

The Catholic School of Saint Gregory The Great

Believe and Achieve



PLAY POLICY

To be read in conjunction with related
school Policies.

Rationale

This policy sets out the school's commitment to ensuring that quality environments for play and informal recreation are available to all its children, and aims to improve the way we think about, and provide, opportunities for play. In line with article 31 of the UN convention on the rights of the child, our school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment within challenging settings, free from unacceptable levels of risk.

We are committed to supporting the children in their social and emotional development, helping facilitate learning through play and ensuring play is a valued and exciting part of each day. We also recognise that our children at St Gregory's would benefit from additional opportunities to be active (OPS, 2017 and 2021 and more in line with county in 2023) in less-structured curriculum times and to develop their language and communication skills – play is used at our school to do both of these things.

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.

Purpose

As a school we recognise the value of play and aim to develop a wide range of outside play environments to meet the needs of all our children. Play is satisfying and freely chosen by the child. Play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. It may be serious or light hearted and may be done simply for its own sake. We aim to ensure children's choice over their experiences is promoted in our grounds.

The value of play

Play enables children to learn through experiences that cannot be taught but can be modelled. Free play can also have a direct positive impact on a child's ability to meet formal educational goals. Through exploring and testing ideas children learn:

- How to make new friends and communicate with other people.
- How to play new games and learn new skills including physical skills like climbing.
- How to get along with other people, learn how to share and work as a team.
- How to stay healthy and build energy levels.
- To take risks and keep safe.

Adult's role in play

The adult's role in play will be governed by the Playwork Principles which state:

- The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process which will be informed by in-house training and education.
- The role of the playworker is to recognise their own impact on the play space and to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.

Play and Risk

Managing Risk in Play Provision

*'Good risks and hazards in play provision are those that engage and challenge children, and support their growth learning and development.'*¹

An essential element of exploration within the medium of play is the opportunity for children to experience freely-chosen activities, where they can take acceptable risks and challenge themselves beyond their existing capabilities. Allowing children to take acceptable risks develops their ability to independently judge risks and learn new skills.

*'Without opportunities to take acceptable levels of risk children's development is inhibited, undermining their capacity to deal with the wider unsupervised world.'*²

It is the school's responsibility to strike a balance between the risks and the benefits as guided by the Health and Safety Executive (2012). Carefully considered and comprehensive risk assessments of all play provision within the school should be constantly reviewed, or whenever significant change/development in play provision/equipment takes place.

Children will be encouraged to manage their own risk by staff who will support them in undertaking dynamic risk benefit assessments to build their own ability to risk assess for their future. This is done throughout the school in formal learning and informal learning time.

More conventional risk benefit assessments are devised alongside our staff and can be found in the CAFAW office.

¹ Managing Risk in Play Provision; Play England; 2012

² South Gloucestershire Council Play Policy: Play Safety Forum Position Statement

Appendix



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Making hammocks and swings	Children building and creating fixed height for swings and hammock type activity, mainly a fall or being struck	- Social skills - Co-operation and teamwork - Gross and fine motor skills - Learning properties of materials - Physical exercise - Agility - Enjoyable - Learning about social rules - Learning control - Learning about success and failure - Construction skills - Children learn about boundaries through taking risks in their play	M	M	M	Talk to children about what measures they could put in place to make the activity safe enough without removing beneficial risk. Includes children climbing on structures and tables to tie off. Ongoing maintenance checks on popular playground furniture and hammock building areas. Lunchtime staff trained in dynamic risk benefit assessment. Communicate 'rules' with all staff and children. Staff are first aid trained.
Climbing in bins	Children may injure themselves whilst climbing in/out mainly by falling over or out of bin	- Social skills - Co-operation and teamwork - Gross and fine motor skills - Learning properties of materials - Physical exercise - Agility - Enjoyable - Learning about social rules - Learning control - Learning about success and failure - Children learn about boundaries through taking risks in their play	L	M	L	Talk to children about what measures they could put in place to make the activity safe enough without removing beneficial risk. Lunchtime staff trained in dynamic risk benefit assessment. Staff are first aid trained.
Pushing and	Children falling	- Physical exercise	M	M	M	Talk to children about what



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pulling around in crates	out of crate Children being struck by swinging fast moving crates	- Agility - Enjoyable - Learning about social rules - Learning control - Emotion regulation - Emotional resilience - Children learn about boundaries through taking risks in their play - Co-operation - Cross age and cross gender - Releasing energy - Communication skills - Trust - Empathy - Understanding about properties of materials				measures they could put in place to make the activity safe enough without removing beneficial risk. Staff monitor area. Lunchtime staff trained in dynamic risk benefit assessment. Communicate 'rules' with all staff and children.
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To be carried out in conjunction with 'Risk level matrix' and 'Scrapstore PlayPod – Risk Benefit Assessment guidance notes'

Name of person carrying out risk assessment: C Blanch
 Date carried out: March 2023
 Review date: March 2025