

 *Learning through faith*

 *“At St Mary’s we believe that ordinary people can choose to be extraordinary”*

 **Children’s Play Policy**

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| **We have the right to:**  | **We have the responsibility to:**  |
| ● have fun at playtimes  | ● make sure that everyone has fun and our play does not stop this.  |
| ● make our own decisions about our play and choose what we do.  | ● make sure our decisions don’t affect others in a negative way.  |
| ● choose who we play with and include others.  | ● make sure that no one is left out of play or forced to do something they don’t want to.  |
| ● play with lots of different toys and have a well looked after environment.  | ● take pride in, respect and look after our environment and toys.  |
| ● explore be creative and take thoughtful risks.  | ● think about what we are doing and talk to a adult from the play team about the risks we are taking if they ask us to.  |

**Play work Principles**

1. **Understand Need**- All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals.
2. **Understand Process-** Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. **Support Process-** The prime focus and essence of play work is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. **Advocate for Play -** For play workers, the play process takes precedence and play workers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
5. **Create Spaces -** The role of the play worker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. **Learn and Reflect-** The play worker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, reflective practice.
7. **Understand Adult Impact-** Play workers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people’s play on the play worker.
8. **Choose Intervention Styles-** Play workers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All play worker interventions must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.