COLLIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Play Policy

Collis Primary School
Fairfax Road, Teddington TW11 9BS

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Non-Statutory Policy

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1. Introduction

Play is one of the earliest parts of human development and continues for the rest of life. Experiencing quality play is intrinsic to a child's development in a range of areas including wellbeing, social skills and cognition.

Collis Primary School is committed to providing a 'whole' education for children both inside and outside of the classroom. In 2023 it was decided that, following the implementation of 'The Collis Way' to further support our pursuit of 'exceptional' behaviour, a lunchtime play initiative would be implemented in partnership with OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). As we strive to do our best for our children, we are dedicated to providing a rich play setting where 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.

The OPAL 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."*

This policy is informed by our vision:

'Learning to make the world a better place'

To achieve this we follow the 5 Cs of Collis and these are integral to our everyday life.

At Collis we:

- **Care**
  We are a school that relentlessly promotes empathy and wellbeing. We are a place where lots of good things happen. We give children the best time of their lives.
- **Challenge**
  We work to be the best we can. We have an academic environment that encourages and inspires. We are a springboard to help children succeed in life.
- **Collaboration**
  We help each other learn within our learning community; through learning together we can achieve more.
- **Courage**
  We are resilient and keep going even when we are stuck, and we encourage the children to do the same. We do this by preparing and equipping our children for now and the future.
- **Creativity**
  We grow dreams. We enable children to find their true passions. We teach children how to think, not what to think. We help them to understand next steps in their learning journey.

2. Purpose and Aims

Following the School's decision to partner with play specialist company – OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) – to develop 'Amazing play, every day for every child', this policy outlines our daily commitment to providing the strategic and daily operational leadership needed to provide and maintain, safe, high quality play provision for all our children. The OPAL initiative aligns seamlessly with our school vision, our inclusion, behaviour and anti-bullying policies.

Additionally, the school recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes the right to play, recreation and leisure (Article 31) and the right of children to be listened to on matters important to them (Article 12). We acknowledge that we have a duty to take these rights seriously and listen to children's views on their play.

Children spend up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in 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 their friends even more vital. Moreover, research shows that play can enhance language development which is vital for all our children and in particular for EAL learners which is pertinent to our school context as well as those children with deprived speech and language. In spring and summer term 2023, we surveyed different key stakeholders to gain their views on play: pupils, staff and parents. Some of the comments were: *'There is not enough to do which then results in squabbles', 'Behaviour deteriorates when the children are outside compared to in the classroom'.*

Play is defined as any freely chosen activity that a child finds satisfying and creative. It may or may not involve equipment or other people. It should meet the four components of a child's development: physical, intellectual, educational and social. At Collis Primary School, we believe play has many benefits therefore we aim to:

- Ensure play settings provide 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.
- Aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Provide a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.
- Provide a range of environments which will support children's learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- Promote independence and teamwork within children.
- Build emotional and physical resilience.
- Enable 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.
- Encourage self-confidence and the ability to make choices, problem solve and to be creative.
- Maintain children's openness to learning, develop their capabilities and allow them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

These aims align seamlessly with our core values of collaboration, care, challenge, creativity and courage.

3. 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 (2012)

Collis Primary School will use the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance document *'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach'* (September 2012) as the principle 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.*

'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)

The School will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance on Managing Risk in Play and Leisure (see Appendix 1) as its principle guiding document in making decisions relating to risk and play. Our role as play providers is to facilitate the maximum amount of enriching opportunities for children to encounter. They need to learn to manage risk for themselves in an environment that is as safe as it needs to be, rather than completely devoid of risk. The benefit to children of challenging play opportunities should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments. We will adopt a risk-benefit approach and will practice dynamic risk management (see Appendix 2) to manage our duty of care to protect and provide for children's needs. This approach will encourage the children to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support this.

Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. In the words of the play sector publication 'Best Play', 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'*.

Risk assessments of all play provision within the School will be reviewed on an annual basis or whenever significant change/development in play provision/equipment occurs.

4. 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 outdoors. Collis Primary School recognises OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception, the School does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will take remote and ranging 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 the Collis Play Team is as follows:
Head Teacher: Kevin Hogston
Lead Assistant Head: Sophie Macartney
Manager, Lunchtime and After School Club: Paul Dowsett

5. The Adult's Role In Play

Adults in school will have a continuing dialogue with children regarding their thoughts about play. This will predominantly happen in special play assemblies following the CINI structure – Celebrate, Inform, Negotiate, Innovate, school council meetings and via the two-way dialogue that occurs due to strong pupil-teacher relationships that exist in school.

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 (see Appendix 3). 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 play team'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 across the 16 different play types (see Appendix 4). A skilled and experienced member of the play team 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. The play team 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 or change the play space if this is required.

6. Children's Role In Play

The children will have access to their own version of the play policy entitled 'The Collis Way to Play' (see Appendix 5). In it will also include the rights and responsibilities of the children which they will need to do in order to follow the behaviour policy – 'The Collis Way'.

The playground charter ('The Collis Way to Play') will be shared and explained to all children regularly as part of ongoing play assemblies, discussions and dialogue in class and with school council.

7. Equality and Diversity

Through providing a rich play offer meeting every child's needs, we will ensure children (regardless of age, gender, race, disability or other special needs) can develop and thrive, build strong relationships and enjoy school.

8. 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.

In particular, at Collis Primary School, we will make best use of the large field to provide whole year round enjoyment.

Appendix 1 – Health and Safety Executive Guidance on Managing Risk in Play and Leisure

https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf

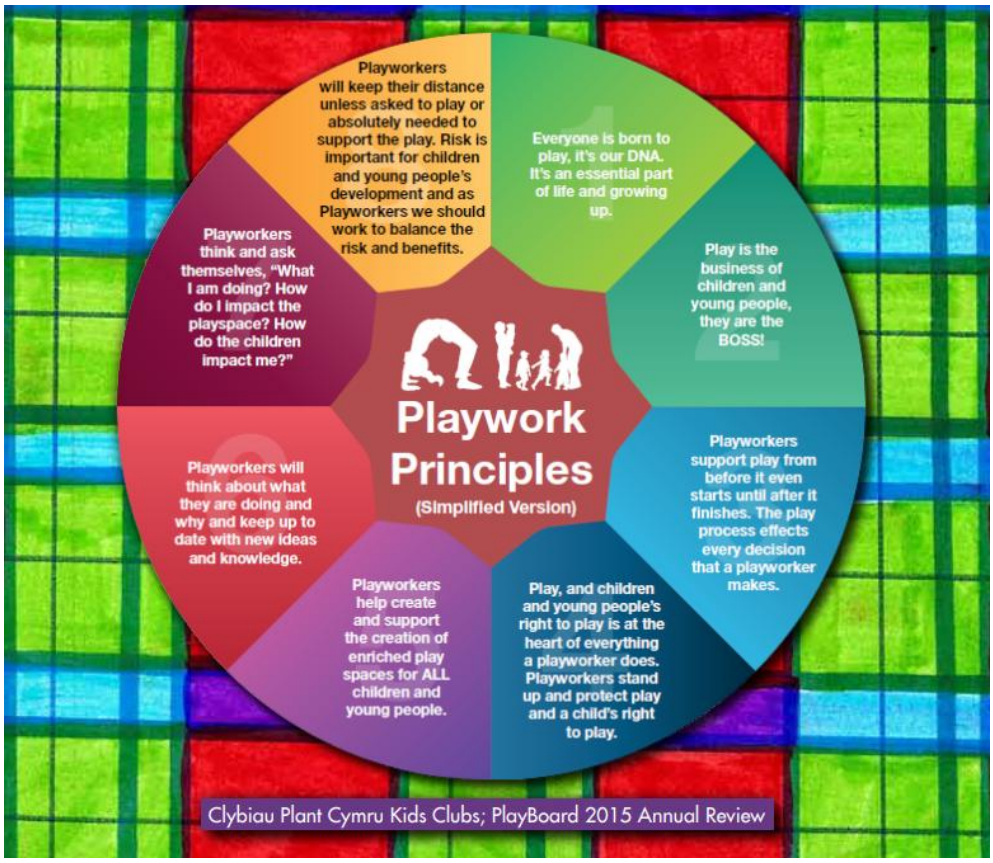
Appendix 2 – Benefit Risk Assessment Record Sheet

Benefit Risk Assessment Record Sheet

Risk assessment date: Assessed by

	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 agreed

Appendix 3 – Playwork Principles



Appendix 4 – 16 Different Play Types



Appendix 5 – The Collis Way to Play

