

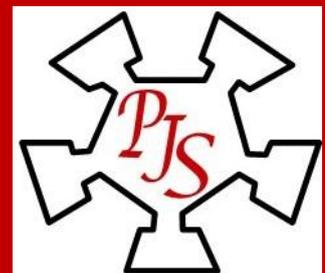
# *Priory Junior School*

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## PLAY POLICY

Policy Date: February 2024

Review Date: February 2025



# PRIORY JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Play Policy

*APPROVED BY GOVERNING BODY –*

*POLICY TO BE REVIEWED*

<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Keefe
<b>Curricular Lead for Play</b>	Emma Welch
<b>Play Coordinator</b>	Tracy Keefe
<b>Play Champion – Governor Link</b>	Simon Flint
<b>Play Champion – Parent Link</b>	Racheal Bourke

## 1. Commitment

At Priory Junior School, we are committed to use our school vision and this policy when considering all decisions that determine 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

**Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that, 'A child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.'**

Children spend up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in school at play. Therefore, this time needs to be coherent and planned for. Priory Junior School believes that all children need opportunities to play. Opportunities 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.

Play is recognised for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning; a finding confirmed by many studies of early childhood. Research shows that play can enhance problem solving; it is also widely regarded as providing opportunities for social interaction and language development which is vital for all our children.

Better quality play leads to happier children and happier staff. With better quality play opportunities there are fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school and improved skills development and learning. As the children improve their quality of play and have more enriching play times, there are fewer accidents and classroom learning is enhanced as the children come in from play happy and ready to learn.

Play offers opportunities for our pupils to develop and demonstrate the Priory Junior School values – discovery, motivation, perseverance, collaboration, responsibility, honest, courage, thoughtfulness appreciation and friendship.

## 3. Definition and benefits 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:

- 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 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.

#### 5. 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)

**Priory Junior 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.**

(<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/assets/docs/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>) In doing so, we will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide* (Play Safety Forum, 2012). (<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/8625/1/00942-2008DOM-EN.pdf>)

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 addition to standard risk-benefit assessments the school will regularly practice dynamic risk management with children, encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them. When introducing new play opportunities to children, a risk-benefit assessment will be completed and shared with all staff. (See Appendix 1)

#### 6. Supervision

The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. Priory Junior School recognises OPAL's (Outdoor Play and Learning) three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Supervisors will use ranging and remote supervision models, so that children can quickly find an adult and adults can patrol all play areas to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

#### 7. The adult's role in play

We, at Priory Junior School, are fully committed to working with children to provide the play experiences that they want and need in their school. We will have a continuing dialogue with

children about the play provision in the playground which will include regular play assemblies, School Council involvement, surveys and other pupil voice outlets.

Priory Junior 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 Play Team'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. The Play Team will be guided by OPAL and the Play Principles to ensure that the play space is inclusive – supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way. 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.

## **8. The children's role in play**

The children will all have access to their own version of the play policy. In it will also include the rights and responsibilities of the children to:

- Have ownership of their play and outdoor learning experiences.
- Respect and look after each other their environment and equipment.
- To take responsibility of their actions surrounding purposely dangerous or unsafe behaviour.
- Ensure that playtimes are fun for everybody. This children's play policy will be shared and explained to all children regularly as part of ongoing assemblies, discussions and dialogue in class and with the School Council.

## **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.

At Priory Junior School, we will:

- use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing, encouraging the children to value natural or found objects for play.
- include the children when planning for playing and learning outdoors.
- ensure that the outdoor area offers all children the opportunity to investigate, take risks, explore and use their imagination and creativity.
- expect the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things.
- give children the opportunity to manage the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors.
- enrich the quality of the environment to maximise the variety of play types and increase play value.

- ensure that the play space is an integrated area where all children from reception to Year 6 can play safely.
- teach the children their responsibilities with regard to maintaining the quality of their outdoor space, and the equipment available and ensure they take an active part in doing this.
- promote children's love, pride and enjoyment of the outdoors, a key foundation for caring for the environment.
- help children develop confidence in team building and advocating their own rights.

**Appendix 1**

Risk-benefit assessment date: .....

Assessed by: .....

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or utility or related policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date

