**Sunnyside Primary School**

**Play Policy**



January 2018

**Rationale**

Play is the quintessential element for children to enjoy their childhood. It is fundamental to their quality of life as children. Playing is fun: it is how children enjoy themselves. Childrens development, learning, imagination, creativity and independence are promoted through the act of play. Play can help to keep children healthy and active. It allows children to experience and encounter boundaries, learning to assess and manage risk in their lives; both physical and social.

**Children have a right to play.**

The right to play and formal recreation, for all children and young people up to the age of 18, is contained in article 31 of the UN convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991. The government has a duty under this convention to protect and promote play oportuities for all children and young people.

**The Value of Play**

Play enables children to learn through experience that cannot be taught. Through exploring and testing ideas children learn:

* how to make new friends and communicate with other people.
* how to play new games and learn new skills including physical skills.
* how to get along with other people, learn how to share and work as a team.
* how to stay healthy and build energy levels.
* about taking risks and keeping safe.

Sunnyside Primary School recognise the value of play and aim to develop a wide range of outside play environments to meet the needs of all of our children. Play should be satisfying and freely chosen by the child. Play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. It may be serious or light hearted. It may be done simply for its own sake. We aim to ensure children’s choice over their expereinces is promoted in our grounds.

We aim to offer children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, we aim to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks.

**Aims**

* To ensure play settings provide a challenging and stimulating environment.
* To allow children to take risks
* To provide opporutnities for children to build relationships with their peers.
* To aid children’s physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
* To provide a range of environments which will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
* To provide a range of environments which will support children’s learning across the curriuclum and leraning about the world around them.
* To promote independence and team work.

**Challenge and Risk**

*“Play is great for children’s well-being and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to elimate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool”* (extract from the HSE balance approach for children’s play statement [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk))

We will strike the balance between the risks and the benefits. There will be risks that help children to learn to deal with environmental hazards. We will support any foreseeable risks to the children and involve them in assessing risks which will include writing risk assessments or rules for playing with the equipment e.g. loose parts play rules.

*“Safety must be considered at all stages of play provision, but inevitably there will be a risk of injury when children play, as there is a risk of injury in life generally”* (Extract from Managing Risk in Play Provision by the Play Safety Forum).

At Sunnyside Primary School we will be encouraging play. A child can fall and injure themselves whatever game they are playing wherever they are. However, to remove this risk completely would mean removing play, and the benefits of play are too great. At Sunnyside Primary School we feel that it is important to challenge the children, stretch them and enable them to learn the important skills that play highlights. Some of the activities offereed to our children might be deemed as ‘risky’ however, they will be undertaken in a controlled environment, checked by health and safety and will be monitored and evaluted regularly.