



Risk Benefit Assessment



Risk Benefit Assessment Record Sheet and Advice

The purpose of **Risk Benefit Assessments** are to enable us to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in our play environment.

They cannot and will not provide complete 'safety' and this is not their purpose.

They can help us to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm.

We have two approaches to managing risk: Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments and Dynamic Risk Management

Standing Risk Benefit Assessments means we look at our usual environment and practices at least annually, and also when significant changes take place and keep a written record of the areas in the table below.

Dynamic Risk Benefit Management means that staff should be aware of 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. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of likelihood or severity or harm with preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible, and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Common areas that need standing assessment include:

Boundaries to dangerous areas, trees management and tree climbing, fixed equipment and inspection, broken loose parts, rope tying especially at height, water use and water features.

Staff will carry out daily, on-going risk assessment and pass on any potential hazards to a member of SLT.





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Description of Activity, Principle or Object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or Utility Or Related Policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action Date	Reviewed on
Pupils playing with heavy loose play equipment whilst den building: Potential for splinters, crush injury from cable drums, ply sheets and pallets. Potential injury when lifting heavy objects.	Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way.	Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe holding, moving and stacking. Staff apply principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and use of heavier play parts.	OPAL Team	November 2022	Ongoing
Trees unsafe to climb: potential injury falling from trees with thin or weak branches. In dry weather the children can climb the small horse chestnut up to the no-go lines ONLY Risk of falling injuries and falling over to the graveyard. Risk of injury on the fence.	Although we would like to allow the children to climb, we currently have no suitable trees in the designated area. Tree climbing allows for extension of motor skills and assessment of own risk	All children briefed not to climb trees. Supervision by staff to enforce this. We will build raised platforms in the woodland and field to enable safe climbing as part of the project at a later date. Children have been briefed not to climb any trees apart from the horse chestnut and the laurel. No-go lines are up in every branch Laurel tree reopened with a protruding rock cage covered with astroturf. Children advised not to remove piece of turf. 19/5/23	OPAL team	November 2022	12th November 2022 All no go bands- last check 24/6/22
Pupils playing in a different environment with new potential dangers: There is an increased risk of minor injury to pupils who may require immediate first aid.	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves.	Pupils with minor injuries (scratches and minor abrasions) will be treated by nominated First Aiders. More serious injuries will be referred to a member of SLT if the injury requires parental contact or hospital treatment.	Jayne Meissner Fiona Beale Kirsty Mull Taya Stenner Sinead York Amanda Woodland	November 2022	12th November 2021





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Pupils playing in sand pit: Sand pit possible attraction for cats, dogs and fox faeces. Sand in eyes.	Large, 25m squared area enables creative, sensory play for a large number of children.	Pit checked daily by the OPAL team, caretaker and monitored throughout the day by staff. Sandpit covered at the end of every day. New Sand added annually.	Jason Crook OPAL Team Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
The use of tyres: the risk of tyres being rolled down the hill resulting in injury. Tyres collecting water that is turning stagnant	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves.	Children reminded of the potential risk during Play Assemblies. The school's supervision styles (Remote and Ranging) allow the OPAL Team to manage potential risk. Reminder to children when the water freezes not to lick or eat. Wash hands after use.	OPAL Team Ian Gunning Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022 Drill holes in the tyres to let out the water attempted and not possible. Moving tyres periodically to empty water.
Children slipping and injuring themselves in wet weather either on the bank or in the wooded area.	Active outdoor play at all times of the year is an important part of obesity prevention and helps to establish life-long patterns of healthy physical exercise.	Children to wear appropriate clothing (coats and wellies). Appointed First Aiders available if injury occurs. Year 5 & 6 are allowed to wear old trainers if in woods. Leaves removed during autumn. Anti-slip paint on play equipment.	OPAL Team Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Children accessing the pond by climbing over the fence: risk of falling into the pond.	Once renovation of pond is complete, it will allow children to play in a safe environment where risk is low.	Children reminded not to enter the pond area. The area is fenced off and a gate is padlocked at all times until the completion of the project to renovate the pond area and mitigate risk. Children are reminded during Play Assemblies.	OPAL Team Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022





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		Pond dredged and cleaned annually to avoid build-up of sludge.			
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Children using slack lines: risk of slipping off and falling onto the ground.	Children developing skills of balance, agility and core strength as well as teamwork and cooperation.	Children shown how to use the equipment appropriately. Slack lines are tied to trees no higher than two feet off the ground. One child at a time.	OPAL Team Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Children using hammocks: risk of playing inappropriately and falling out of hammocks and causing injury.	Children are able to develop balance, coordination and gross motor skills. Other benefits include improving children's mental health and wellbeing.	Children shown how to use the equipment appropriately. Hammocks are tied to trees no higher than two feet off the ground. One at a time.	OPAL Team Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Children using sticks to play: risk of injury by using sticks inappropriately.	Playing with sticks not only ignites children's imaginations, but also has other therapeutic benefits. Branches and other large sticks can build strength and muscles as children lift, drag, or carry them to and from places outdoors. Teamwork happens when a stick is too large for just one child to move.	Children shown how to play appropriately with sticks. Regular reminders during Play Assemblies. Children drag longer sticks when moving around the playground.	OPAL Team Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022





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Description of Activity, Principle or Object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or Utility Or Related Policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action Date	Reviewed on
Bikes/Trikes/Wiggle Boards/scooters, circus stepper	Increased balance and improvement of gross motor skills. Fitness and core strength improved with use.	Children to be shown possible pitfalls of falling off bikes, crashing into others with bikes and injury while pushing others on bikes. Awareness of finger trap risks. Staff to make sure all bikes and scooters have proper rubber handles or taped off Caretaker to check the bikes annually.	Play Team All Staff	November 2022	12th November 2022
Heater in Snug:	Enables the use of the snug all year round	Children to be shown how to avoid the risk. Heater temp to be monitored. Children shouldn't be adjusting the heater.	Play Team Teachers using room	November 2022	12th November 2022
Shipping container:	Necessary for storage of loose parts	Risk of children trapping fingers in the door. Children could become trapped by loose or falling loose parts. Risk of being locked inside while hiding inside. Responsible children choosing packing away to stay in container as packing away.	Play Team ALL STAFF	November 2022	12th November 2022
Water play – hose pipe and water butts around garden	Children to explore water. Use of water supports sensory and creative play. Kids to be shown how to use hose sensibly and instructed to NOT drink from pipe. Water butts to be tethered and secured. Butts be allowed to run dry and re-filled to ensure no stagnant water.	Risk of drowning very minor. Risk of falling heavy water butt.	Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022





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Slope surfing	Benefit of balance, innovation, team work, turn taking and creativity. Encourages cooperative, locomotive and creative play.	Children to be shown and continually reminded about possible risks - slips, trips, crashes, ticks or falling objects. Implement a circular system 'Do not climb up the way you come down, walk round and ascend on opposite side of tree' Only in dry weather, in wet weather only those who are on forest school and in full waterproofs	Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Netting/ropes/ladders to assist hill climbing	Improved strength and agility by using materials to assist ascent of woodland slopes	Risk of slipping, falling or rope burns from materials. Children to be shown responsible use of these items, not too many children to use at once. JB to ensure installation done in as safe a manor as possible	Play Team	November 2022	
Head high slacklines	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves. Increase upper body strength and balance.	Correct installation (as per manufacturer's guidelines). Height monitored. Lines always well above head height to avoid garrotting.	Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022



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Rope ladders	Versatile use. creative play and freedom to climb - must be installed correctly by a responsible member of the play team	Correct installation (as per manufacturer's guidelines). Height monitored. Only installed at height when supervised by a member of the play team	Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Digging areas	Encourages independent and/or cooperative play and mastery play - fine motor skills improved. Knowledge of gardening improved through digging and planting in Garden area	Designated areas to be created for digging, muddy sides and plant borders. Also garden	Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Garden area	Sensory and exploratory play - Children to be introduced to the space as a quiet/sensory space with yoga mats and wind chimes installed. Team of children to help with gardening and planting - encouraging responsibility taking	Quiet space of contemplation. Children to be shown responsible management of plans within the space. Play team to monitor growth of any hazardous plants. Children shown how to use tools correctly and safely.	Play Team OPAL Team	November 2022	12th November 2021
Chalk/water paints	Beneficial in all ways, develop creativity and fine motor skills	chalks and paint brushes to be maintained by children and play team - Board to be cleaned on Fridays.	Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022





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Description of Activity, Principle or Object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or Utility Or Related Policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action Date	Reviewed on
Ball games - Various	develop social play, fine and gross motor, hand/eye coordination	Show children and role model sensible play with balls - alert children to risk of injury and make sure they are aware of how to keep games contained so they don't impact on whole school play No ball games (especially football) on monday and friday. This allows the space to be used by other children for other games.	Teachers through PE Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Targets	improved ball skills - turn taking and communicative play	risk of balls hitting others	Teachers through PE Play Team	November 2022	12th November 2022
Gloop (Cornflour mix) in tough spot	Sensory experience Accessible to all - mastery, exploratory play	Pay attention to potential allergy risk Hand wash station to be set up nearby.	Volunteer team	November 2022	12th November 2022



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Safari vehicle	Opportunities for creative, imaginative and role play. Social space for small group quiet or imaginative play or place for larger group activities and adventures.	<p>Vehicle has been 'made safe' by our local trusted mechanic – The engine has been disconnected, all doors and possible openings have been locked so no risk of 'door slamming-trapped fingers' all sharp or rusted sections have been softened or welded. Windows locked in open and winders removed. The windows will serve as the entry/exit for the cab. In position the car has been 'dug in' to avoid any slipping and the brakes are locked on. Carpeted steps (carpeted pallets) have been placed beneath the window and at the back of the flat-bed to assist smaller children to ingress and egress safely. Rules of use –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Not too many people in the cab at once (children can use discretion while staff monitor)2. No climbing on windscreen3. No climbing on the roof or bonnet while wet.4. NO jumping off of roof5. No throwing things at it.6. Please be careful and respectful <p>Currently children not allowed in the car at all due to water and mice! Jason to strip the cab</p>	ALL STAFF	November 2022	1st March 2023



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		<p>and install wooden bench and drainage holes at some point.</p> <p>JB to add safety barriers to prevent children getting caught in the wheel arches</p> <p>During the summer holidays our local mechanic removed the front seats completely and disposed of them leaving the area ready for benches to be installed</p> <p>AW and JM to fill the wheel arches with expanding foam or similar to stop children from catching their fingers.</p>			
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Sandpit digger	Creative play - fine and gross motor skills will be enhanced through the use of this apparatus. Turn taking and team working skills will also be challenged.	One child at a time. Children to stand back (safe space) from grabber arm to avoid collision. Digger to only be used during supervised play times. Children not to access during afternoon play unless specifically instructed by an adult on duty.	ALL STAFF	November 2022	12th November 2022
Bouncers - Pogo sticks and lolo balls	Locomotive, physical and creative play	Risk of slips & Falls - Limit use when wet and potentially slippery. Teach correct use of equipment, One child at a time. Use on appropriate surfaces only.	All STAFF OPAL staff	November 2022	12th November 2022
Litter pickers	Creative play fine motor skills shared responsibility of grounds	4 available mut be shared ONLY for the collection of litter, NOT toys to be returned to holding point after breaktime	All staff OPAL staff	November 2022	12th November 2022
Pushchairs	Locomotive play Imaginative play	Fully checked over to ensure sturdiness and the collapse mechanism broken in place to stop the risk of getting fingers caught. Rules in place of where pushchairs can be used (not to be pushed down verges)		November 2022	12th November 2022





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Pond	See Pond risk assessment	See Pond RA	All staff OPAL staff	November 2022	December 2022
Tree swing Risk of children grazing themselves on the ground if they miss the swing Risk to other children too close	Physical play turn taking	Checked to ensure correct positioning against the tree. Children told not to climb up onto the branch Regular checking of the integrity of the ropes and that the knots are sound.	All staff opal team	September 2022	Weekly
Stage Small risk of falling from the sides If children are under the stage there are bolts to be aware of	Area to sit, play games, perform and use as a forest school activities area	Children will be told not to climb on the safety railing at any time. Small drop at front and side, minor risk of fall injury. Children should be told not to push others off the stage. When the bolts are capped (JM to sort) children will be allowed under the stage. Minor risk of banging heads on the wooden beams	All staff to watch children JM to monitor the condition of deck and do repairs when necessary	November 2022	December 2022
Stage canopy Danger of children playing with the ropes.	Stage more accessible in all weathers	Ropes will be secured and marked with the "do not touch" ribbon. Children will be told not to touch the ropes	All staff to monitor. Any loose ropes to be reported to JM	November 2022	Spring 2023 Tarp broken. Secured. Proper roof 31/10/22



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Description of Activity, Principle or Object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit or Utility Or Related Policy	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action Date	Reviewed on
<p>Upright tyre. Risk of falling from the top or tripping through it. Low risk of the tyre falling</p> <p>4/11/22 - Trees either side have been chopped. Children still allowed to climb the tyre. Reminder to not stand up on the stumps.</p>	Climbing, social area, dens	<p>Tyre must be ratchet scrapped at all times. An additional safety rope must always be attached.</p> <p>Ropes and knots should be checked weekly and adjusted as necessary.</p>	Playleaders	September 2022	<p>Weekly</p> <p>All straps retightened 9/5/22 24/6/22</p> <p>4/11/22 Children reminded to not stand up on the tree stumps</p>
<p>New metal shelving</p> <p>Minimal risk of tipping as secured to fence. Small risk of cuts if misused, small risk of shelving becoming hot in the summer.</p>	The shelving is weatherproof and can house loose parts all year without degrading.	Check for bends and snags. Can tape if necessary. Check if it gets hot in summer and warn the children to be careful.	Playleaders	November 2022	Ongoing
<p>Storage area for larger loose parts.</p> <p>Risk of slipping/falling</p>	Risks low. Benefits: gives children more access to loose parts and the ability to tidy up afterwards	Make sure the area is tidied properly periodically. Check for broken items.	OPAL team	November 2022	Ongoing
<p>Oak tree with the rope swing.</p> <p>Tree has possible bacterial wetwood. Should not affect tree but needs to be checked.</p> <p>Possible risk of insects congregating near the sap.</p>	Tree has the swing on and the children enjoy playing there.	Playleaders to watch and check tree.	Playleaders	24/10/22 - Consultation with tree surgeons. Tree is fine	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>19/5/23 Swing restrung after rope frayed.</p>





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					Strapping used instead
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Cut logs from tree felling. Balance beams. risk of falling and dropping logs. Risk of rolling them down the hill.	The children are using the logs to balance on and create walkways with the balance beams. Used in den building etc.	Children have been told not to use the larger logs that will be too heavy to lift. No rolling the logs down the hill.	OPAL team	November 2022	ongoing
Traffic cones	Fun for role play, also as instruments	Children told to be careful lifting as they are a bit heavy.	OPAL team	Jan 22	Ongoing
Perspex screen	Painting drawing/creativity	Heavy and can catch in the wind. Do not move. Adult to ensure the board is in a safe place before use. Risk of paint in eyes. NOT acrylic paint	OPAL team	Feb 22	Ongoing TAKEN APART AS BROKEN
Skipping ropes	Children learning how to skip, playing in a group with friends	Risk of being whipped with a rope as they are plastic, and sometimes used to attach bikes together Children told to use the ropes as intended and not to tie onto other equipment or people	OPAL team	May 23	Ongoing

Risk Assessment Date: September 2022

Assessed by: Ian Gunning

