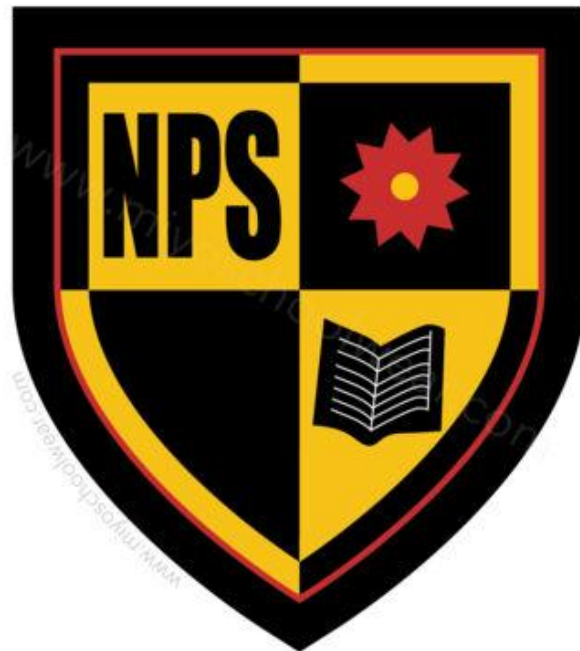


Infant Play Policy



Policy Created: February 2024
Update by: 2027/28



"Newmains Primary School C.A.R.E.S"



Rationale:

At Newmains Primary, the best interest of the children in our school is top priority. We are guided by research into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma and believe learning through play will support children to access the curriculum through a more holistic approach.

Play provides opportunities for children to experience learning in a meaningful and purposeful way. It is a means by which children can develop the skills and capabilities to access the content of the curriculum. This is embedded by providing children with opportunities to access child initiated, adult initiated and adult-led learning.

“Play is fundamental to children and young people’s quality of life but first and foremost it is a child’s right and one which the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is keen to see actively applied” (Scottish Government, Play Strategy). Through play children create their own culture, develop their abilities, explore their creativity, challenge their limitations and assumptions and learn about the people and places around them. At Newmains Primary School we are committed to achieving this by placing the Meta Skills at the heart of all learning.

Many of Scotland’s educational policies and guidance documents discuss the importance of play and place a high emphasis of its value in meeting the needs of all our learners. The value of play is emphasised through the Play Strategy for Scotland’s vision; *“We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities.”* The 2015 Play Strategy document further outlines the value of play and the role it has in enabling young learners to access the curriculum in a way that is relevant to them.

Snap Shot of Curriculum Policy

“There is a need to debate curriculum balance in the early stages of the primary school, and consider whether play and self-directed learning opportunities are underrepresented.” (Building the Curriculum Two: P7)

The refreshed narrative on the Scottish Curriculum documents outlines the need for greater teacher autonomy, it recognises the importance of creating an approach to learning which best meets the needs of learners in your care and notes that there is no set way to achieving this.

Scotland's curriculum – Curriculum for Excellence – helps our children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century.

Individual settings and practitioners are empowered to make the decisions needed to provide a coherent, flexible and enriched curriculum that is adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and which reflects the uniqueness of their communities.

(Refreshed Narrative on Scottish Curriculum)



(Refreshed Narrative on Scottish Curriculum)

Building the Curriculum Four; Skills for life, learning and work, alongside the Developing the Young Workforce (DYF) Policy document, clearly outline the need to develop a curriculum which supports children in fostering the necessary skills to thrive in the 21st century. DYP recognises the need for “Children and young people (to) develop interests, strengths, skills and aspirations through experiences as part of the curriculum and life beyond school.” Many of the skills noted in the image below, taken from the DYW document, are central to the play based learning pedagogy and form the very foundations of the skills and qualities the play based learning pedagogy aims to develop.

Preparing children and young people (3-18) for the world of work



Developing the Young Workforce

Children and young people develop interests, strengths, skills and aspirations through experiences as part of the curriculum and life beyond school. A range of partners support these exciting journeys through co-design and co-delivery and together shape children and young people's decisions about their future and the pathways they follow. Where will these journeys take children and young people and how can YOU contribute?

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/developingtheyoungworkforce



The importance of play:

At Newmains Primary School practitioners aim to ensure that planning, application and evaluation of play allows for a balance of the day approach. Teachers provide a range of teacher led, teacher initiated and child led learning experiences throughout the day.

There are many benefits of learning through play. We believe play can help to develop;

- Cognitive, social and emotional development.
- Motivation and a love of learning.
- Skills for thinking, learning and acting in social worlds.
- Connections and meaning through hands on experience.
- Coordination, fine motor skills, gross motor skills and core strength.
- Resilience, self-regulation and stress management.
- Creativity, imagination and independence.

At Newmains Primary School we aim to build and develop the Meta Skills:

- Focusing
- Communicating
- Curiosity
- Adapting
- Collaborating
- Creativity
- Integrity
- Feeling
- Sense making
- Initiative
- Leading
- Critical Thinking

The role of the teacher/adult

Staff are committed to facilitating high quality play experiences throughout the curriculum. These experiences will:

- Encourage curiosity and questions.
- Help children reflect and extend their thinking.
- Support children to solve their own problems.
- Challenge the children through questioning.
- Offer appropriate materials and activities to support all learners' needs and abilities.
- Develop co-operatively learning skills.

- Encourage independence, resilience and perseverance.
- Encourage higher order thinking
- Build on pupils prior knowledge and experiences.

Classroom environment

The classroom environment should be designed around the following zones:

1. Teaching zone – Carpet space, teaching table.
2. Creative zone – Art area.
3. Social zone – Small world area, role play area, loose parts area.
4. Discovery zone – Construction area, woodwork, water and sand.
5. Outdoor zone – loose parts.

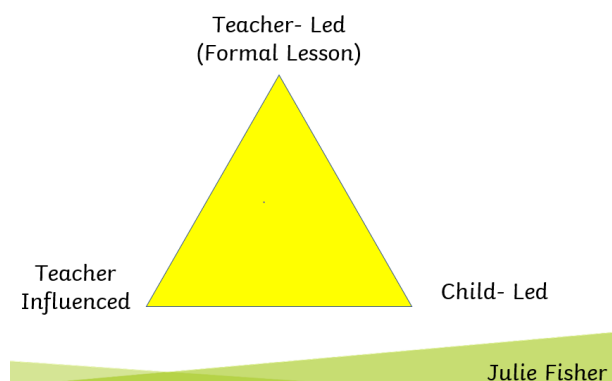
Although each zone has a specific purpose, it is important to carefully consider the resources and mechanics of each area to enable transparency and flow throughout the learning environment.

Resources should be open ended and carefully selected to encourage children to explore their curiosity, problem solving, challenge themselves and their own preconceived ideas.

Planning, Observation and Documentation

Within each learning space teachers will provide a balance of opportunities and provocations for

- Child- led learning
- Teacher initiated learning
- Teacher – led learning



Observations are also key for teachers to plan, assess and implement further experiences or add depth to prior learning. Teachers will identify specific children to observe throughout the week. They will document this observation digitally linking it

to the Meta Skills and the Leaven Scale of Well-being and Involvement. This will inform future planning.

Evidence of learning will be documented both digitally and displayed within the classroom environment.

Useful Links:

- Fife Play Pedagogy Toolkit

[Fife Play Pedagogy Toolkit – Developed by Fife Children and Education Services \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](http://glowscotland.org.uk)

- Realising the Ambition

<https://education.gov.scot/media/3bjpr3wa/realisingtheambition.pdf>

- First Steps to Playful Pedagogy

https://www.playscotland.org/resources/print/First-Steps-to-Playful-Pedagogy_JHamend.pdf?plsctml_id=20120

- Play Strategy For Scotland: Our Action Plan

[Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

- The University of Strathclyde Play Diary created by Deirdre Grogan. A tool to evaluate the play learning environment

[Play 20Diary 202020 20booklet.pdf \(storage.googleapis.com\)](http://storage.googleapis.com)

- Early Level Play Pedagogy Toolkit

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/early-level-play-pedagogy-toolkit/>

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Updated: May 2024

