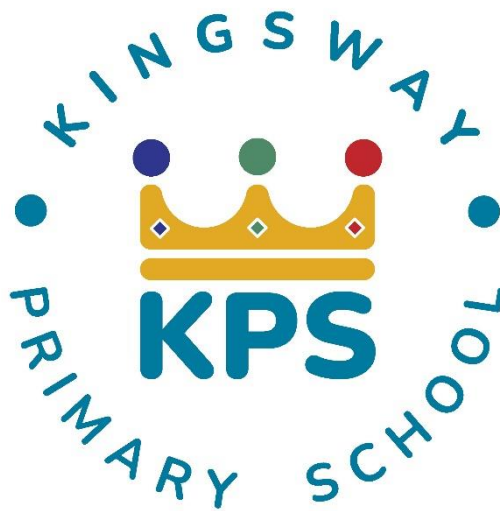


Kingsway Primary School

Play Policy



Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

Summer 2025

Next review due by:

Summer 2027

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."*

This rationale supports the schools core values of Kindness, Independence and Teamwork (Kingsway KIT). Through play, children will have many opportunities to develop and demonstrate the characteristics associated with our core values through engaging in the different types of play. OPAL also links to our learning at Kingsway pedagogical approach by supporting children to develop their social skills through collaboration.

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.

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.

At Kingsway we focus on developing a comprehensive experience for children, not just academically but also through social and emotional learning during play. We believe that the OPAL approach provides a great opportunity to encourage student leadership, also making the lunchtime break more engaging and purposeful. While some children will engage in play opportunities, others may take on leadership roles to support other children in their play.

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.
- Developing in our children a lifelong love of being active.
- Providing children with skills from working together for the benefit of all which will support them into their futures.

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.

At Kingsway Primary School, our children have the right to:

- Feel safe, happy and enjoy learning
- Be respected and valued
- Have access to a wide and varied curriculum
- Be offered the full range of activities in our school
- Enjoy living a healthy lifestyle.
- Develop skills for life.
- Achieve their potential

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

Through our Kingsway Kit, we encourage our children to take responsibility for the different values of Kindness, Independence and Teamwork. Through OPAL we will encourage children to choose the level of challenge they feel competent with and give them the opportunities to achieve the goals they set themselves. We will ensure this is done in a safe, risk assessed environment.

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 recognises 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 patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

At break times, the members of staff on duty will position themselves so there are equal numbers of staff on the school field and playground areas to ensure all areas are supervised and visible by an adult where children are present.

At lunch times, the play team will ensure a member of staff is present in each of the play zones for the entirety of lunch. These members of staff will patrol their zone ensuring there is an adult present at all activity stations assisting with risk assessing the activities children are engaging with.

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.

All adults working with children through play have received a copy of 'PLAYWORK ESSENTIALS, An introduction to essential playwork skills and knowledge for all adults working in schools.

Training will be provided by OPAL to play leaders to support in developing their understanding of safe play and risk assessment.

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

Through opportunities for collaboration, we encourage all our children to play together as part of Team Kingsway. This will include team building and cooperation when working with others in order to support in creating positive relationships with children across the different year groups developing a supportive ethos.

Appendix

The full HSE Managing Risk Statement (Doc 4.6) will be attached as an Appendix.