

Nythe Primary School Risk Benefit Advice and Record Sheet

OPAL's RAPID approach to risk is an essential part of the OPAL Primary Programme
No school should offer the kinds of play that OPAL promotes without a robust and continually updated RAPID plan.

“Health and safety law in Great Britain has an enduring principle – that those who create risks are best placed to control them, and that they should do so in a reasonable and sensible way.”

Dame Judith Hackitt HSE Chair 2015

- R:** Risk-benefit assessment
- A:** Assemblies focused on playtime
- P:** Policy for play ratified by your governors or equivalent
- I:** Inspections carried out regularly
- D:** Dynamic risk management embraced by all staff

The purpose of **Risk Benefit Assessments** are to enable us to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in our play environment. They cannot and will not provide complete 'safety' and this is not their purpose. They can help us to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm.

We have two approaches to managing risk: Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments and Dynamic Risk Management

Standing Risk Benefit Assessments means we look at our usual environment and practices at least annually, and also when significant changes take place and keep a written record of the areas in the table below.

Dynamic Risk Benefit Management means that staff should be aware of changing nature of the play taking place. They should support children to assess and manage risk as much as possible for themselves, but they should also be vigilant and take action, if they think that risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of

likelihood or severity or harm with preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Common areas that need standing assessment include:

Boundaries to dangerous areas, trees management and tree climbing, fixed equipment and inspection, broken loose parts, rope tying especially at height, water use and water features.

Staff will carry out daily, on-going risk assessment and pass on any potential hazards to a member of SLT.

Risk-benefit assessment date: February 3rd 2025

Assessed by: Gudrun Osborn, Josh West and Darren Stiles.

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	Review Date
<p>Pupils playing in a different environment with new potential dangers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an increased risk of minor injury to pupils who may require immediate first aid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased freedom to play fosters more creative play Pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils with minor injuries (scratches and minor abrasions) will be treated by nominated First Aiders. All first aid administered reported on Bromcom. The Principal reviews termly to check for possible patterns that require review to the risk assessment. More serious injuries will be referred to a member of SLT if the injury requires parental contact or hospital treatment. Termly play assemblies at a minimum or when new 	<p>Play Team: Darren Stiles Callie Bransgrove Kath Wilson Carla Tayler Kayte Goff Leanne Bucko Leah Foster Anne Beare</p> <p>SLT staff member on duty</p>	<p>3.2.25</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

		equipment is introduced/issues arise.			
<p>Large loose parts – playing with pallets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor splinters and injuries to hands caused by rough wood. This is an accepted part of playing with rough sawn timber. • Minor head injuries, scrapes, cuts, bruises • Trip hazards • Crush injuries to extremities, • Potential of limbs becoming stuck • Unstable stacks toppling over when balanced edgewise on • Slipping between gaps • Nails popping up • Slats breaking under pressure from stamping feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can use pallets in many different ways; building forts, house, dens and structures, vehicles, climbing on, sitting on, bracing other loose parts so they don't easily move e.g bridges over ditches, combining with large cable spools and planks to make mega-structures and as simple theatre stages for dancing or rehearsing a show on. • Imaginary play • Team building • Problem solving • Building physical strength • Co-operation • Communication • Creativity • Cense of achievement • Language opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will check pallets for nails, significant damage, large splinters or sharp points before providing them to children. • All pallets will then be checked for further damage on a weekly basis. • Damaged pallets will be removed from the play environment until repaired or disposed of. • Play Team briefed on inspecting pallets for damage and testing the stability of structures. • Pupils briefed in assembly about what to look out for in terms of damage to pallets, removing damaged pallets from the play environment and informing staff, and the following guidelines in respect of playing with pallets: <p>The use of pallets on tarmac for standing on will be limited to a maximum fall height of 60cm (4 pallets high when laid flat on top of each other).</p> <p>Pallet structures for standing on above this height will only be allowed on grass and soil. Here a maximum fall height of 1.5m will be used.</p>	<p>Darren Stiles weekly.</p> <p>Play Team to monitor daily.</p> <p>Josh West - Play assembly</p>	3.2.25	Weekly

		<p>Children and staff should talk about and test the stability of all pallet structures before playing in them (e.g. dens) or on them.</p> <p>Agreed guidelines to initially have pallets stationary. Standing on pallet structures will be limited to those that are stable and strong, with pallets tied or braced together if necessary.</p> <p>Explicit lessons on play and the correct use of items. Collaborative and modelled play between staff and pupils.</p> <p>Pupils briefed on the potential slip risk hazard if pallets are left out in wet conditions.</p>			
<p>Large loose parts – wooden and plastic cable spools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crush injuries from rolling spool Minor splinters and injuries to hands caused by rough wood. This is an accepted part of playing with rough sawn timber. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will check reels for significant damage, large splinters or sharp points before providing them to children. All reels will then be checked for further damage on a weekly basis. Damaged reels will be removed from the play environment and disposed of. Play team briefed on inspecting reels. Pupils briefed on safe useage of spools. Spools to be used in designated areas only and not to be rolled 	<p>Darren Stiles to check weekly.</p> <p>Play team to monitor.</p> <p>Play assembly</p>	3.2.25	Ongoing

		from the field onto the playground down the slope.			
<p>Pupils playing in sand pit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand pit possible attraction for cats, dogs and fox faeces. Sand in eyes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative play Sensory play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pit checked daily by the site manager and monitored throughout the day by staff. Sandpit covered at the end of every day. New sand added annually. 	Darren Stiles to check the sand pit daily when opened.	3.2.25	Ongoing
<p>Large loose parts – tyres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor head injuries Scrapes, cuts, bruises Trip hazards Crush injuries to extremities, Potential of limbs becoming stuck Nails left in tyres Protruding wires or little wear left. With larger tyres, there is a risk of injury when moving. With smaller tyres, children will want to stack them, get inside them, roll them around and build large structures. Tyres being rolled down the slope onto the playground resulting in injury. Tyres collecting water that is turning stagnant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross motor skills Musculoskeletal development Imaginary play - make houses, forts shops etc from tyres and wood.' Team building Problem solving Building physical strength Co-operation Communication Creativity Sense of achievement Language opportunities Chance to extend play Develop social opportunities Tyres filled with sand, earth or stone and dust can be used as permanent borders for social spaces, sandpits or any loose material enclosure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will check tyres for protruding wires, significant damage before providing them to children. All tyres will then be checked for further damage on a weekly basis. Damaged tyres will be removed from the play environment until repaired or disposed of. Play Team briefed on inspecting tyres for damage and testing the stability of structures. Pupils briefed on safe lifting in play assemblies. Heavy objects must not be lifted above heads. Pupils briefed and reminded of stacking tyres and climbing on tyres no higher than three (on grass or soil) Tyres can be slippery when wet. 	Darren Stiles to check tyres weekly. Play Team apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier tyres.	3.2.25	Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Team to empty tyres of water once a week. • Pupil to wash hands after playing with the tyres. 			
<p>Balance Bikes/Trikes/Wiggle Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increased risk of falling off. • Potential injury falling and hurting themselves or bumping into other children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased balance • Improvement of gross motor skills. • Fitness. • Core strength improved with use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to be shown possible pitfalls of falling off bikes, crashing into others with bikes and injury while pushing others on bikes. • Race track created from tyres to define a specific area for use of bikes and trikes. • Awareness of finger trap risks. • Staff to make sure all bikes and scooters have proper rubber handles or taped off. • Children taught how to store the bikes safely in the pit stop. • Playtime staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of bikes and trikes. • We have not asked children to wear a helmet. OPAL guidance (6.9) states, 'Compulsory cycle helmets are likely to damage children's health more than they increase safety. Children's use of bicycles/scooters is different from adults. Children's healthy outdoor activity and 	Darren Stiles to check weekly.	3.2.25	Ongoing

		freedom to play will be even more restricted by wearing a helmet. Where the risks to a healthy lifestyle are greater than the risks from "safety" measures then health should take priority – particularly when the increase safety is marginal at best.'			
<p>Skipping ropes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of being whipped with a rope as they are plastic, and sometimes used to attach bikes together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children learning how to skip. Playing in a group with friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children told to use the ropes as intended and not to tie onto other equipment or people 	<p>Play Team to monitor</p> <p>Play assembly</p>	3.2.25	Ongoing
<p>Large loose parts – suitcases and pushchairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trapped fingers trapped hair child accidentally being locked inside trip hazard potential to be struck by one if it is swung around 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role play Enjoyment Motor skills Coordination Strength. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of locks. Equipment checked regularly for sharp edges/rust/cracked plastic. Play assembly used to educate the children best ways to use the equipment. 	<p>Darren Stiles to check weekly.</p> <p>Monitored by the Play Team.</p>	3.2.25	Weekly
<p>Digging in the earth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low risk except if forks are used for digging, or if children unearth some kind of hazardous material. Injury could occur if a child is inadvertently hit by a spade when another is working hard at digging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical strength and exercise. Determination and perseverance. Sense of satisfaction, exploratory play. Playing with the elements. Extend opportunities for imaginative and creative play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No forks to be provided for digging. Child size spades and trowels only. Digging only allowed in designated areas – identified by a tyre enclosure. Children to report anything unusual they find. Staff to supervise regularly, ensuring children have sufficient space. 	<p>Play Team</p> <p>Play assembly</p>	3.2.25	Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play assembly on safe digging, emphasising the importance of giving each other room. • Children not to eat anything they dig up! • Children to wear wellies at all times and waterproof trousers (provided). 			
<p>Tree Climbing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falling out of the tree. • Falling on to someone else. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree climbing provides many benefits to children and for many schools is the only affordable way to allow children to have opportunities for upper body strength and coordination. • Tree climbing builds self-esteem, confidence, physical strength, hand-eye coordination, prediction, planning and provides opportunities for pride and a sense of achievement. The urge to be up high is very strong and instinctive in children especially as they gain confidence in their bodies.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable climbing trees identified and labelled with colourful ribbon to identify height. • Children allowed to climb to a maximum of 1.5m (height of feet) grass or loose soil. • Play assembly on safe tree climbing shared with children: The rule of three Keep close to the trunk Stay off the dead Test weak branches Always think about falling If it doesn't feel right, don't do it Never help up, only talk down • Guidance shared with play time staff. Reviewed regularly 	<p>Monitored by the Play Team</p> <p>Play assembly</p> <p>Parent Play workshop</p>	3.2.25	Ongoing
<p>Playing with ropes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main dangers from rope is from looped rope suspended at height. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ropes can be used for making rope swings, crafts, tying things together, pulling each other around, skipping, tug-of-war, jumping over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Assembly on Rope play. • One to one sessions with each class on rope play in the forest. 	<p>Play assembly</p> <p>Play team</p>	3.2.25	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If ropes are taken into the trees and bushes there needs to be more active supervision and better training with the children.' 	<p>and all kinds of object and imaginative play.'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play time staff briefed on rope play and supervision across all zones. The following considerations are taken into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thicker rope is safer than thinner rope Wires should not be in the play environment Looped ropes in tree should be closely supervised Looped ropes should be removed at the end of play Ropes tied at height on fixed play equipment are under direct supervision. Ropes tied on to branches should be moved monthly. 			
<p>Playing with sticks as guns or swords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for severe eye injuries from sticks being waved at eye level or impaling type injuries from falling on to sticks whilst running. Whilst there is no significant risk of injury from sticks being used as guns, there may be concerns from parents about this type of play behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pleasure and enjoyment, friendship, comradery, peer attachment, emotion regulation, self control, imagination and fantasy play. Playing with concepts such as right and wrong / heroes and villains / life and death. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sticks are not allowed to be used as real weapons and will be taken away from children who do so. Where sticks are used as pretend swords, children need to be careful of who is around them and allow plenty of space so that they do not inadvertently hit another child. Children must not swing sticks around where there are other children close by who are not involved in the game. 	<p>Play team Play assembly</p>	<p>3.2.25</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticks should only hit other sticks or inanimate objects. • Play assembly on playing with sticks • Playtime staff to supervise and intervene if children's behaviour is deemed reckless or if they are unaware of the risks they are posing to others. 			
<p>Children playing in the forest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multitude of potential trip hazards and potential for minor cuts and grazes. • Risk of eye injury from sharp branches at eye level. • Nettles present risk of stings but these should be considered as minor risks. • Children could become ill if they ingested plants that were poisonous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for den-making, shelter and play "in corners". • The woodland is big enough to accommodate a large number of children and so disagreements over "territory" will be minimised. • Lots of opportunities for imaginative and creative play, playing in and with nature, tree climbing, digging, as well as shade during hot or wet weather. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large logs used to create an informal barrier that children should not venture beyond. • Children encouraged to trample down nettles within the playable area when they have wellies on • Play assembly on playing safely in the forest. • Emphasise not eating any plants and staying within agreed boundaries children briefed and play time staff ensure children stay in bounds. • Woodland checked daily. • Unsafe materials removed. • Deep animal burrows filled. 	<p>Play team</p> <p>Play assembly</p>	3.2.25	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Daily</p>