



Play Policy

At Greasley Beauvale Primary School, the Governors recognise the importance of ensuring equal opportunity for all children and adults. The Governors will continue to ensure that this is an essential element of all school policies and actions.

The right to develop, learn and work in an environment free from discrimination is implicit in our school's ethos and embodied in its Vision.

Our Vision:

At Greasley Beauvale Primary School, our vision is for everyone to **reach their true potential, nurture their talents** and foster a personal **love of learning** through a **safe, engaging and challenging curriculum**. **We take notice of each other** and **strive to be healthy and happy in body and mind**. We **champion physical, emotional and mental wellbeing** to **promote the best outcomes for everyone** to **build a healthy future together**.

At Greasley Beauvale Primary School, you are “Learning for Life” to “Paint Your Own Rainbow”

This policy was written in March 2024. The Full Governing Body approved it remotely through the School Bus.

Nominated SLT member responsible for policy: Mrs Pamela Barrowcliffe

Next review date: March 2025

Signed: _____ (Chair) Date: _____

Summary of changes:

Introduction of new play initiative in conjunction with OPAL. -The aim is for the school to achieve the Platinum mark.

- 1. Commitment**
- 2. Rationale**
- 3. Definition and Value of Play**
- 4. Aims**
- 5. Rights**
- 6. Benefits and risks**
- 7. Supervision**
- 8. The adults role in play**
- 9. Equality and Diversity**
- 10. Environment**

1. Commitment

Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery 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

Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. 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. Children spend up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in primary school at play. Therefore, this time needs to be led and planned for to ensure high quality and varied provision is made available. Changes in society such as improved technology have led to "play deprivation" for many of today's children . This makes school play with friends even more vital for all our children.

In Spring 2024 we surveyed our parents and children to gain their views on play. Some of the comments were:

- "Not much to do"
- "He has a good imagination but doesn't get a turn on the equipment."
- "I think play is fantastic for all ages children, my child is in year 1 and has found the transition from reception to year one quite tricky, this is because she loved the play doh and the freedom of learning through play in Reception"
- "We just want to play with our friends but sometimes we are told we can't play that."
- "We really want more time to play with others."
- "We love the music and parachute on KS1 but not everyone likes this and my brother doesn't get to do this."

The OPAL Primary 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.*”

Children at Greasley Beauvale Primary School follow our Rainbow Values and these help them to become well rounded citizens. Rich and valuable play opportunities provide children with a sound vehicle by which to learn, develop and apply the key virtues that school aims to instil in all that we do.

Our Rainbow Values are

Respect and acceptance – “Being ready, respectful and safe in everything we do”

Active body and active mind – “Take ownership over your physical and mental wellbeing”

Inclusive yet individual – “Embrace diversity and be proud of who you are”

Nurture, develop and grow – “Persevere and take risks with your talents and potential”

Believe in yourself – “Be confident in your choices”

Overcome your obstacles – “Be brave, show resilience and challenge yourself”

Wonder and curiosity – “Ask questions and seek answers”

Children at Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School are given the opportunity to develop their play and understanding of our Rainbow Values through the interactions that take place during play provision.

3. Definition and value of play

Play is defined as a process that is intrinsically motivated, directed by, and freely chosen by, the child. Play has its own value and provides its own purpose. It may or may not involve equipment or other people.

We believe play has many benefits, including, but not limited to:

- 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 provided 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. (Rainbow Value)
- Aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development across all year groups.
- Provide children with a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play in an imaginative way.
- Provide a range of experiences/environments that will support children's learning across the curriculum and about the world around them.
- Promote independence and team work within children.
- Build emotional and physical resilience.

5. **Rights**

Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes *the right to play, recreation and leisure* (Article 31, [Appendix 1](#)) and the *right of children to be listened to on matters important to them* (Article 12 [Appendix 2](#).) We acknowledge that we have a duty to take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their play.

Article 31 of the UNCRC states that children and young people have the right to have fun in the way they want to, whether by playing sports, watching films, or doing something else entirely. They have the right to rest, too.

Children and young people should be able to take part freely in cultural activities, just like adults. The government should make sure it's easy for them to do this whether or not they have a disability.

Article 12 says that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken

seriously. This principle recognises children and young people as actors in their own lives and applies at all times throughout a child's life.

These rights of the child are intrinsically linked to our Rainbow values that we teach children throughout their time at school.

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 (Play Safety Forum, 2012)

Greasley Beauvale Primary 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. In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide* (Play Safety Forum, 2012). ([see appendix 3](#))

"HSE 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 dangers" (HSE 2013)

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. As outlined in the play sector publication 'Best Play', ([see appendix 4](#)) 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.

R- Risk – benefit assessment – We will consider the risks and associated benefits of using equipment , we will think about how we can reduce the risks and if the benefit is worth the risk.

A – Assemblies – A weekly or fortnightly assembly will focus on playtimes – these celebrate play within our school. We will celebrate, inform, negotiate, and innovate.

P – Policy – The policy for play has been agreed by governors and shared with all stake holders.

I – Inspections – Inspections are carried out weekly by the play co-ordinators and loose part assessments are carried out daily by the play team.

D – Dynamic Risk assessments – This means that staff should be aware of the 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.

At Greasley Beauvale Primary and Nursery School, we see that if adults remove all risk for children, they never learn to recognise or manage it within their own lives. When adults remove risk without an explanation, we see that whilst a situation may have been avoided in the moment, it may not be avoided next time – as the child had no opportunity to reflect on the apparent risk, and the implications for not mitigating it. An example would be a child about to climb a tree. If an adult simply said, do not do that, get down – the child would be safe in the moment and move on, but will most likely go on to climb a tree in future, with no adult present. The risk remains, the adult doesn't. If the adult asked some questions such as, 'how high do you think is a safe fall?', or 'how high are you going to climb? How will you get YOURSELF down?', the child has opportunity to consider what they are about to do, the risks and mitigations for themselves.

Involving other children in the play discussion further strengthens the impact of the conversation. The full H&SE Managing Risk Statement is added as an Appendix to our Play Policy.

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 should be one or more adults present in each area outdoors.

The school recognises OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in Reception and Nursery, whose skills and orientation in the school environment need to be assessed, the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial.

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 levels of risk likely to be emerging.

The structure of Greasley Beauvale Primary School Play team is as follows:

Head Teacher

Play Governor

Parental Lead for Play

Curricular Lead for Play

Play Co-ordinators – 3 members

The Play Team – 6 members

TA's are also often involved in supervision during lunch time on a 1-1 or group basis. Our grounds are divided into six zones which will initially have remote supervision with an adult patrolling the edge of the zones so that they can see the entire zone. This will be adapted as more resources are added and more support is needed to encourage children to assess the risks that they take.

8. 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 Playwork 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 playworker'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 playworker 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. Playworkers 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 appendix 4 \(Play work Principles\)](#)

9. Equality and diversity

"The most vulnerable deserve our best."

Nancy Zinkin

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.

See the link to our Equality and information objective policy -[Appendix 5](#)

10. 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.

www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf (appendix 6)

Appendix 1

UNCRC Article 31

I have a right to rest, relax and play

Adults should make sure children have the chance to play and relax in a safe, supportive and stimulating environment.

Governments should make sure children can be part of cultural and artistic activities.

When decisions are made about activities in the community, adults should include children in planning these

Article 31 of the UNCRC says that children and young people have the right to have fun in the way they want to, whether by playing sports, watching films, or doing something else entirely. They have the right to rest, too.

Children and young people should be able to take part freely in cultural activities, just like adults. The government should make sure it's easy for them to do this whether or not they have a disability.

Appendix 2

UNCRC – Article 12

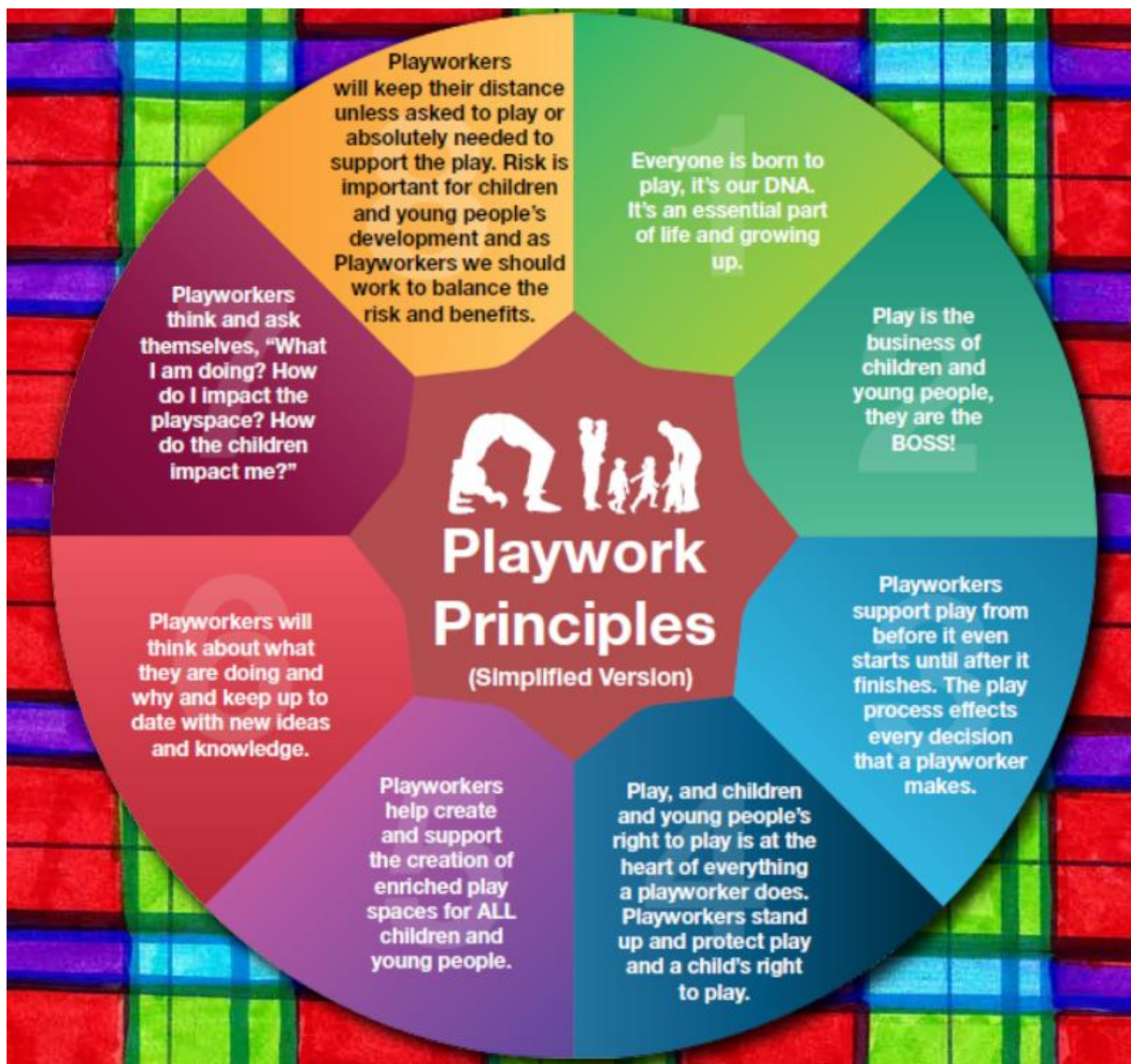
Participation of children and young people is one of the **General Principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child** as it plays a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all children.

One of the relevant articles of the Convention that addresses the principle of participation is Article 12, the right to be heard. Article 12 says that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This principle recognises children and young people as actors in their own lives and applies at all times throughout a child's life.

Appendix 3 - *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 2012).*

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

Appendix 4 – Play work principles



Appendix 5

<https://primariesite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/greasley-beauvale-primary-school/UploadedDocument/2b934fd0-691d-483c-8b54-a24df1dbda70/equality-information-and-objectives-policy-2023-2024.pdf>

Appendix 6–

<http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf>