



# Policy Document: Play

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## Policy Statement on Play

### *Learning Together, Learning For Life.*

#### Links to Visionary Statement

#### We aim to .....

- keep children's learning at the heart of our thoughts and actions
- provide the opportunity for all our children to achieve academic excellence within a broad and balanced curriculum
- create an ethos which nurtures creativity, self-belief, independence and a sense of respect for other
- ensure that our schools are happy, safe, supportive and secure places in which to learn
- create a stimulating learning environment
- develop strong and productive partnerships with parents and the wider school community
- have high expectations in all areas of school life
- prepare children for the future

***Agreed and Signed on behalf of the Full Governing Body.....***

***Date:.....***

***Next Review:.....***

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Last Updated: January 2019

Next Review: January 2022



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## Policy Statement ~ Play

**“Play is recognised as any activity that a child enters into that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated and that actively engages the child”.**

### Commitment

Paulton Infant School recognises the importance of the need for high quality sustainable play for children regardless of their needs and abilities and that inclusive play is achieved by offering carefully considered outdoor spaces that offer a real choice of accessible play opportunities.

At Paulton Infant School, we want to help children to be safe, reliable, independent and **successful citizens** for the 21st century. We want to ensure each child is making appropriate progress in line with school achievement aims. We aim to give our children confidence and a desire to achieve their full potential.

### Rationale

Children spend 25% of their primary school attendance in playtime. This time is valuable and needs coherent planning. Changes in culture and society have led to 'play poverty' in childhood. 'Play poverty' has numerous negative impacts and may be attributed to a rise in childhood mental health problems.

Quality play means happier children. Happier children mean an increase in well-being, self-esteem and resilience, fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school, more effective lessons, better core skills development, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary problems, fewer accidents and a happier school.

***At Paulton Infant School we uphold Article 31 of the UN Convention which states that all children have a right to play.***

Play England drew up The Charter for Children's Play which sets out a vision for play and states that:

- Children need time and space to play at school.
- Adults should let children play.
- Children value and benefit from staffed play provision.
- Children's play is enriched by skilled playworkers.
- Children sometimes need extra support to enjoy their right to play.

### Definition

Play is recognised as any activity that a child enters into that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated and that actively engages the child. Great play may be solitary or social. Great play makes children happy and happy children are better learners.

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## **Paulton Infant School play:**

- Allows children to truly be themselves and be reflective.
- Allows children to explore and discover things about the world in which they live.
- Encourages children to take acceptable risks, and in doing so, find new challenges and develop new skills.
- Allows children to be creative and co-operative.
- May be messy and expressive.
- Provides a break from structured routines.

## **Rights, Equality and Access**

***Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.***

Paulton Infant School acknowledges that every child has the right to choose the kind of play that is suitable for them whatever their age, gender or background.

## **Health, Safety, Benefit and Risk**

**The Health And Safety Executive (HSE) key message is:**

*'Play is great for children's well-being 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.'*

*HSE fully recognises that play brings the world to life for children. It provides for an exploration and understanding of their abilities; helps them to learn and develop; and exposes them to the realities of the world in which they will live, which is a world not free from risk but rather one where risk is ever present. The opportunity for play develops a child's risk awareness and prepares them for their future lives.*

*Striking the right balance between protecting children from the most serious risks and allowing them to reap the benefits of play is not always easy. It is not about eliminating risk. Nor is it about complicated methods of calculating risks or benefits. In essence, play is a safe and beneficial activity.*

Research shows that the uncertainty and challenge of much of children's play is a very large part of its appeal to them, and that it also enhances the development of their brains and bodies, making them more adaptable and resilient as they grow. Risk and challenge is not limited to physical risk – it includes the uncertainties involved in making new friends, playing with children from different backgrounds and building emotional resilience through trying out new experiences with the possibility of failure.

Children should be encouraged and supported to encounter and manage risk for themselves in an environment that is as safe as it needs to be rather than completely devoid of risk. The benefit to children of challenging play opportunities should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments.

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Paulton Infant School will use the Health and Safety Executive's guidance Managing Risk in Play and Leisure as its principle guiding document in making decisions relating to risk and play. All staff will have appropriate training on encouraging play and developing the children's ability to take acceptable risks and manage risk.

## **The Adults' Role in Play**

We believe that it is the job of a play leader, SMSAs and all adults to ensure that the broadest possible range of play opportunities are available to children, to observe, reflect and analyse the play that is happening and select a mode of intervention or make a change to the play space if needed. Playworkers ensure that the play space is inclusive; supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way. Adults understand and follow the Playwork Principles, defined by Play England, listed below.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult-led agendas.
5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

## **Environment**

At Paulton Infant School we will:

- Use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing.
- Include the children when planning for playing and learning outdoors.
- Ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity.
- Encourage the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things.
- Give children the opportunity to manage, play in, and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors.

To be reviewed January 2022

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