

Wellesley Primary School
Outside Play Policy

Rationale

(Reference: South Gloucestershire Council Play Policy and Strategy document 2006 - Appendix A)

This policy sets out the school's commitment to ensuring that quality environments for play and informal recreation are available to all its children, and aims to improve the way we think about, and provide, opportunities for play. In line with South Gloucestershire Council policy, the school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment.

The Value of Play

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

- About their bodies and themselves as a person
- About how to get on with people
- About the physical world around them

As a school we 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 is satisfying and freely chosen by the child. It may be serious or light hearted. It may produce something or it may be done simply for its own sake. We aim to ensure children's choice over their experiences is promoted in our grounds.

Aims

- To ensure play settings provide a challenging and stimulating environment.
- To allow children to take risks.
- To provide opportunities for children to develop their skills of getting on with each other.
- 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 curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- To promote independence and team work within children.

Learning Opportunities

- The physical world e.g. earth, air, fire and water
- Man made and natural materials
- Challenge in relation to the physical environment
- Movement e.g. running jumping, climbing, balancing
- Emotions e.g. learning about oneself and others, sadness/gladness, rejection/acceptance,frustration/achievement,boredom/fascination, fear/confidence.
- The operation of the five senses through sounds, textures, tastes, smells and sights
- Social interactions - enhancing self esteem and understanding of others through freely chosen interactions e.g. within peer groups, with individuals, with groups of different ages, abilities, interests, gender, ethnicity and culture.
- Making choices, problem solving, being creative,
- Achieving and also coping with failing,
- Communication and negotiation skills,
- Change e.g. building/demolishing, transforming the environment and experiencing the seasons.

Play and Risk

Managing Risk in Play Provision

'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'.¹

An essential element of exploration within the medium of play is the opportunity for children to experience freely-chosen activities, where they can take acceptable risks and challenge themselves beyond their existing capabilities. Allowing children to take acceptable risks develops their ability to independently judge risks and learn new skills.

*'Without opportunities to take acceptable levels of risk children's development is inhibited, undermining their capacity to deal with the wider unsupervised world.'*²

It is the school's responsibility to strike a balance between the risks and the benefits. This policy sets out the school's overall objectives for children to take acceptable risks

¹ South Gloucestershire Council Managing Risk in Play Provision 'Summary Statement' 2006

² South Gloucestershire Council Play Policy: Play Safety Forum Position Statement (8)

in their play. The school recognises the challenge that this new thinking brings and follows the guidance provided by South Gloucestershire.

Carefully considered and comprehensive risk assessments of all play provision within the school should be reviewed on an annual basis, or whenever significant change/development in play provision/equipment or child circumstances takes place.

Reviewed: Summer 2009

Review Date: Summer 2010