



Play Policy 2025

Core Values

Readiness

Resilience

Respect

School Values

Independence

Aspiration

Compassion

Collaboration

Courage

Honesty

Responsibility

Confidence

Kindness

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Introduction

Kender Primary School recognizes the importance of the need for high quality sustainable play for children regardless of their needs and abilities and that inclusive play is achieved by offering carefully considered outdoor spaces that offer a real choice of accessible play opportunities.

Children spend 1.4 years of their primary school attendance in playtime. This time is valuable and needs coherent planning. Changes in culture and society have led to 'play poverty' in childhood which has numerous negative impacts.

Better play means happier children. Happier children mean fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school, more effective lessons, core skills development, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary problems, fewer accidents and happier staff.

Our School vision

'Kender children to become successful citizens of their community and beyond'

They will ...

- Be **independent** and make excellent progress
- Be polite, **confident** and set an example for others
- Be **resilient, courageous** and able to take risks
- Be **kind, honest** and have the ability to show **compassion** for others
- Be able to **collaborate** and take **responsibility** for their learning and behaviour
- Show **respect** for all and have the highest standards in behaviour and conduct
- Have a strong sense of well-being and ability to manage their emotions
- Have high **aspirations** and be **ready** to take the next step in their learning journey

1. Commitment

Our school undertakes to refer to this play policy in all decisions that affect children's play. Our school is committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

2. Rationale

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. The school acknowledges the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 31, and supports the child's right to play. We believe play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin, or individual abilities.

The OPAL programme rationale is that

"... better, more active and creative playtimes can mean happier and healthier children, and having happier, healthier, more active children usually results in a more positive attitude to learning in school, with more effective classroom lessons, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary behavioural problems, fewer playtime accidents, happier staff and a healthier attitude to life."

3 Definition and value of play

Play is defined as any freely chosen activity that a child finds satisfying and creative. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. We believe play has many benefits, including:

- Play is critical to children's health and wellbeing, and essential for their physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Play enables children to explore the physical and social environment, different concepts and different ideas.
- Play enhances children's self-esteem and their understanding of others through freely chosen social interactions, within peer groups, with individuals, and within groups of different ages, abilities, interests, genders, ethnicities and cultures.
- Play requires ongoing communication and negotiation skills, enabling children to develop a balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others.
- Play enables children to experience a wide range of emotions and develop their ability to cope with these, including sadness and happiness, rejection and acceptance, frustration and achievement, boredom and fascination, fear and confidence.
- Play encourages self-confidence and the ability to make choices, problem solve and to be creative.
- Play maintains children's openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

4. Aims

In relation to play our school aims to:

- ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- provide a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- provide a range of environments which will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- promote independence and teamwork within children.
- build emotional and physical resilience.

5. Rights

Our school recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes the right to play, recreation and leisure (Article 31) and the right of children to be listened to on matters important to them (Article 12). We acknowledge that we have a duty take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their play.

6. Benefit and Risk

'Play is great for children's wellbeing 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.'

Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (2012)

The school will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance document 'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach' (September 2012) as the principle value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play. In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in 'Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide'.

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision, and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. In the words of the play sector publication 'Best Play', play provision should aim to 'manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children and young people safe from harm'.

In addition to standard risk-benefit assessments the school will practice dynamic risk management with children, encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

See the link to the full H&SE Managing Risk Statement in Appendix 1.

7. Supervision

The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During playtimes we rota staff so that the children are adequately supervised. Younger children in reception and nursery have a higher ratio of adults to support their needs appropriately.

The school recognises OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. With this in mind supervision by the school adults will take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

EYFS

Ratios in the Nursery - 1:13 for level three and above, 1:8 for level 2 staff, 1:13 for all staff when teacher present. Ratios in Reception - 1:15 at all times teacher and support staff.

KS1 - KS2

We require a minimum of 4 adults on the playground during lunchtimes and playtimes; all with designated areas. For the overwhelming majority of playtimes, there is, in addition, at least one member of SLT.

8. The outdoor environment

At Kender we will:

- use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing
- include the children when planning for playing and learning outdoors
- ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity;
- encourage the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things; and
- give children the opportunity to manage, play in and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors.

9. The adult's role in play

The school will help children maximise the benefits they can gain from play by the provision of trained staff who are informed by and work in accordance with the Play-work Principles. Staff will use and refer to these principles when appropriate interventions are needed, and ultimately will strive for facilitating an environment that nurtures children's self-directed play.

The play worker's core function is to create an environment that will stimulate children's play and maximise their opportunities for a wide range of play experiences. A skilled and experienced play worker is capable of enriching the child's play experience both in terms of the design and resources of the physical environment and in terms of the attitudes and culture fostered within the play setting. Play workers are a channel of access to new materials and tools and they can act as a stimulus to children to explore and learn. They are also available to participate in the play if invited.

See play work essentials

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bRfaDNlBr5gst7zDOt4nmgzo88PAouwe/view>

10. Equality and diversity

Through providing a rich play offer meeting every child's needs we will ensure all children, regardless of age, gender, race, disability or other special needs, can develop and thrive, build strong relationships and enjoy school

11. Environment

We believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable or unnecessary risks and thereby offer children the opportunity to explore for themselves through their freely chosen play.

We will strive to continually improve the quality and diversity of our school's grounds to enhance play. We will use the document 'Best Play' to guide us on what a quality play environment should contain.

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/resource/best-play/>

12. Monitoring and evaluation

The Play Policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work.

Pupil and staff surveys are conducted annually. Pupils in the spring term and staff in the summer term. Analysis from these surveys is shared with pupils, staff and governors.

The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the MHWB Lead and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.

13 Links to other policies;

This policy links to other school's policies on:

PSHE

Health and Safety

Positive Handling

Promoting Good Behaviour

Anti-Bullying

Sex and Relationships Education

RSH Education

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Complaints

Appendix 1

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/8625/1/00942-2008DOM-EN.pdf>

Appendix 2

The playwork principles

Keep a reflection diary to understand how you do these things

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. 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 playwork 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 playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.

5. Create Spaces

The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.

6. Learn and Reflect

The playworker'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 Impact

Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

8. Choose Intervention Styles

Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker interventions must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.