

Fishergate Primary School



Outdoor Play and Learning Policy

1. Commitment

At Fishergate Primary School, we are committed to providing and continually improving high-quality play opportunities for all children.

As part of Fishergate's commitment to raising the attainment of disadvantaged young people (RADY), these pupils' SEMH and wider academic needs are prioritised. Any barriers for disadvantaged pupils, including pupils from families seeking sanctuary, are overcome so they can participate fully in the Play curriculum and achieve alongside their peers.

We will refer to this Play Policy in all decisions that affect children's play and lunchtimes. The school will provide the strategic and operational leadership necessary to ensure that play is valued, planned for and resourced effectively as an integral part of our curriculum and wider school life.

2. Rationale

We believe that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and influence their environment.

At Fishergate, play provision reflects our ethos of **respect, responsibility, resilience, kindness, cooperation, high aspirations, equity and inclusion.**

We celebrate diversity and recognise that our differences enrich our school community. Through the OPAL Primary Programme, we recognise that better, more active and creative playtimes lead to happier, healthier children, stronger relationships, positive behaviour and improved learning across the school.

3. Definition and Value of Play

Play is a process that is intrinsically motivated, freely chosen and directed by the child.

Play has value in its own right and supports:

- Physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development
- Emotional wellbeing and self-regulation
- Confidence, creativity and problem-solving
- Communication, cooperation and negotiation
- Risk assessment and resilience
- Self-esteem and respect for others
- Engagement and readiness to learn
- Understanding and appreciation of difference

At Fishergate, we see play as a foundation for lifelong learning in an inclusive and diverse community.

4. Aims

In relation to play, Fishergate Primary School aims to:

- Provide a varied, stimulating and challenging play environment
 - Encourage appropriate risk-taking and independence
 - Develop respectful and positive relationships
 - Promote care for people, property and the environment
 - Support physical health and active lifestyles
 - Encourage creativity and imagination
 - Build emotional and physical resilience
 - Promote teamwork, cooperation and responsibility
 - Ensure equity of access and participation for all children
 - Celebrate diversity and difference through play
-

5. Rights

We recognise the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly:

- Article 12 – the right to be listened to
- Article 31 – the right to play and recreation

Children's voices are valued and influence how play develops at Fishergate.

6. Benefit and Risk

Fishergate Primary School adopts a **risk-benefit approach** to play.

We recognise that risk is a necessary part of learning and development. The aim is not to remove all risk, but to manage it sensibly so that children can build resilience, judgement and confidence.

We follow:

- *HSE Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach*
- *Managing Risk in Play Provision* (Play Safety Forum)

Dynamic risk management is used daily, with adults supporting children to identify and manage risk.

7. Supervision

Children are supervised at all times during play.

We use OPAL's supervision models:

- Direct supervision (primarily for new or vulnerable children)
- Ranging supervision (adults moving across the site)
- Remote supervision (adults visible and available)

The focus is on safety, inclusion and enabling independence.

8. The Adult's Role in Play

All staff support play using the **Playwork Principles**, by:

- Creating enabling environments
- Providing open-ended resources
- Observing before intervening
- Supporting children to resolve difficulties independently
- Intervening when safety, equity or wellbeing requires
- Joining play only when invited or beneficial

Adults at Fishergate are facilitators, not controllers, of play.

9. Equality, Equity and Diversity

We are committed to equitable and inclusive play provision.

All children, regardless of age, gender, background, culture, language, ability or need, are supported to participate fully in play.

We actively remove barriers, make reasonable adjustments and ensure that difference is valued and celebrated within our play culture.

This policy works alongside our Equality, SEND and Behaviour Policies.

10. Environment

The school grounds are recognised as a vital learning environment.

At Fishergate, we will:

- Continually improve the quality and variety of our outdoor spaces
- Provide natural and loose-part resources
- Offer active, imaginative, social and quiet play areas
- Ensure environments are stimulating, safe and inclusive
- Encourage care for the environment and sustainability
- Create spaces that reflect and respect our diverse community

We aim to provide a rich play environment that supports safeguarding, wellbeing, teamwork, confidence and a love of learning.