

**Introduction**

“Children need and have the right to play, and play provision offers them the opportunity to play freely in the ways they choose, without direction from adults.” Play England

This policy is written with regard to play that takes place at ‘playtimes’ and is underpinned by the school’s vision – ‘Roots to Grow – Wings to Fly’

and values:-

**Adaptable**

**Self-belief**

**Perseverance**

**Inclusive**

**Respect**

**Enquiring**

**Definition:**

Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development- not only for the children, but also for the society they live in.

**Rationale**

- Children use play in the natural environment to learn about the world they inhabit with others.
- Play is critically important to all children in the development of their physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills.
- Play is first and foremost the process of a child’s own, self-directed learning and as such is a process that has validity for all ages of children. It is such a vital component of a child’s life that the child’s capacity for positive development will be inhibited or constrained if denied free access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.
- Play allows the beneficial exposure of children to some level of risk and challenge, giving them the chance to learn about the real consequences of risk taking. The school adopts the Play Safety Forum Statement on Managing Risk in Play Provision.

**Aims:**

- To make playtimes fun and exciting for all children by creating an environment that fosters play.
- To support play by providing rich and challenging play opportunities within the school environment.

- To encourage the creation of high quality play opportunities which are appropriate, accessible, stimulating and challenging for **all** children within the school, irrespective of their background, culture, ethnicity, disability or gender.
- To develop the school grounds and make a range of materials available to improve provision for open ended play opportunities.
- To encourage pupil voice in making decisions about how areas are developed and used by the school community.
- To support children in taking reasonable risks.

**Objectives:**

To enable all children in the school community to develop physically, socially, emotionally and creatively through providing rich opportunities for play

To encourage children to take responsibility for their play environment

To develop well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn

To ensure provision extends the choice and control that children have over their play and maximises the range of play opportunities.

To foster independence and self-belief

To foster inclusion and children's respect for others and offer opportunities for social interaction

To recognise the children's needs to test boundaries

To allow children to learn new skills and develop their ability to judge risks independently

**Health and Safety (Managing Risk)**

Play is critical to children's physical and mental health.

Children will enjoy a healthy range of play opportunities which do not limit their enjoyment but which enable them to manage risk. A balance will be struck between risks and benefits.

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision.

Children will therefore be exposed to the risk of minor and easily-healed injuries such as bruises, grazes or sprains.

We adopt the following summary statement from the South Gloucestershire Council, Play Policy & Strategy Document 2006:

"Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury."

This policy should be read in conjunction with risk assessments related to playtimes.

Children will be expected to have appropriate clothing in school (wellington boots and coats) to enable them to engage in play activities irrespective of the weather.

### **Guidelines**

This policy is based upon the South Gloucestershire Council Play Policy and Strategy and is underpinned by the original 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

### **Be Healthy**

#### **Emotional Health**

##### **The school will:**

- provide opportunities for children to explore their own identity and the identity of others
- provide opportunities for children to express their emotions and thereby develop emotional awareness
- support children to create and explore their own play experience and thus enhance their self-belief
- show respect to each child as a unique individual

#### **Physical Health**

##### **The school will:**

- provide an environment where children can be physically active outdoors
- promote active play that encourages positive physical activity

### **Stay Safe**

#### **Emotional safety**

##### **The school will:**

- provide an environment and atmosphere that will help to make children feel emotionally safe
  - provide opportunities for older pupils to support younger pupils as Play Pals
- take children's concerns seriously and act on them appropriately
- support children in their right to keep themselves safe
- ensure that children are safe from emotional harm
- ensure adults intervene sensitively and develop a culture of independence

#### **Physical safety**

**The school will:**

- provide an environment in which risks may be managed
- balance health and safety considerations against the children's need to develop their own risk taking skills

**Enjoy and Achieve****The school will:**

- ensure playtimes are fun and exciting for all children
- ensure children take some responsibility for making decisions and be a part of leading the play project in school

We have a 'Play Pod' which is used at lunch times to provide all of the above and promotes imaginative play.

**Conclusion**

At Alexander Hosea Primary School we recognise the importance of creating opportunities that allow children to explore both themselves and their world through the medium of play. All our pupils will have access to the best quality and widest range of stimulating and satisfying play opportunities.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed by all staff as part of the school's rolling programme.

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