

GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

OPAL OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE & SAFETY FRAMEWORK

A Supplementary Appendix to the OPAL Play Policy

1. Introduction: Purpose of this Document

While the main **Glebe Opal Play Policy** outlines the school's philosophy and overarching aims for play, this **Operational Guidance & Safety Framework** serves as the practical manual for daily implementation. It provides staff with clear protocols for risk management, supervision, and maintenance to ensure that play remains adventurous, inclusive, and safe.

2. Day-to-Day Risk Management and Communication

Our approach to risk is dynamic and informed by **ISO 31000: Risk Management Guidelines**. Staff are expected to exercise professional judgment, balancing the developmental benefits of play against potential harm through structured and proportionate decision-making.

2.1 Proportionate Responses

- **Intervention Strategy:** Actions should reduce unnecessary hazards without removing the meaningful challenge of the play.
- **Acceptable Risk:** Minor injuries (bumps, scrapes, and bruises) are recognized as a natural part of childhood development and learning. Intervention is only required when a situation is deemed actively unsafe or carries a risk of serious injury.

2.2 Communication and Education

- **OPAL Assemblies:** All new activities, resources, or "loose parts" must be introduced to pupils via dedicated assemblies. Staff will explain:
 - The nature and purpose of the activity.
 - Associated risks and safety expectations.
 - Self-management strategies for children.
- **Site Signage:** Temporary physical signage must be used to indicate restricted areas due to weather (e.g., icy surfaces), maintenance, or specific staffing levels.

3. Supervision Protocols in Practice

Supervision at Glebe is designed to *enable* play rather than restrict it. We utilize a model of ranging and remote supervision.

3.1 General Site Supervision

- **Positioning:** Staff should maintain wide sightlines and constant environmental awareness.
- **Role of the Adult:** Intervene primarily to:
 - Prevent serious harm.
 - Support inclusion for all pupils.
 - Scaffold children's own risk-assessment skills.

3.2 Scaffolding Autonomy

- **Reflective Language:** Use open-ended questions (e.g., "What's your plan for getting down?") to help pupils think through consequences.
- **Differentiated Support:** Provide direct guidance to younger children while encouraging self-regulation and peer-mentoring among older pupils.

3.3 High-Risk Zones

Areas identified in the **Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA)** as having higher foreseeable risks (e.g., climbing structures or water play) require:

- **Active Supervision:** Adults must maintain clear sightlines within these zones.
- **System Support:** Support safe systems of use while still allowing children the space to test their own limits.

4. The Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA) Process

The RBA is a "live" document, not a static file. Our approach is underpinned by the **Play Safety Forum's "Managing Risk in Play Provision" (2012)**, which promotes the principle that children must encounter and manage age-appropriate challenges.

- **Continuous Review:** The RBA is updated in response to staff observations, seasonal changes, site developments, and specific pupil needs.
- **The RoSPA Standard:** In line with **RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents)** guidance, our goal is to manage *significant* risks. We focus on eliminating "hidden" hazards (risks children cannot see) while preserving "evident" challenges that are essential for growth.

5. Equipment Standards and Maintenance

To ensure legal compliance and proportionate safety, Glebe's play provision adheres to recognized national and international standards.

5.1 Technical Standards

- **BS EN 1176 (Playground Equipment and Surfacing):** All equipment is designed and maintained to prevent structural failure, lacerations, and entrapment (hair, clothing, or body parts).

- **BS EN 1177 (Impact Attenuating Playground Surfacing):** Surfaces under climbing or moving equipment are maintained to reduce the likelihood of serious head injuries relative to the critical fall height.
- **Third-Party Installations:** Any new specialist equipment or third-party installations must comply with applicable British and European Standards.

5.2 Inspection Regimes

Per the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**, the school follows a tiered inspection process to ensure health and safety "so far as is reasonably practicable":

1. **Routine Visual Inspections:** Daily checks by staff for obvious hazards (broken glass, debris).
2. **Operational Inspections:** Regular, detailed checks of equipment stability and wear.
3. **Annual Main Inspections:** Conducted by a qualified professional from the **Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII)**.
4. **Repairs:** All maintenance is carried out by competent persons to ensure continued compliance.

6. Staff Training and Compliance

Glebe Primary School ensures its play provision meets statutory duties under the **Children Act 1989 & 2004** and **DfE Health and Safety Advice for Schools**.

- **Induction:** All new staff receive guidance on supervision expectations and dynamic risk assessment.
- **Ongoing CPD:** Regular training sessions address safeguarding responsibilities and the school's duty to promote the welfare of children.
- **Inclusion:** Training ensures that play remains adventurous for all children, including those with SEND, through reasonable adjustments and thoughtful scaffolding.