

ETTINGTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Date of Publication: May 2026



Learning for Fullness of Life
Trust-Respect - Love

PLAY POLICY

1. Commitment

As a school, we aspire to live out God's plan for all to flourish.

We believe in providing our children with opportunities to use and develop the gifts and talents they have been blessed with, to ensure they embrace 'Life in its fullness' (John 10:10) following the teachings of Jesus.

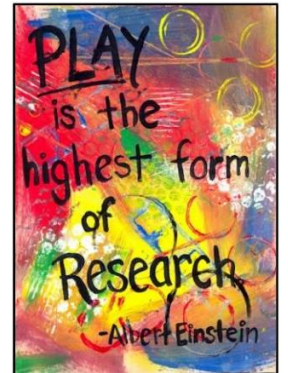
Our vision is to place the child at the heart of everything we do, 'Learning for the Fullness of Life'. It is to work together, where everyone is a partner in learning; providing a safe, happy, caring and stimulating community, where children are given opportunities to reach their true potential.

Ettington Church of England Primary School commits to this play policy in all decisions that affect children's play and is committed to ensuring play provision is given due attention at all levels for the benefit of all of our children.

2. Rationale

Children in British primary schools spend 20% or 1.4 years of their school attendance in play.

Play is the process through which children learn everything that they need to know that cannot be taught. Play wires the brain, builds capable bodies, and is the foundation of building relationships.



OPAL's programme enables schools to provide every child with rich opportunities to be creative, collaborative and active in their outdoor play, in environments that are safe enough for 'health and safety' but challenging enough for children's ongoing development.

Our school believes that all children need;

- quality opportunities for all children
- a safe and inspiring environment to support and encourage play
- welcoming and accessible opportunities for play
- opportunities to take risks through play and to explore risk benefits for themselves in a safe and supported environment.

Our vision is to place the child at the heart of everything we do. It is to work together, where everyone is a partner in learning; providing a safe, happy, caring and stimulating community where children are given opportunities to reach their true potential.

As a school, we aspire to live out God's plan for all to flourish – every person, every child and every adult, is unique and special with God given gifts and talents and it is our role, as we seek to serve our school community, to grow, nurture and cherish. This demands the inclusion of quality play provision and a wide variety of opportunities for our children. We aim to inspire all children to "flourish during a life of fullness within God's love and to develop happy, confident, loving and caring children who look after and value themselves, each other and their world ensuring every child has an opportunity to feel valued and to flourish within school.

3. Definition and value of play

We share the following definitions and values for play with both OPAL

- 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, as well as different concepts and 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, engaging in the 16 types of play.
- 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 that 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 to take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their play.

6. Benefit and risk

The school has adopted a risk-benefit approach to managing risk in play. Allowing children to explore new behaviours and risks through a safe play environment, is essential to our vision to nurture the development of happy, healthy, confident children.

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. Adults will carry out regular site and equipment checks, including recording and actions taken.

See appendix A - Health and Safety Executive Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach (September 2012)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childs-play-statement.htm>

See appendix B - *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide* (Play Safety Forum, 2012).

<https://playsafetyforum.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf>

7. Supervision

The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day there will be one or more adults present in designated site zones to ensure adequate supervision.

Supervisors will use ranging and remote supervision 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 the levels of risk likely to be emerging.