



'We can and we will'
GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

OPAL PLAY POLICY

1. Mission Statement & Rationale

Our school refers to this play policy, alongside direction from the senior leadership team, to provide the strategic and operational leadership needed to maintain quality play provision for all children at Glebe Primary School. We believe that better, more active, and creative playtimes result in happier, healthier children with a more positive attitude toward learning. Play provision must be welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, ethnic background, economic circumstances, or individual abilities. By encouraging safe and purposeful play, we foster the resilience, collaboration, and problem-solving skills essential for academic, social, and emotional growth.

2. The Definition and Value of Play

Play is an intrinsically motivated process that is directed and freely chosen by the child. It is critical to children's health and wellbeing, and essential for their physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual development.

Through freely chosen social interactions, play enhances self-esteem, ongoing communication, and negotiation skills. Furthermore, it encourages children to experience and cope with a wide range of emotions, allowing them to navigate success and failure, which supports the effective use of the school's **Zones of Regulation**.

3. Policy Aims

In relation to play, Glebe Primary School aims to:

- Provide a varied, challenging, and stimulating environment that supports learning across the curriculum.
- Allow children to encounter acceptable risks and use a common-sense, benefit-led approach to manage these risks.
- Promote independence, teamwork, and both emotional and physical resilience.

- Enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.

4. Benefit and Risk Management

Play involves an element of risk-taking; our goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks against the developmental benefits. The school follows the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and the Play Safety Forum's *Managing Risk in Play Provision* (2012).

- **Proportionate Management of Risk:** Staff make professional judgements that balance the developmental benefits of play against the likelihood of potential harm. While the school maintains a robust duty of care, it is recognized that a "zero-risk" environment is neither possible nor desirable for a child's development.
- **Risk-Benefit Assessments (RBA):** These are treated as live, working documents. Formal RBAs are conducted for high-impact activities (e.g., loose parts play, climbing, den building) and are reviewed regularly in response to site developments, seasonal changes, and incident logs.
- **OPAL Assemblies & Pupil Voice:** Children are active participants in safety. New resources are introduced through assemblies where risks and safety expectations are co-constructed with pupils to foster self-regulation and hazard awareness.

5. Supervision and the Adult's Role

Supervision at Glebe is active and purposeful, designed to enable play while maintaining a safe environment. The school utilizes a tiered supervision model:

- **Supervision Models:** Staff utilize **Direct** (close proximity), **Remote** (within sight/sound), and **Ranging** (patrolling an area) models. The choice of model is determined by a dynamic risk assessment of the age of the children, the nature of the activity, and the specific site zone.
- **Ratios and Positioning:** Supervision levels meet or exceed statutory requirements. "High-Risk Zones" (e.g., climbing structures or water play) are designated as fixed-point supervision areas where an adult maintains constant, clear sightlines.
- **Adult Intervention:** Staff operate under the *Playwork Principles*. Intervention is prioritized for preventing serious harm or when a child requires "scaffolding" to navigate a challenge. Reflective questioning is used to help children assess their own risks (e.g., "What is your plan for getting down safely?").

6. Inspection, Maintenance, and Standards

To satisfy health and safety obligations and insurance requirements, Glebe maintains a rigorous inspection regime:

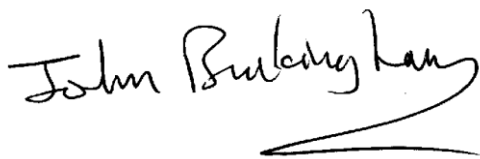
- **Fixed Equipment (BS EN 1176/1177):** All fixed play structures undergo an annual independent inspection by a RPII (Register of Play Inspectors International) certified inspector.
- **Loose Parts & Natural Features:** Items such as crates, tires, and timber are subject to:
 - **Daily Visual Checks:** Conducted by staff before play sessions to identify broken items or site hazards.
 - **Operational Inspections:** Monthly checks by the Site Manager to ensure the ongoing integrity of "play pods" and loose resources.
- **Statutory Compliance:** Our practices align with the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* and the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*.

7. Equality, Diversity, and Environment

We are committed to an inclusive play offer that advances equality of opportunity. Play environments are adapted where necessary to ensure that children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) have equitable access to the benefits of outdoor play.

We champion our school's green spaces as a vital educational resource. Daily site assessments determine the accessibility of natural areas based on weather conditions. Where areas are restricted for maintenance or safety, clear signage and staff briefings ensure children understand the boundaries.

Reviewed: March 2026



John Buckingham
Chair of Governors