

Playground Risk policy

As a school we are committed to the positive promotion of challenge and risk as part of children's learning opportunities during their playtimes.

We are guided by the statement on play and risk issued by the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE):

The HSE fully recognises that play brings the world to life for children. It provides for an exploration and understanding of their abilities; helps them to learn and develop; and exposes them to the realities of the world in which they will live, which is a world not free from risk but rather one where risk is ever present. The opportunity for play develops a child's risk awareness and prepares them for their future lives.

Striking the right balance between protecting children from the most serious risks and allowing them to reap the benefits of play is not always easy. It is not about eliminating risk. Nor is it about complicated methods of calculating risks or benefits. In essence, play is a safe and beneficial activity. Sensible adult judgements are all that is generally required to derive the best benefits to children whilst ensuring that they are not exposed to unnecessary risk.

Safeguarding is at the heart of all our work. At our school we recognise that we cannot eliminate accidents, but will strive to ensure that we focus on controlling the most serious risks, and those that are not beneficial to the play activity or foreseeable by the user.

What this means at St Teresa's RC Primary School

At our school, we commit to providing children with experiences which help them learn how to manage risk in their play.

1. We will ensure staff are trained and continuously developing their practice to enable children to play freely *and* to experience risk and challenge.
2. We will involve whole school community, particularly children, parents and lunchtime staff in on-going dialogue to promote children's capability to self-manage their playful challenges.
3. School staff will use their own judgement and expertise as well as, where appropriate, the judgement of others¹ to ensure that any proposed controls to manage serious risks are proportionate to the risks involved.
4. We will communicate the agreed controls to staff and children and will use a risk benefit assessment for every type of play activity. We will ensure everyone focuses on the important risks.
5. We will have procedures which enable us to manage small risks in a sensible manner, and which minimise the incidence of any risk which could cause someone serious harm.
6. Our procedures will be reviewed termly and we will have daily and weekly briefings which enable us to manage children and the space in a responsive and proactive manner. Our procedures include:
 - Fixed equipment audits
 - Daily grounds safety checks
 - Equipment maintenance and repair logs
 - Daily communication and activity logs
 - Staff training plan and monitoring criteria

N.B.

Our procedures, risk benefit assessments and staff training and development plan can be found in the appendices, and are available on our website or via the school office.

If you have any further questions, please contact Mrs S Burgess, Head Teacher, via the school office.

Date of policy draft: 23/01/2018

Date of review: 23/01/2019

¹ (E.g. from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Play England, Rospa) and through taking professional advice where necessary (E.g. with regard to tree maintenance, built structural assessments). Support of Charlotte (School playtimes and Grounds) and Pascale (Grounds, Legal, Community) and Community Neighbourhood/Policing team, as well as the school community.