary School

Play Policy 2023 – 2024



Simonside Primary School undertakes to refer to the play policy in all decisions which affect children's play. Our school subscribes to the principles and strategies advocated by OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning).

Named personnel with designated responsibility for play:

Head Teacher	Deputy Head Teacher	Lead	Teaching assistant	Teacher	Parent	Governor
Mrs Louise Thompson	Mrs Emma Hills	Miss Jenny Young	Miss Jade Swales	Mr Steven Goldie	Miss M Bell	Mr Harbottle

Change History

Date	Description
2019	Initial draft of policy
June 2022	Updated policy
16.03.2023	Updated policy for new school building

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1. Rationale

Playing is an integral part of the school day. Playtime takes up more than 20% of a child's time at school.

Play is defined as a process which is:

1. Freely chosen by the child
2. Directed by the child
3. For the child's own motivations and reasons

If the above are not true, whatever is happening is probably not play.

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. As a Rights Respecting Gold school, Simonside acknowledges the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 31, and supports the child's right to play. We believe play provision should be: Welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin, or individual abilities.

The OPAL programme rationale is that ...*"better, more active and creative playtimes can mean happier and healthier children, and having happier, healthier, more active children usually results in a more positive attitude to learning in school, with more effective classroom lessons, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary behavioural problems, fewer playtime accidents, happier staff and a healthier attitude to life"*.

At Simonside Primary school we also recognise the positive impact that such playtimes will have on attendance.

2. The Value of Play

We believe the learning opportunities of play include:

- Emotions e.g. learning about oneself and others, sadness/gladness, rejection/acceptance, frustration/achievement, boredom/fascination, fear/confidence.
- Social interactions - enhancing self-esteem and understanding of others through freely chosen interactions e.g. within peer groups, with individuals, with groups of different ages, abilities, interests, gender, ethnicity and culture.
- Making choices, problem solving, and being creative.
- Assessing risk.
- Playing with scrap materials, tyres and other multipurpose objects.
- Achieving and also coping with failing.
- Communication and negotiation skills.

‘Play in all its rich variety is one of the highest achievements of the human species, alongside language, culture and technology.’ (Whitebread, 2012)

Playing contributes greatly to such diverse areas as language, arts, culture, science, maths and technology. Furthermore, play supports self-regulation as a key developmental mechanism: this ability is increasingly shown to be vital to academic success.

3. The Adults Role in Play

The school will help children maximise the benefits they can gain from play by provision of trained staff who are informed by and work to the Playwork Principles. All dinner supervisors will be referred to as play workers.

The Playwork Principles

1. UNDERSTAND NEED

All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals.

2. UNDERSTAND PROCESS

Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

3. SUPPORT PROCESS

The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.

4. ADVOCATE FOR PLAY

For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.

5. CREATE SPACES

The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.

6. LEARN AND REFLECT

The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, reflective practice.

7. UNDERSTAND ADULT IMPACT

Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

8. CHOOSE INTERVENTION STYLES

Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker interventions must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

Here at Simonside Primary School, all adults working at school are part of the play team and have a responsibility to follow this play policy.

The team working directly with OPAL to ensure the policy is in place and develop outdoor play consists of:

- Mrs L Thompson (Head Teacher)
- Mrs E Hills (Deputy Head Teacher)
- Mr Harbottle (Governor)
- Miss J Young (OPAL Lead)
- Mr S Goldie (OPAL Lead)
- Miss J Swales (Teaching Assistant)
- Miss M Bell (Parent)

4. Aims

The school aims to address the provision of improved play opportunities:

- To ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment
- To allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to these risks and their benefits
- To provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other
- To enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other
- To aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development
- To provide a range of environments which will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively
- To provide a range of environments which will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them
- To promote independence and team work within children
- To build emotional and physical resilience

5. Benefit and Risk

'Play is great for children's well-being and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool' *Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide is published for Play England 2012*

The school will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance document 'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach' (September 2012) as the principle value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play. It will adopt a benefits/risk approach as detailed in 'Managing Risk in Play Provision' Implementation Guide. Managing Risk in Play Provision Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision, and of all environments in which children and young people legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children and young people the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. In the words of the play sector publication Best Play, play provision should aim to 'manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children and young people safe from harm'.

In addition to standard risk/benefit assessments the school will practise dynamic risk management with children encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them. Staff should be constantly aware of the changing nature of the play taking place in their allocated zone. Staff should have an idea where all children are in their zone, how risky their play appears to be and what resources they are using. Staff should be vigilant and take immediate action if ever they think that a risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. If staff think that serious harm (meaning death, life-long debilitating injury or hospitalization) is imminent, or probably, they should intervene to manage/stop the risky play immediately.

6. Supervision

The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day there should be one or more adults present outdoors. The school recognizes OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in Reception, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging. Adults will wear high – Vis jackets to ensure they are easily visible. Some areas of the environment will have adult supervision at all times to ensure the safety of children and control crowds.

7. Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to a stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable risk and thereby offer the opportunity to explore both themselves, through their freely chosen play. The areas have been designed to create social spaces that link up in a variety of ways. All the zones collectively provide opportunities for the 16 different types of play (Bob Hughes 2006 Play types – Speculations and Possibilities):

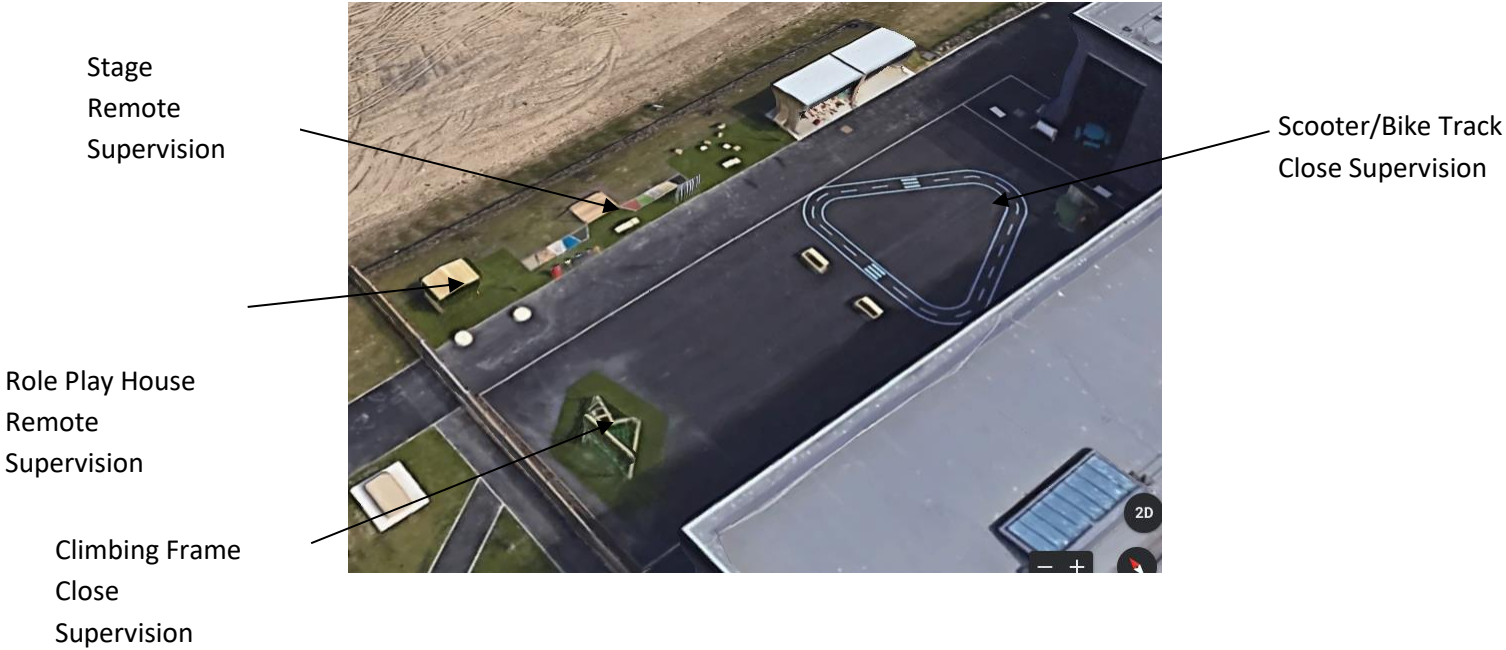
- Symbolic play (props given specific symbolic meaning)
- Locomotor play (chase, tig, hide and seek, throw/catch)
- Recapitulation play (playing with/in the elements e.g. den building)
- Creative play (making, painting, manipulating materials)
- Exploratory play (physically exploring an environment)
- Communication play (singing, rhyming, imitating)
- Socio-dramatic play (dramatization of everyday events)
- Role play (enacting adult behaviours)
- Fantasy play (e.g. casting spells and doing magic)
- Deep play (jumping climbing, moving fast – almost out of control)
- Object play (simply playing with objects)
- Mastery play (digging holes, growing things, demolition and construction)
- Rough and tumble play (physical contact games)
- Dramatic play (making plays, song and dance routines)
- Social play (negotiation of rules and social norms)
- Imaginative play (using objects as other objects)

8. Appendix

Early Years Outdoor Environment:



Key Stage One Outdoor Environment:



Key Stage Two Outdoor Environment:

Outdoor classroom

Mud Kitchen
Remote Supervision

Parallel Bars
Close Supervision

Den Building
Remote Supervision

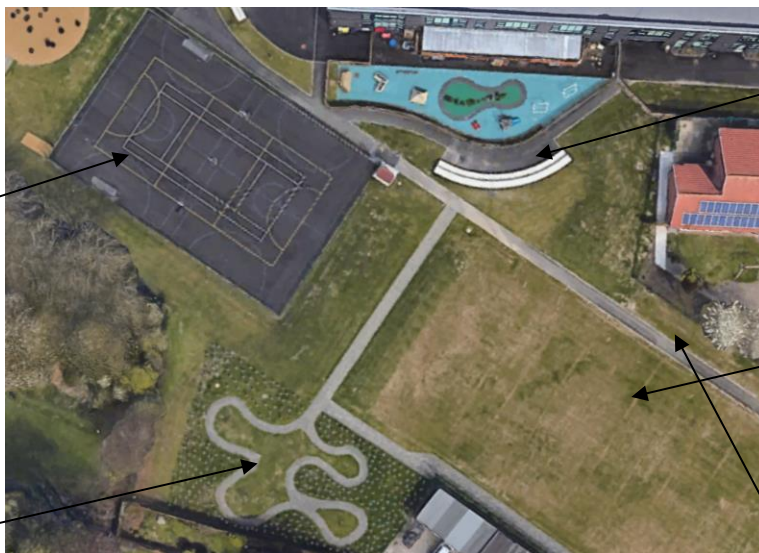


Sand Pit
Remote Supervision

Amphitheatre
Remote Supervision

The Village
Remote Supervision

Construction
Remote Supervision



MUGA
Close Supervision

Secret Garden
Remote Supervision

Amphitheatre 2
Remote Supervision

Playing field
Close Supervision

Track
Close Supervision