

Lyons Hall Primary School

Play Policy

Rationale

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 article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Play Principles and the Department for Children, Schools and Families publication 'Managing Risk in a Play Provision', our school believes that all children need opportunities to play which allows them to explore, manipulate and experience their environment, free from unacceptable levels of risk.

The Value of Play

Play enables children to learn through experiences that cannot be taught. Free play can also have a direct positive impact on a child's ability to meet formal educational goals. Through play children can:

- Make new friends and develop their communication skills.
- Learn how to play new games.
- Develop their motor skills.
- Learn how to get along with other people, sharing and working as a team.
- Learn to take risks and keep safe.
- Develop their problem solving skills.
- Learn about themselves as a person and the physical world around them.

Adult's role in play

The adult's role in play will be governed by the Playwork Principles which state:

- The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process which will be informed by in-house training and education.
- The role of the playworker is to recognise their own impact on the play space and to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.'

The adults at Lyons Hall are committed to supporting the children, helping them to facilitate learning through play and ensuring play is a valued and exciting part of each day.

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.

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 takes place.

Play at Lyons Hall Primary School

At Lyons Hall Primary school we believe that play:

- **Is inclusive.** Everybody is able to take part.
- **Is Innate.** It can be physical, imaginative, creative and explorative. It stretches perceptions and encourages all areas of development.
- **Is child Led.** Having the freedom of choice.
- **Is about taking managed risks and being challenged.** It will help children to make informed and adapted decisions in play and life.
- **Encourages co-operation and responsibility.** Everybody shares and works as part of the team.
- **Is exciting, fun and full of laughter!**

¹ Department for Children, Schools and Families: *Managing Risk in Play Provision Summary Statement*. Nottingham. 2008.