

*Learning through faith*

**Risk Benefit Assessment**

**Risk Benefit Assessment Record Sheet and Advice**

The purpose of **Risk Benefit 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 can help us to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm. We have two approaches to managing risk: Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments and Dynamic Risk Management

**Standing Risk Benefit Assessments** means we look at our usual environment and practices at least annually, and also when significant changes take place and keep a written record of the areas in the table below.

**Dynamic Risk Benefit Management** means that staff should be aware of changing nature of the play taking place. They should support children to assess and manage risk as much as possible for themselves, but they should also be vigilant and take action, if they think that risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of likelihood or severity or 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.

Common areas that need standing assessment include:

Boundaries to dangerous areas, trees management and tree climbing, fixed equipment and inspection, broken loose parts, rope tying especially at height, water use and water features.

**Staff will carry out daily, on-going risk assessment and pass on any potential hazards to a member of SLT.**

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| **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** | **Action Date** | **Reviewed on** |
| Pupils playing with heavy loose play equipment whilst den building: Potential for splinters, crush injury from, ply sheets and pallets. Potential injury when lifting heavy objects. | Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way. | Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe holding, moving and stacking. Staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier play parts. | OPAL Team | March 2025 | Ongoing |
| Trees unsafe to climb: potential injury falling from trees with thin or weak branches.  In dry weather, the children can climb on the ‘bench’ around the base of the tree. Risk of falling injuries minimal. | Although we would like to allow the children to climb, we currently have no suitable trees in the designated area.  Tree climbing allows for extension of motor skills and assessment of own risk | All children briefed not to climb trees. Supervision by staff to enforce this. | OPAL team | March 2025 | N/A Tree not safe to climb |
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| Pupils playing in a different | Increased freedom to play | Pupils with minor injuries (scratches and minor | OPAL Team/Head | March 2025 | On-going |
| environment with new | will foster more creative | abrasions) will be treated by nominated First |  |  |  |
| potential dangers: There is an | play and ensure pupils learn | Aiders. More serious injuries will be referred to |  |  |  |
| increased risk of minor injury | to manage risks more | The Headteacher if the injury requires parental |  |  |  |
| to pupils who may require | effectively themselves. | contact or hospital treatment. |  |  |  |
| immediate first aid. |  |  |  |  |  |
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| The use of tyres: A risk that stagnant water can collect in tyres | Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves. | Children reminded of the potential risk during Assemblies and OPAL Team to empty any water out of the tyres before play. | OPAL Team | March 2025 | On-going . |
| Children slipping and injuring themselves in wet weather. | Active outdoor play at all times of the year is an important part of obesity prevention and helps to establish life-long patterns of healthy physical exercise. | Children to wear appropriate clothing (coats and wellies). Appointed First Aiders available if injury occurs.  Leaves removed during autumn. | OPAL Team | March 2025 | On-going |
| Children using a variety of different ropes to create pulleys- Risk of rope burn/ risk of strangulation | Children developing skills of balance, agility and core strength as well as teamwork and cooperation. | Children shown how to use the equipment appropriately. Ropes are tied to trees no higher than two feet off the ground.  One child at a time. | OPAL Team | March 2025 | On-going |
| Children using sticks to play: risk of injury by using sticks inappropriately. | Playing with sticks not only ignites children's imaginations, but also has other therapeutic benefits. Branches and other large sticks can build strength and muscles as children lift, drag, or carry them to and from places outdoors.  Teamwork happens when a stick is too large for just one child to move. | Children shown how to play appropriately with sticks. Regular reminders during Play Assemblies.  Children to drag longer sticks when moving around the OPAL area | OPAL Team | March 2025 | On-going |

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| Children using off cuts of guttering in dens. Risk of hitting a child when moving the guttering into place. | Encourages independent and/or cooperative play | Children shown how to play appropriately with guttering. Regular reminders during Play Assemblies.  Children to drag larger guttering on the floor when moving. | OPAL Team | March 2025 | On-going |
| Digging areas (Gardening Club) | Encourages independent and/or cooperative play and mastery play - fine motor skills improved. Knowledge of gardening improved through digging and  planting in Garden area | Designated areas to be created for digging, and plant borders. Children will observe a demonstration on the proper use of trowels and safe usage. | Headteacher  Gardeners | March 2025 | On-going |
| Garden area (Gardening Club) | Sensory and exploratory play - Children to be introduced to the space as a quiet/sensory space with yoga mats and wind chimes installed. Team of children to help with gardening and planting - encouraging responsibility taking | Children to be shown responsible management of plants within the space. Headteacher & volunteer gardeners to monitor growth of any hazardous plants. Children shown how to use tools correctly and safely and are monitored at all times. | Head/ Gardeners | March 2025 | On-going |
| Cut log ends from tree felling.  Balance beams. Risk of dropping logs when moving. | The children are using the logs to balance on and create walkways with the balance beams.  Used in den building etc. | Children have been told not to use the larger logs that will be too heavy to lift.  No rolling the logs down the hill. | OPAL Team | March 2025 | On-going |
| Variety of plastic crates, for den building- Risk of cuts if crates are broken. | Encourages independent play | All equipment checked on a daily basis to ensure no cracks etc. Children aware and will inform a member of staff if any equipment is broken. | OPAL Team  Site Supervisor | March 2025 | On-going |