



# Statham Risk-Benefit Assessment

***“Health and safety law in Great Britain has an enduring principle – that those who create risks are best placed to control them, and that they should do so in a reasonable and sensible way.”***

***Dame Judith Hackitt H&SE Chair 2015***

The purpose of **Risk-benefit Assessments** is to enable school to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in the play environment. They cannot and will not provide complete ‘safety’ and this is not their purpose. They help us to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm.

OPAL’s approach follows best practice advice from the Health and Safety Executive, The Play Safety Forum, Zurich Municipal Insurance, and Local Authority Health and Safety Advisory Teams.

We follow OPAL’s five-part **R.A.P.I.D. Response** to managing risk in our school approach to play, which is also followed alongside the guidance on managing loose parts set out in OPAL Loose Part Guidance

- R: Risk-benefit Assessment**
- A: Assemblies focused on Playtime**
- P: Policy for Play ratified by Governors or equivalent**
- I: Inspections carried out regularly**
- D: Dynamic Risk Management embraced by all staff**

**Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments** means we will review our usual environment and practices at least annually, and also when significant changes take place- updating this assessment in response to ongoing incidents.

Common areas that need standing risk-benefit assessments are:

- boundaries to dangerous areas
- tree management and tree climbing
- fixed play equipment
- broken loose parts and heavy loose parts
- rope tying (especially at height)
- water use and water features



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- use of sharp or heavy tools.

We carry out a written RBA

- as part of an annual team site walkabout for any agreed significant risks.
- when changes are introduced that have a reasonable chance of significant harm.
- when your concerns are raised more than once by staff.
- when you have had serious 'near-miss incidents or very frequent low-level injuries.

## **Assemblies focused on playtime**

OPAL Play Assemblies are held half termly with children to discuss, inform and negotiate risks that arise during play.

Assemblies should aim to:

- Celebrate our school's culture of play and children's creativity.
- Inform children of changes, rights, and agreements.
- Negotiate with children on issues such as risk, tidy-up and expected behaviours.
- Innovate around what children are currently playing to deepen children's engagement.

Play assemblies have dual purposes:

- To ensure that all children, staff and parents understand how much respect and regard we have for the children's play
- To ensure all children understand the risks and their responsibilities regarding the play opportunities, and that children and staff are involved in agreeing rules and ways of practice.

A brief written log will be kept noting risks discussed and how they will be managed.

## **Policy for play**

A play policy approved by the governing body and leadership is essential and forms the basis for the understanding of all staff and their decision making about managing risk in play.



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*This should include formal adoption of the Health and Safety Executive's guidance and your policy should include a statement on supervision styles*

## **Inspections carried out regularly**

Engineered fixed equipment have an annual technical inspection by a certified inspector. Ongoing visual inspections are carried out by the site manager and a record kept.

In addition, all play team members are trained to constantly check for and remove hazards as part of their daily practice, with a clear knowledge of when to record and appropriate responses. Children are also trained in recognising hazards and reporting to staff.

**Dynamic Risk Management** means that staff should be aware of the changing nature of the play taking place. They 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.

Dynamic risk management in playwork requires that staff maintain '[relaxed vigilance](#)'. The quality of play will suffer if the adult's attitude is one of hovering, anxious over-attention.

There should be an assumption that most play is not dangerous and that children can develop a high degree of competence, given practice, over time. However, staff should also be vigilant, and they should be aware of the kinds of play and resources being used in their patch, who is playing and what the likely risks are.

All play team staff are trained and reminded that active risk management is an essential part of their job using the OPAL Online Playwork Essentials course and training book. They should be observant, mobile and attentive at all times.

Most of the time they will not need to intervene but should be ready to:



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- **stop activity or manage the risk** if staff think that *serious harm* (meaning death, life-long debilitating injury or hospitalisation) is imminent or probable.
- **remain vigilant** if they think that serious harm is possible but not probable.
- **note and move on** if serious harm is very unlikely.

All new staff joining the Play Team are trained to the same level as existing staff.

**Risk Assessment Date: Sept 22**

**Assessed by: BW**

**Review : Oct 22, Dec 22**

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
<p><b>Large loose parts</b> Pupils playing with heavy play equipment: Potential for splinters, crush injury from cable drums, ply sheets and pallets. Potential injury when lifting heavy objects. Falling on children. Crushing injuries. Heavy lifting. Could involve players or bystanders</p>	<p>Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way. Physical core strength and fitness increased in moving objects. Coordination, cooperation, creativity. Items are essential to a rich play environment.</p>	<p>Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe holding, moving and stacking. “One, two, three, lift” – bent knees and straight back. Agree stacking heights in play assembly. No double size pallets Large dens only in supervised den zone Play Team apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier play parts. <b>Large tractor tyre to be stacked and secured to avoid rolling</b> <b>Additional instruction to all children re dens.</b> <b>Avoid territorial play- use PHSE sessions to reinforce safe interactions.</b></p>	<p>BW and Play Team. MN</p>	<p>Ongoing 21.10.22</p>



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<p>Children playing with rope: potential for neck injury and strangulation.</p> <p>Falling from loosely tied knots.</p>	<p>Thick rope enables pulling and dragging and other safe applications such as demarcation, den-building etc</p> <p>Tying knots - fine motor skills.</p>	<p>All pre-looped rope has been discarded.</p> <p>All rope checked to ensure it is not damaged.</p> <p>Climbing ropes (only used in trees).</p>	<p>MN</p> <p>Play Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Digging area use of real spades/ gardening equipment</b></p> <p>Chopping feet</p> <p>Accidental blows</p> <p>Use as weapon</p> <p>Risk to players and bystanders</p>	<p>Gross motor skills- physical strength and fitness.</p> <p>Informed decisions of the best tools for the job</p> <p>Application of practical skills</p>	<p>Pupils briefed about safe use of equipment/storage of equipment. Staff vigilant in ensuring equipment is tidied away safely. Gloves available</p> <p>Tools not toys training in play assembly</p> <p>Only diggers in the digging zone</p> <p>Staff monitor location of gardening equipment. Limit to sandpit/ mud kitchen and allotment area. Increase storage areas to ensure safe storage.</p>	<p>Play team</p> <p>Play Coordinator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Tree Climbing</b></p> <p>Falls, scrapes, skin punctures, head injuries</p>	<p>Pupils able to climb and play in trees, potentially build in trees.</p> <p>Fine and gross motor skills, physical strength and fitness.</p> <p>Coordination, creativity</p>	<p>Assembly to cover rules.</p> <p>Children can only climb as high as an adult can reach.</p> <p>They must not put their body weight on a branch thinner than their arm.</p>	<p>BW</p> <p>Play Team</p>	<p>Jan 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Woodland</b></p> <p>Trip hazards</p> <p>Ingestion of natural resources</p>	<p>Woodland provides excellent opportunities for den-making, shelter, play “in corners” and tree climbing.</p>	<p>Woodland checked daily in AM.</p> <p>Assembly about disagreements and how they can be resolved without adults.</p>	<p>MN</p> <p>BW/JR</p>	<p>Daily</p> <p>Jan 2022</p>



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		There may be disagreements over "territory".		
Pupils playing in different environments with new potential dangers: There is an increased risk of minor injury to pupils who may require immediate first aid.	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves.	All Play team members will carry their own 1 <sup>st</sup> aid pouches. Pupils with minor injuries (scratches and minor abrasions) will be treated in situ and will be added to scholar pack. More serious injuries will be referred to a first aider (JM, JS or BW) who will deal with as appropriate, informing a member of SLT if the injury requires parental contact or hospital treatment.	All play team.	Ongoing
Pupils playing in sand pit: Sand pit possible attraction for cats, dogs and fox faeces. Sand in eyes.	Large, 6ft x 9ft squared area will enable creative, sensory play for a large number of children.	Pit checked daily by MN. TAs carry eye wash in 1 <sup>st</sup> aid pouches to wash eyes in the event of thrown sand.	MN	Daily
Caravan Children often unsighted	Shelter, quieter area for children to sit and read or draw. Provides role play environment.	Play team member covering the area by caravan and sandpit to do regular checks inside the caravan.	Play team	Daily

Review 11.2.22, 9.2.22, 21.10.22 5.12.22



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- MN to ensure the gate is bolted shut at 845am and 310pm each day.
- Staff to remain in agreed designated zones to cover all areas of the playground ( see attached photo/timetable)
- KS1 to only use forest at lunchtime
- Staff to constantly scan the horizon to check on children's well being.
- All staff wear high visibility jackets when on duty.
- Staff to alert SLT to any safety concerns.

