

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. The school acknowledges the UN Convention 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."

We firmly believe that successful and considered play opportunities support us in ensuring that our children leave Cambrai as 'good people'. Rich and valuable play opportunities provide children a sound vehicle by which to learn, develop and apply the key virtues that school aims to instil in all that we do. These are:

<p>Fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrity • honesty • morality 	<p>Kindness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generosity • humility • empathy • charity 	<p>Respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manners • teamwork* • polite disagreement 	<p>Bravery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • courage • justice • leadership 	<p>Coolness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-control • independence* 	<p>Stickability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivation • resilience* • perseverance
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3. Definition and value of play

Play is defined as any freely chosen activity that a child finds satisfying and creative. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. 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, different concepts and different 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.
- Successful play is a priority for the school; we seek to embed play as part of our personal development curriculum, and aim to see it as a significant strength within our school self evaluation for our children's personal development
- Play aligns well with our school 'outdoor education curriculum'; in many circumstances, children will be able to apply taught skills within the formal programme and apply these within their own play contexts – shelter work is a particularly good example of this
- As a new and growing school, play across year groups is central to us developing the family approach of Cambrai. Post COVID restrictions, we see wonderful playtimes as a key strategy to bring the new school together, for the first time
- We see play as an opportunity to include all children – all of the time. We carefully consider the variety of play resource, space and type to ensure that there is always something for everyone: it is vital at Cambrai that children look forward to playtimes because there is always something to interest them, meet their emerging interests and needs

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 which will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- promote the school virtues
- build emotional and physical resilience.

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 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 (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. In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *'Managing Risk in Play Provision': An Implementation Guide*.

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. 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 practice dynamic risk management with children, encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

At Cambrai, we see that if adults remove all risk for children, they never learn to recognise or manage it within their own lives. When adults remove risk without an explanation, we see that whilst a situation may have been avoided in the moment, it will not be avoided next time – as the child had no opportunity to reflect on the apparent risk, and the implications for not mitigating it. An example would be a child about to climb a tree. If an adult simply said, do not do that, get down – the child would be safe in the moment and move on, but will most likely go on to climb a tree in future, with no adult present. The risk remains, the adult doesn't. If the adult asked some questions such as, 'how high do you think is a safe fall?', or 'how high are you going to climb? How will you get YOURSELF down?', the child has opportunity to consider what they are about to do, the risks and mitigations for themselves. Involving other children in the play discussion further strengthens the impact of the conversation.

The full H&SE Managing Risk Statement as an Appendix to your Play Policy.

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. The school recognizes OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception, or higher risk areas (such as the climbing zone) 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.

Our supervision plan is:

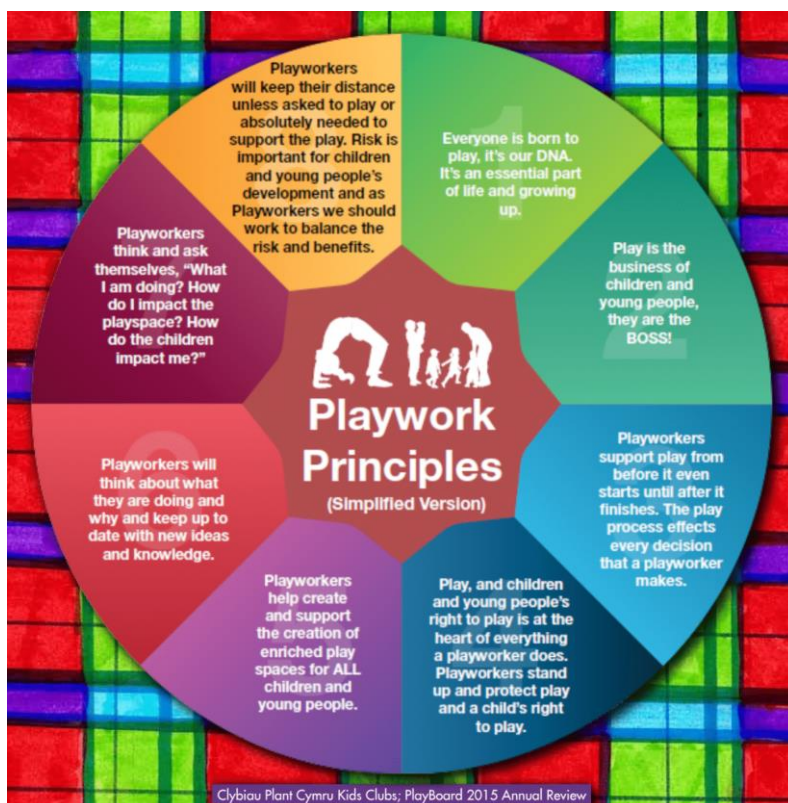
- Direct supervision of the climbing zone - one adult (A)
- Ranging supervision of the school field / 'the Village' – one adult (B)
- Ranging supervision of the loose parts zone / mud kitchen – one adult (C)
- Ranging supervision of the MUGA – one adult (D)
- Remote supervision of the sand and gravel pits – (C and D)

8. The adult's role in play

The school will help children maximize 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.

Part of the induction of all staff who are involved in the play of children (almost all staff in a primary school) is a discussion regarding this policy, a shadowed play time experience and a session discussing 'The language of Play' (appendix 2). We see the language we use with our children during play as the very vehicle to get play right – so we spend a valuable amount of time ensuring that all staff, particularly those who have not been part of the OPAL programme from the beginning, understand the way play is talked about, modelled and intervened aligned to the school and OPAL principles.



These 'Playwork Principles' also form part of the initial induction of all staff involved in play – and are part of our staff OPAL notice board

9. Equality and diversity

"The most vulnerable deserve our best."

Nancy Zinkin

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. Play is not an exception to our school's commitment to equality and diversity. As school fully resourced to meet the demands of children with significant physical disability, playtimes too are considered when balancing the additional needs of some, against the developmental needs of all. This commitment is clearly outlined and articulated on our school webpage:

<https://www.cambraiprimaryschool.co.uk/send-at-cambrai>

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.

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/resource/best-play/>

11. Safeguarding and Play

At Cambrai, we recognise that a rich play setting supports our wider safeguarding agenda within school. In essence, our strong play offer, as outlined above:

- helps children develop confidence in sharing their voice and advocating for their own rights,
- increases children's social and emotional capabilities
- helps develop a love, enjoyment, respect and safe use of the outdoors, a key foundation for caring for the environment and keeping themselves safe in the outdoors environment

This policy was originally created by M Dent, Executive Headteacher, on behalf of the Play Team.

Date of Implementation: January 2022

Review Date: January 2023

Signed:

Headteacher:



Chair of Governors:



Appendix 1: full H&SE Managing Risk Statement

Appendix 2: The Language of Play