

Castle Hill St Philip's CE Primary



Play Policy

Play Policy

Commitment

Castle Hill St Philip's recognises that play is an essential part of a happy and healthy childhood. As a school, we are keen to provide consistently high quality and inclusive play opportunities for all children. We consider the outdoor space, resources and supervision practices to create these inclusive opportunities for every child. We use this policy to guide our planning in providing play opportunities for all children. At Castle Hill we embed our school vision and ethos into everything. The skills used in play closely link to our Christian values: Love, Respect, Forgiveness, Perseverance, Responsibility and Resilience which **are at the heart of all we do.**

We believe play enables children to become independent, imaginative and able to access appropriate risks. At Castle Hill, learning has no limits.

Rationale

Many children today suffer from 'play deprivation' due to changes in society. At Castle Hill, we believe inclusive play opportunities are vital in having happier and healthier children. We believe with more imaginative play opportunities comes fewer behaviour problems and an increased positive attitude towards learning. Research shows that play can enhance problem solving; it is also widely regarded as providing opportunities for social interaction and language development which is vital for all our children. Play can also enhance physical development of children, including their fine and gross motor skills. A child's holistic development will be supported as play allows for children to develop strong internal values and confidence because all factors are being considered.

Definition

At Castle Hill, children and staff think play is:

- Free time to interact with friends
- Time to learn social skills
- Opportunity to build/ maintain relationships
- Freedom to express ourselves
- Freedom of choice
- Self-directed leisure
- A time to have fun and enjoy ourselves
- Time to use and develop imagination and creativity
- Time to unwind from learning in the classroom

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.

Benefit and Risk

It is important for children to face challenges, success, and failure to become more resilient. At Castle Hill, we are committed to providing these opportunities for children in the right way. The Health and Safety Executive offer guidance on the provision of play in educational settings and state that:

The Health and Safety Executive fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE understands and accepts that this means children will often be exposed to play environments which, whilst well-managed, carry a degree of risk and sometimes potential danger.

The school will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance document, 'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach' (September 2012) as the principal value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childs-play-statement.htm> (Appendix 1)

Risk-benefit approach

It is vital children learn to manage risk themselves in a safe environment. In addition to written risk assessments the school will use dynamic risk management in order to respond to the fluid nature of risk and challenge in the play environment. The school will also manage risk by building children's skills in identifying and managing appropriate risk themselves.

The benefit to children of challenging play opportunities should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments.

Supervision Styles:

Staff at Castle Hill will take a playwork approach to supporting children at playtimes; this includes using direct, ranging and remote supervision styles to ensure the safety, engagement and enjoyment of all playtimes. The school does not believe direct supervision **alone** is possible or beneficial. Supervision 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.

OPAL has developed the five-part R.A.P.I.D. Response to managing risk in your school approach which should be followed alongside the guidance on managing loose parts.

1. Risk benefit assessment - Castle Hill has developed its own Risk Benefit assessment and this has been shared with staff and parents, and is available on the school's website.
2. Assemblies - Regular assemblies will be delivered when new equipment is introduced into the school environment to remind the children and staff of the values which relate to play.
3. Policy - This information is part of the play policy section on supervision.
4. Inspection - A record is kept of any inspections or equipment that is found to be damaged and needs fixing.
5. Dynamic risk management - Dynamic risk management in playwork requires that staff maintain 'relaxed vigilance'. 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, they should be aware of the kinds of play and resources being used in their area, who is playing and what the likely risks are. This will then be monitored.

The Adults' Role in Play

At Castle Hill, we are dedicated to working with children to provide the experiences that they want and need in school. As staff, we will ensure children have a broad range of play experiences and opportunities. Staff will communicate with children and other adults to observe, reflect and analyse the play that is happening. Our aim is to support children to make the most of their play opportunities.

Environment

At Castle Hill we will:

- Use all outdoor space as a natural resource for play
- Communicate with children to enhance their play opportunities
- Integrate the playground with a mixture of year groups
- Teach children to take responsibility for their outdoor space and resources
- Encourage a range of play types in the given environment

Appendix 1

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>