



# **Richard Bonington Primary School Play Policy**

**February 2024**

## Richard Bonington Primary School Play Policy

### 1. Commitment

Our school undertakes to refer to this play policy in all decisions that affect children's play. Our school is committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

### 2. Rationale

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. 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 Primary 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."*

**Outlined below are our own school aims and values:**

**Aims: The Richard Bonington Primary School Always Code.**

- Respect and value our school and community.
- Believe in each other and celebrate success.
- Participate and make every day count, aspiring to achieve your very best.
- Support everyone, care for them and make them feel welcome.

### Keys to success.

As well as teaching children curriculum knowledge we believe it is vital to teach the attitudes or 'keys' that will make them successful learners.

- Resilient learners
- Independent enquirers
- Team workers
- Creative thinkers
- Reflective learners.

We feel that OPAL will align with these and through play, children will continue to develop these key areas.

### 3. Definition and value of play

Play is defined as a process that is intrinsically motivated, directed by the child and freely chosen by the child. Play has its own value and provides its own purpose. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. It may be serious or light hearted. It may produce something or it

may be done simply for its own sake. It allows children an opportunity to be creative, to make decisions and to assess and manage risks.

At Richard Bonington, we recognise that play may need to make a noise, get dirty, make a mess and sometimes be out of the direct gaze of adults. We believe that the role of the adults is to support the play process.

We believe play has many benefits, including:

- Play is critical to children's health and wellbeing, and essential for their physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Play enables children to explore the physical and social environment, as well as different concepts and ideas.
- Play enhances children's self-esteem and their understanding of others through freely chosen social interactions, within peer groups, with individuals, and within groups of different ages, abilities, interests, genders, ethnicities and cultures.
- Play requires ongoing communication and negotiation skills, enabling children to develop a balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others.
- Play enables children to experience a wide range of emotions and develop their ability to cope with these, including sadness and happiness, rejection and acceptance, frustration and achievement, boredom and fascination, fear and confidence.
- Play encourages self-confidence and the ability to make choices, problem solve and to be creative.
- Play maintains children's openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

#### **4. Aims**

In relation to play our school aims to:

- Ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- Allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- Enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- Aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Provide a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- Provide a range of environments that will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- Promote independence and teamwork within children.
- Build emotional and physical resilience.
- Allow children the right to assess risk, get out and tidy away equipment
- Ensure adults respect these rights, providing inclusive opportunities for creative, exciting play, use of restorative justice to resolve conflicts and to support children who have additional needs at playtime.

#### **5. Rights**

Our school recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes *the right to play, recreation and leisure* (Article 31) and the *right of children to be listened to on matters important to them* (Article 12). We acknowledge that we have a duty to take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their play.

## 6. Benefit and risk

*'Play is great for children's wellbeing 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: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 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 principal value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play.** In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide* (Play Safety Forum, 2012).

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. As outlined in 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.

In line with our aims, values and curriculum principles, it's important for our children to be able to experience risk and challenge and therefore build resilience. We want children to work collaboratively and support each other in a creative thinkers, team workers and reflective learners.

## 7. Supervision

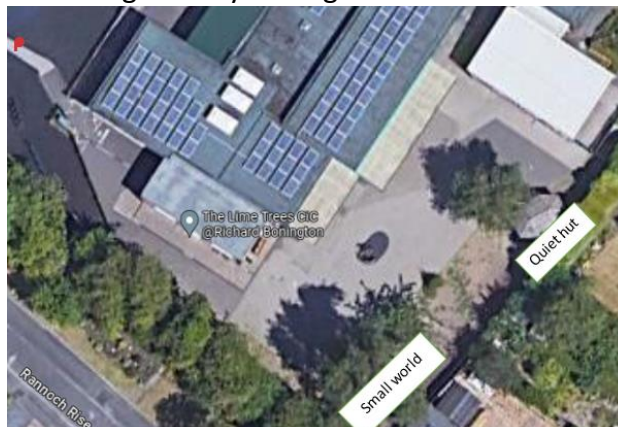
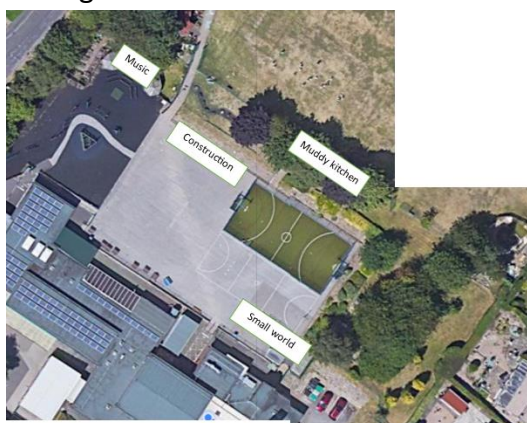
The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day there should be one or more adults present outdoors.

Richard Bonington Primary School has generous ratios of adults to children for playtimes and lunchtimes. We recognise OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in Reception, whose skills and orientation in the school environment need to be assessed, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervisors will use ranging and remote supervision models, so that children can quickly find an adult and adults can move around the site to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

The proposed supervision for our school will look like this:

-Play team have designated zones/social spaces to monitor. These cover all the areas outlined on the map of the school grounds below.

- The play team wear hi-vis jackets to be spotted by children and other adults.
- They are using walkie talkies to communicate with the play leader. This also helps with sending children in for lunch.
- The Play team use 'Dynamic Risk management' when on duty. They are constantly aware of the changing nature of play taking place in their allocated zones. They are aware of the children within their zones, how risky play is and what resources they are using. The play team support children to assess and manage their risks as much as possible for themselves.
- Play team will appear calm and confident while constantly being alert and aware of risks.
- All staff should be prepared to intervene, if necessary. Intervention should balance the management of risk. Children should feel empowered to gradually manage their own risks.



## 8. The adult's role in play

The school will help children maximise the benefits they can gain from play by the provision of trained staff who are informed by and work in accordance with the Playwork Principles. Staff will use and refer to these principles when appropriate interventions are needed, and ultimately will strive for facilitating an environment that nurtures children's self-directed play.

The playworker's core function is to create an environment that will stimulate children's play and maximise their opportunities for a wide range of play experiences. A skilled and experienced playworker is capable of enriching the child's play experience both in terms of the design and resources of the physical environment and in terms of the attitudes and culture fostered within the play setting. Playworkers are a channel of access to new materials and tools and they can act as a stimulus to children to explore and learn. They are also available to participate in the play if invited.

## 9. Equality and diversity

Through providing a rich play offer meeting every child's needs, we will ensure all children, regardless of age, gender, race, disability or other special needs, can develop and thrive, build strong relationships and enjoy school.

## 10. Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable or unnecessary risks and thereby offer children the opportunity to explore for themselves through their freely chosen play.

We will strive to continually improve the quality and diversity of our school's grounds to enhance play. We will use the document 'Best Play' to guide us on what a quality play environment should contain. [www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf](http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf)

*In addition, you could also reflect on how a rich play setting supports safeguarding, helps children develop confidence in team building and advocating for their own rights, increases children's social and emotional capabilities and helps develop a love and enjoyment of the outdoors, which is a key foundation for caring for the environment.*

# Appendix

## **Appendix A**

HSE Managing Risk Statement

## **Appendix B**

Richard Bonington Primary School Play Charter

## **Appendix C**

Ranging supervision zones of Play Team.



# Richard Bonington Play Charter



We have  
the right to  
play and  
enjoy OPAL

Everyone  
chooses  
what to  
play

We share  
equipment  
fairly and  
kindly

We allow  
people to  
join in  
games

We play  
safely

We have the  
responsibility to  
make sure  
everyone enjoys  
playtime.

We take  
care of  
equipment

We allow  
people to  
join in  
games

We treat  
each other  
how we would  
like to be  
treated

We ask  
grown ups  
if we need  
help

We help  
people if  
they need  
us

We love  
our play!



## Appendix C- Ranging supervision zones of Play Team.

