



Outside Play Policy

The community of St. Charles' believes that Jesus is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to giving every child, every opportunity to achieve their potential in mind and body, in a happy, safe and caring environment.

Policy Agreed: June 2019

Next Review: June 2020

1. South Gloucestershire Council Play Policy: Play Safety Forum Position Statement (8)
2. Health and Safety Executive Risk Document: 2012

Introduction

This policy sets out St. Charles' commitment to ensuring that quality opportunities for play are available to all our children, and aims to improve the way we think about, and provide, opportunities for play. We believe that providing opportunities, which allow all children to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment, are essential for the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development of the child.

Purpose

As a school we recognise the value of play and aim to develop a wide range of outside play environments to meet the needs of all of our children. We define play as any freely chosen activity which a child finds satisfying. It may be serious or light hearted. It may produce something or it may be done simply for its own sake. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. We aim to ensure children's choice over their experiences is promoted in our grounds.

At St. Charles, we aim to:

- Aid development of the whole child (physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual).
- Provide a range of environments which will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- Ensure play settings provide a challenging and stimulating environment.
- Allow children to take risks.
- Allow children to explore and develop skills so that they can strike a the balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their self-confidence and their ability to make informed choices.
- Provide a range of environments which will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- Promote independence and team work within children.

Risk Assessment and Play

We recognise that, in order to play, children may need to make a noise, get dirty, make a mess and sometimes be out of the direct gaze of adults and we aim to support their play through positively managing these needs.

An essential element of exploration within the medium of play is the opportunity for children to experience freely chosen activities, where they can take acceptable risks

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and challenge themselves beyond their existing capabilities. Allowing children to take acceptable risk develops their ability to judge risk independently and learn new skills.

***'Without opportunities to take acceptable levels of risk children's development is inhibited, undermining their capacity to deal with the wider unsupervised world.'*¹**

As a school we feel taking risks in play has the following benefits:

- Enables children to develop their own boundaries, knowing where and when to take a risk
- Builds confidence
- Develops independence
- Promotes peer interaction and reciprocity
- Extends experiences and develops life skills for the future

It is our responsibility to strike a balance between the risks and the benefits of play. This policy sets out the school's overall objectives for risk management in play provision, and the school recognises the challenge that this brings.

Key message: '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'.²

To manage the levels of risk we will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Recognising the need for professional judgements in setting the balance between safety and other goals
- Ensuring risks are as apparent as possible to staff and children
- Ensuring that hazards that children may not appreciate will be controlled and managed
- Providing trained staff to supervise play settings
- All staff are responsible for ensuring that adults are in place before children are allowed outside.
- Staff who are unable to carry out their playground duty are responsible for arranging another adult to cover their area.
- Supply teachers should not cover playground duty unless suitable training has been given.

Carefully considered and comprehensive risk assessments of all play provision within the school should be reviewed on an annual basis, or whenever significant change/development in play provision/equipment takes place.

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Remote Supervision

We may not be able to see every child all of the time. All staff are assigned a zone on a weekly rotation and it is expected that staff will move around throughout the playtime, finding out what the children are doing and where the children are playing. Staff can then check in on the children's play throughout playtime.

First Aid

All LTS carry a bum-bag which contains basic First Aid equipment and have access to supplies when stock needs replenishing. LTS have basic first aid training and are aware of key First Aid staff within school should further consultation be needed. Any bumped heads must be reported to parents via a phone call and discussed with the appropriate teacher. Any First Aid incidents must be recorded in accident logs carried by staff. When a phone call home is not required, a slip will then be sent home to parents/carers to notify them of the incident.

Weather

At St. Charles, we operate a 'whatever the weather' approach. In order to make full use of our grounds throughout the year, staff and pupils are expected to have suitable, warm and waterproof clothing in school at all times. This includes appropriate footwear. In cases where children do not have weather appropriate clothing school will endeavour to provide an alternative. If this is not possible, children may have their access to the grounds limited.

In extreme weather, such as torrential rain, icy conditions or intense sun, the decision will be made by the member of staff on duty, or the Play Lead during lunch time, as to whether to limit or curtail play activities if it is felt that by not doing so the children will be at significant risk.

Review

This policy has been shared with the whole school community and any suggestions have been closely looked at by the OPAL Team. Review will take place in one year's time, unless it is felt that an earlier review would be necessary under any extenuating circumstances.

OPAL Team

Sarah Cornbill (OPAL lead)
Miss M Tait (Head teacher)
Courtney Tallentire (KS1 representative)
Sharon Longstaff (LTS representative)
Sarah Maxfield (Governor representative)

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