



Staples Road Primary School Risk-Benefit Assessment

‘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’. Health and Safety Executive 2021

The purpose of these **Benefit-Risk 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 are to help us to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm. We use OPAL’s approach which follows best practice advice from the Health and Safety Executive, The Play Safety Forum, Zurich Municipal Insurance, and Local Authority Health and Safety Advisory Teams. The recommended practice for supporting play provision – and all services where the activity is risky but has benefits – is to make the benefits explicit in the assessment process from the outset. This has been recommended practice for all play provision since 2012.

This document will be regularly reviewed and all children and staff supervising play should be aware of its content and use them to guide their play and practice. Every time a new item or section of play is opened up we will add to this document.

Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments

These will be reviewed annually or when significant changes take place. These include: tree management and tree climbing, fixed equipment and inspection, broken loose parts, rope tying (especially at height), water use and water features.

In addition, all play team members will be trained to constantly check for and remove hazards as part of their daily practice, with a clear knowledge of when to record and appropriate responses.

Remember the law does not require you not to have accidents, but to understand the reasons for the risk you provide and to demonstrate the reasonable steps you have taken to manage those risks.

Risk Benefit Assessment Date: 27/06/22

Assessed by: Mark Johnson and Claire Stephenson

Updated: 17/01/23, 21/03/23, 19/05/23, 3/10/23, 25/10/23

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 to report any issues to
<p>Play equipment currently known as the Infant and Junior apparatus Who: Children potential injury from children falling off or falling onto / knocking into each other</p>	<p>Gross motor skills and development of upper body strength, opportunities for children to hang upside down, climb, balance and swing</p>	<p>Annual technical inspection made by certified inspector from external company G M Services. Any damage/ broken parts to be reported to the Site Manager, cordoned off and not used until inspection/ repair works have been carried out. The surface on ground under the infant equipment wet pour rubber and under the junior equipment is bonded rubber mulch and meets the required specifications and standards for fall height.</p>	<p>Graham Fitzgerald</p>
<p>Trees Who: Children potential injury falling from trees with thin or weak branches</p>	<p>Gross motor skills and development of upper body strength, climbing</p>	<p>Currently there are no trees on site that are suitable for climbing. All potential trees need to be regularly checked for suitability and strength for climbing and damage to branches. Trees identified as suitable for climbing need to have a clear climbing height limit (max 1.5metres onto soft surface not tarmac or concrete). All children and staff briefed about which trees can be climbed, how high, how many children at a time, and which trees are not safe to climb. Tree climbing guidance</p>	<p>Graham Fitzgerald</p>
<p>Bushes Who: Children scratches from twigs</p>	<p>Increased freedom to play will foster more creative and sensory play and ensure children learn to manage risks more effectively themselves</p>	<p>Children briefed about which bushes they can play in as an assembly. Pupils briefed about safe use in initial assembly. Supervision at a distance by Play Team to monitor safe use. Play team staff to regularly check in/ behind the bushes and remove any unsafe material including sharp/ broken branches.</p>	<p>Penny Barker</p>

<p>Children playing in different parts of the school grounds than they have before and mixing age groups Who: Children There is an increased risk of minor injury to pupils who may require immediate first aid. Younger children getting knocked over by older children</p>	<p>Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure children learn to manage risks more effectively themselves. Children being able to mix across year groups supports development of relationships and co-operation between children of different ages. Children will be able to play with friends, siblings and cousins who are in other year groups if they want to.</p>	<p>Older children briefing in assembly about being aware of/ looking out for the younger children. If a member of the Play Team needs to administer any first aid, they must let another staff member know before they leave their zone so they can keep an eye on that area.</p> <p>At the start of the academic year - direct supervision for Reception children is needed and the initial area for play may need to be reduced. This can be increased and supervision changed to ranging and remote supervision as the children's confidence, knowledge and skills increase.</p>	<p>Penny Barker</p>
<p>Getting storage boxes and equipment out of sheds, rolling large wooden storage boxes out of shed down slope onto playground, moving or carrying heavy loose parts resources Who: Children, Staff Potential injury to children or staff when lifting/ carrying/ pushing heavy objects.</p>	<p>Core strength, coordination and cooperation. Items are essential to a rich play environment. Children will be able to lift and move items in a safe way.</p>	<p>Children briefed in assemblies about safe holding, lifting and moving. "Ready, steady, lift" – bent knees and straight back. Play Team staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement of heavier play items. Play Squad (children) to be trained / briefed by Danny Wheeler about safe storage and getting equipment in and out of the shed. Only Play Team (adults) to enter Play Team storage shed. Children briefed in Play Assembly about getting resources from new storage shed.</p>	<p>Danny Wheeler</p>
<p>Broken loose parts or other resources Who: Children, Staff</p>	<p>Items are essential for a rich play environment to provide opportunities for</p>	<p>Children and staff to be briefed about where the broken parts bin is situated and what to use it for; items that are broken/ damaged.</p>	<p>Graham Fitzgerald</p>

<p>potential injury to children from sharp edges etc</p>	<p>creative, co-operative and fun playtimes.</p>	<p>Play Team members to check broken parts bin and dispose of any items that can no longer be used. Any items that may be able to be repaired to be reported to the Site Manager who will either repair or dispose of. Large items that are broken need to be placed by a member of the Play Team in the space behind the Year 6 block and the site manager informed who will either repair or dispose of.</p>	
<p>Mud Kitchen Who: Children, Staff slipping in mud on ground injury when using digging tools eg to fingers mud in eyes mud being walked into school</p>	<p>Will enable creative, sensory play,</p>	<p>Tools not toys training in assembly. Only trowels for digging. Brushes available for children to sweep up excess mud. Mud Kitchen area is an enclosed space meaning that mud won't get washed onto the rest of the playground. Saline solution or running water from a tap to flush out eyes if needed. Staff to ensure that children wipe off excess feet upon returning to class. Shoe brushes and exit mat installed. Children can put wellies on. Plastic aprons available for children to cover uniform to limit amount of mud on clothes.</p>	<p>Danny Wheeler</p>
<p>Water Play Who: Children, Staff children getting wet clothes slipping in water on ground</p>	<p>Will enable creative, sensory play</p>	<p>NOT CURRENTLY IN USE: COMING SOON Water play area is at the top of a slope so excess water will drain to the bottom of the playground Discussion with children in assembly with rules about water play to avoid wet clothes. Children have waterproof coats and wellies in school so can choose to wear those when playing with water. Children who have very wet clothes can change into their PE kits.</p>	<p>Claire Stephenson</p>
<p>Craft Cabin Who: Children, Staff being poked by sharp pencils cuts from scissors</p>	<p>Will enable creative, sensory play, support development of fine motor skills,</p>	<p>Children briefed in assembly around safe use of pencils and scissors - items to stay inside Craft Cabin, no running inside Craft Cabin wool and plastic laces to be used for finger knitting and knotting crafts, children briefed not to wrap around necks</p>	<p>Penny Barker</p>

wool or plastic laces - potential for neck injury and strangulation.			
Games equipment Who: Children skipping ropes - potential for neck injury and strangulation, or tripping hazard plastic/ wooden bats - potential for children to get hit	Gross motor skills and benefits of physical activity, partner and co-operative games	Children briefed on safe use of games equipment in assembly small sponge balls to be used with bats	Danny Wheeler
Football pitches Who: Children, Staff potential injury for children not playing football being hit by plastic or leather balls	Children develop football skills and play co-operatively as a team, enjoyment of playing football	Football playing area is on the Olympic course so it's up one end rather than in the middle of the playgrounds. Only sponge balls to be used until permanent fencing / netting erected. Dave to organise and support children in playing football on Olympic course, Wayne to organise and support children on green infant football pitch.	Danny Wheeler
Hammocks Who: Children falling catching limbs and neck in material slings	Gross motor skills development, balance and dexterity. Creative fun. Access for all to 'swing' type equipment	NOT CURRENTLY IN USE Children to be briefed on dangers of materials being placed around necks. Children briefed about the risk of material swings ripping and tearing. Regular checks by Play Team to ensure that swings are safe to use.	Penny Barker
Wagons and trolleys crashing crashing into pedestrians	Physical activity Creativity Adventurous fun Teamwork	Children briefed on dangers of using wheeled vehicles on the slopes of the junior playground. 'Pusher' to keep hands on trolley at all times Children to be reminded about having fun but being safe Play Team staff to monitor safe play in wheeled vehicles	Penny Barker

		Only the boxes/ trolleys to be pushed, not anything that has hand or foot pedals	
<p>Tyres Who: Children, Staff, Building</p> <p>Potential injuries from tyres rolling at speed and causing collisions.</p> <p>Potential injuries from a child getting stuck in tyres or climbing inside a pile of tyres and getting knocked over</p> <p>Fire hazard if piled up next to a building</p> <p>Potential injuries from tyres with metal/nails/glass pieces in them.</p>	<p>Gross motor skills development, balance and dexterity. Creative fun, teamwork, physical activity</p>	<p>Play - Children briefed on dangers of using tyres in the playground. Play assembly to agree with children safe heights for climbing in tyres - 'up to the waist' to start with, then progress to under armpits. Children must be able to stretch arms out parallel. Tyre play limited to junior playground NOT Olympic playground or apparatus area to avoid steeper inclines. Tyres can be rolled 'under control' - ie not pushed and left to roll off.</p> <p>Storage and preparation - tyres to be stored in safe-height piles as far away from school buildings as possible in loose parts storage area (Y6 block) pending inspection by Play Leader. Tyres to be cleaned and inspected before use and with sharp fragments removed. Play Team and children briefed to check and report any tyres with sharp bits. Moveable tyres to be marked with yellow paint on contrasting surfaces to make them easier to spot.</p>	<p>Mark Johnson</p>
<p>Traversing Wall Who: Children</p> <p>Potential injuries from falling off or a child falling off the wall onto them There is a wire fencing above the wall, which is tucked behind it, but can be pulled in front if the children hold onto it and pull it.</p>	<p>Gross motor skills and development of upper body strength, climbing, personal challenge and opportunity to progress due to different levels of difficulty</p>	<p>Safety briefing for all children in classes to introduce how to use the Traversing Wall A Traversing Wall is for climbing across not up and the idea is to climb from left to right without touching the ground. Start on the left and move across to the right - like reading. The bottom holds are for feet and the top holds are for hands. Children must not climb up and put their feet on the hand holds as this is not safe. They mustn't hold onto the top of the wall or the wire fencing above the wall.</p>	<p>Graham Fitz Gerald</p>

		<p>Be considerate of other children on the wall, give them time and space to move along, no overtaking/ climbing over people.</p> <p>Play Team on duty on infant playground do a quick visual inspection at the start of play to check for any defects or faults. The main thing that might happen, particularly while it is new is that some of the holds may become loose and spin round. We have a special Allen key to tighten them if this happens. Tell the children to report any loose holds they find to an adult.</p> <p>At the end of each term a more detailed visual check for any faults or defects and a record made including any action taken. Annual inspection by by certified inspector from external company G M Services.</p> <p>This Traversing Wall does not need direct adult supervision providing the children have been given the appropriate safety briefing. Due to the height of the Traversing Wall, the current concrete playground surface meets safety requirements providing it is used correctly.</p>	
<p>Outdoor Library Who: children large units containing books are only slightly taller than child height, books could fall out onto children or unit could be pulled forward onto a child</p>	<p>enjoyment of reading, quiet cosy space,</p>	<p>wooden book units fastened to the brick wall so no risk of them being pulled over children briefed how to take books out and replace them safely.</p>	<p>Danny Wheeler</p>
<p>Sand Shack:</p>	<p>Creative play, development of fine</p>	<p>Sand Shack to be supervised by duty member of Play Team - warning children about steps and decluttering entry zone.</p>	<p>Danny Wheeler /</p>

<p>Who: children tripping on the door frame or banging into the walls of the shed. Children picking up infections/illness from contaminated sand. Door frame injuries (fingers and hands)</p>	<p>motor skills, shaded area, sensory play possibilities</p>	<p>Number of children allowed in at one time to be limited. Play Team member to use discretion depending on age of children playing (anywhere between 6 and 12).</p> <p>Sand play tools stored inside black grit bin next to shed.</p> <p>Door latch to be used to keep door open during play. Door closed at end of play (but not locked).</p> <p>Playteam to spray surface of sand with sanitising spray at end of every lunchtime. Spray kept in KS2 medical area.</p>	<p>Mark Johnson</p>
<p>Loose parts - guttering and tubes Who: children and adults What: being hit with lengthy pieces of tubing/guttering ; injuries caused by sharp broken edges</p>	<p>Creative play; construction ; ball trackways ; water play</p>	<p>Play - Children briefed on risks of using tubing and guttering in the playground:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe carrying using two hands and holding in the middle • awareness of people around when long pieces of plastic are being carried/moved • awareness of protocol for broken parts if splits and splinters become evident <p>Storage - inside OPAL shed, upright for easy access. Play Team to remain vigilant and check for broken parts. Children encouraged to check and report damage to Play Team.</p>	<p>Danny</p>
<p>Loose parts storage trolleys Who: children What: injuries caused as a result of misuse (ie being used as vehicles)</p>	<p>Portable storage of play equipment ; quick deployment by Play Team</p>	<p>Play assembly reminder about appropriate use / purpose of storage trolleys.</p> <p>Play Team staff to remain vigilant and challenge inappropriate use.</p>	<p>Penny</p>
<p>Loose parts - tarpaulins Who: children</p>	<p>Creative play ; den building</p>	<p>Play - Children briefed on risks of using tarps in the playground.</p>	<p>Claire</p>

<p>What: suffocation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No wrapping of tarps around a person's body or wrapping a person within a tarp ● Dens to have visible access/exit points and not to be fully enclosed ● No knot-tying ● Children to be warned about risk of getting dirty when tarps are being used in wet or damp conditions <p>Storage and preparation - tarps stored in OPAL shed Play Team to remain vigilant and check for ripped tarps. Children encouraged to check tarps and report damage to Play Team.</p>	
<p>Loose parts - stacking crates Who: children and adults What: injuries caused by a slip or fall or by being hit by a falling crate</p>	<p>Creative play ; construction ; motor skill development ; agility</p>	<p>Play - Children briefed on risks of using crates in the playground.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limit to crate tower heights imposed (3 crates) ● Demonstration of safe stack building at Play Assembly Dens ● No pushing or wobbling crate towers when children are on them ● Children to be warned about risk of slipping when crates are being used in wet or damp conditions <p>Storage and preparation - crates to be stacked and stored behind OPAL shed. Crate stacks not to exceed 4 crates</p> <p>Play Team to remain vigilant and check for broken parts. Children encouraged to check and report damage to Play Team. Weekly monitoring check by Opal Working Group</p>	<p>Danny</p>
<p>Loose parts - log slices Who: children and adults</p>	<p>Creative play ; construction ; motor skill development ; agility</p>	<p>Play - Children briefed on risks of using log slices in the playground.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limit to log stacking heights imposed (3 logs) 	

<p>What: injuries caused by a slip or fall, trapped fingers or feet under a log injuries caused as a result of misuse</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstration of safe stack building at Play Assembly ● No pushing or wobbling log slices when children are on them ● Children to be warned about risk of slipping when log slices are being used in wet or damp conditions <p>Storage - log slices to be stored next to wall behind yellow line on junior playground next to OPAL shed Children encouraged to check and report damage to Play Team.</p>	
<p>Digging area Who: children What:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trip/fall from tyre boundary ● Accidental blows and chops ● injury to hand or foot from metal fork or spade ● Animal waste 	<p>Creative play ; construction ; motor skill development</p>	<p>Play - Children briefed on risks of using digging area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tools not toys demonstration ● Digging activity and digging toys to be limited to digging areas. Keep dirt inside tyre wall. ● Tool heads to remain below knee level ● Train children to look and avoid signs of animal waste ● No pushing or wobbling crate towers when children are on them ● Children to be warned about risk of slipping when tyres are wet <p>Storage and preparation - digging tools to be stored near to digging site (black grit bin) Play team to conduct initial assessment prior to each playtime. Children encouraged to check and report any problems to Play Team.</p>	<p>Mark</p>
<p>Den building Who: children and adults What:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● strangulation and pinch injuries ● falls and trips 	<p>Creative play ; construction ; motor skill development, enjoyment, creation of shaded, private spaces,</p>	<p>Play - Children briefed on risks of building dens in the playground.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of binding material limited to use in den structures ● Demonstration of tying 'safe' knots ● Warning about pinch injuries from gripping pegs 	<p>Penny</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● children being hidden from adults ● potential for child to be under a blanket and other children to fall/ jump on top if they don't know anyone is underneath 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dens to be constructed with at least one open side ● Den building limited to playground periphery areas and existing apparatus zones <p>Storage and preparation - den building frames to be stacked in OPAL loose parts shed. Eco-friendly, smooth-edge poles, stands and binds to be sourced .</p> <p>Play Team to remain vigilant and check den zones during playtime. Children encouraged to check and report damage to Play Team.</p> <p>Weekly monitoring check by Opal Working Group to remove/untie tight bindings</p>	
<p>Trikes and scooters Who: Children and Staff What:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● falls ● crashes ● injuries from handling scooters 	<p>Gross motor skills, balance, enjoyment, some children may not have a trike or scooter at home to use,</p>	<p>Children briefed on safety rules in assembly - warnings about speed, safe braking and how to look out for potential hazards e.g. pedestrians and play equipment. Regular reinforcement in play assemblies.</p> <p>Children follow 'SCOOT' rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay inside tyre zone ● Check scooter before riding ● One-way travel ● Observe traffic ● Take turns <p>Scouting to take place in a designated scooter zone, with a one-way system in operation. This zone will have a member of the OPAL play team monitoring.</p> <p>Weekly checks [brakes/ tight wheels/ soft grip handles] by Play Team with removal of broken or faulty scooters by Play Team staff and Play Supervisor..</p>	<p>Mark Johnson</p> <p>Play Team</p> <p>Penny Barker & Danny Wheeler</p>

		<p>School-use scooters will carry white taping on the stem for identification. Privately owned scooters not permitted to be used.</p> <p>No helmets to be worn see guidance on cycle helmets.</p> <p>Children instructed not to push the hand pedalled sit on wheeled toys and to be carefully of fingers/ fingernails getting scraped on the floor.</p>	
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Dynamic Risk Management means that all staff should be aware of the changing nature of the play taking place. The Play Team will support children to assess and manage risk as much as possible for themselves, but they should also be vigilant and take action, if a member of the Play Team thinks that risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of likelihood or severity of 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. Dynamic risk management in playwork requires that staff maintain ‘relaxed vigilance’. The quality of play will suffer if the adult’s attitude is one of hovering, anxious over-attention.

Most play is not dangerous and children can develop a high degree of competence, given practice, over time. However, staff should also be vigilant, and they should be aware of the kinds of play and resources being used in their patch, who is playing and what the likely risks are.

All play team staff **must** be trained and reminded that active risk management is an essential part of their job using the OPAL Online Playwork Essentials course and training book. They should be observant, mobile and attentive at all times.

Most of the time they will not need to intervene but should be ready to:

- **stop activity or manage the risk** if staff think that *serious harm* (meaning death, life-long debilitating injury or hospitalisation) is imminent or probable.
- **remain vigilant** if they think that serious harm is possible but not probable.
- **note and move on** if serious harm is very unlikely.

It is important that new staff joining the Play Team are trained to the same level as existing staff.

Supervising risk during play



All members of the Play Team will carry out daily, ongoing risk assessment and pass on any potential hazards that they can't resolve themselves to one of the OPAL Team Leaders (MJ,CS,DW, PB)