

Newbold Verdon primary School

Dragon Playtime Risk Benefit analysis



Dragon Playtimes

“Health and safety law in Great Britain has an enduring principle – that those who create risks are best placed to control them, and that they should do so in a reasonable and sensible way.”

Judith Hackitt H&SE Chair 2015

The purpose of Risk-Benefit Assessments are to enable you to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in your play environment.

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

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

Our school approach follows best practice advice from the Health and Safety Executive, The Play Safety Forum, Zurich Municipal Insurance, and Local Authority Health and Safety Advisory Teams.

Rationale:

1. Risk-Benefit Assessment - means you should look at your 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 using the risk-benefit template provided. Your assessments should cover hazards deemed to have the potential for unacceptable risk of death or serious injury.

2. Assemblies - These should be held regularly with children to discuss, inform and negotiate risks that arise during play. A brief written log must be kept noting risks discussed and how they will be managed.

3. Policy - a play policy approved by the governing body and leadership is essential and should form the basis for all staff understanding and decision making about managing risk in play.

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4. Inspection - technical reports of engineered fixed play equipment. Fixed equipment should have an annual inspection. Ongoing visual inspections should be carried out by a member of staff and a record kept.

5. Dynamic Risk Management - means that staff should be aware of the 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 of harm whilst preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Dynamic risk management in playwork requires that staff maintain 'relaxed vigilance'. This means that the quality of play will suffer if the adult's attitude is one of hovering, anxious over-attention. There should be an assumption that most play is not dangerous and that children can develop a high degree of competence, given practice, over time. However, staff should also be vigilant, they should be aware of the kinds of play and resources being used in their patch, who is playing and what the likely risks are.

Intervention – if staff think that serious harm (meaning death, life-long debilitating injury or hospitalisation), is imminent or probable they should intervene to either stop or manage the risk. If they think that serious harm is possible but not probable, they should remain vigilant. If serious harm is very unlikely then they should probably focus their attention elsewhere or act to further improve the quality of the play offer.

| 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 |
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| Level of adult supervision in children's play. Play policy principles are adhered to in developing and enhancing play. | Children are able to follow the play principles that are described in our play policy. | We use a form of supervision called 'ranging supervision'. This means that staff are situated across our site in key locations and move around designated areas, engaging with play, carrying out dynamic risk assessments and supporting the school's values and rules. This level of supervision means | ND to introduce Autumn 1 | Ongoing |

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| | | <p>that staff focus on the ‘sensible and proportionate control of real risks’ (Health and Safety Executive – Play Policy) and are readily available to react to incidents as well as respond to children’s invitations to play and opportunities to extend play values</p> <p>Areas chosen for: Varied play environment during lunchtime and playtimes, ease of non-invasive supervision</p> <p>Area prepared by: Sourcing relevant equipment to nurture varied play experiences,</p> <p>Risks managed by: Play team introduction and discussion of all areas and specific risks, Dragon playtime staff identified to check equipment regularly Dragon playtime team regular updates</p> | | |
| <p>Pupils playing with different loose parts play equipment: Potential for splinters, crush injury from cable drums, ply sheets and pallets. Potential injury when lifting heavy objects. (See separate equipment risks below)</p> | <p>Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way, maximising their play.</p> | <p>Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe holding, moving and stacking. “Ready, steady, lift” – bent knees and straight back.</p> | <p>ND</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| Children playing with rope and other loose parts equipment that has the potential for neck injury and strangulation and any other areas of being bound. | Thick rope enables pulling and dragging and other safe applications such as demarcation, den-building etc.. Using rope enables children to tie things together to be creative. Dragon playtime team are vigilant on the use of rope and any other loose strings that has the potential for injuries. ND/LC/JF to monitor the loose part equipment through regular checks | | | |
| Pupils playing on a field which is undulating. Supervision difficult and risk of pupils being injured and out of sight | Future benefit of physical play (rolling, scrambling and jumping) | Children to be briefed in assembly regarding running and playing on undulating surfaces and being out of sight at the bottom of the field. | ND | |
| Loose parts play such as plastic tubes, guttering etc is broken | Enabling children to play with the loose parts play enables children to develop their creative play. Play policy deems what is appropriate and inappropriate play. | Children are encouraged to develop imaginative, creative play. Regular assemblies are held to ensure that all children are aware of their responsibilities at break times to play with loose parts appropriately | ND Dragon playtime team | ongoing |

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| <p>Pallet Use Risk of using pallets include: Unstable stacking, nails from popping up, slats breaking from under pressure, minor splinters caused by hands on roughly sawn wood. At Risk pupils: Harm - category: Splinters – med Scrapes – low Cuts - low</p> | <p>Enabling children to play with the loose parts play enables children to develop their creative play. Useful knowledge and skills of construction. Healthy living link to core strength, cardiovascular and mental health</p> | <p>Through the play policy and through assemblies the children have been taught the expectations for using more than one pallet. Pallets chosen for: Reasonable condition/sturdy, Any protruding nails removed/made safe. Area prepared by: JF sanding down pallets prior to use. Risks managed by (pupils worked with through play assembly): Don't build above waist height, Pallet may break, uncovering Protruding nail/screw, be careful and tell play team, Pallets can give splinters if not handled correctly. Children know that two children should move pallets (KS2) and four children (KS1) All pallets will be inspected for structural integrity by staff once a week for exposed nails, potential finger traps, broken slats etc.</p> | <p>ND JF</p> | |
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| <p>Use of crates or pallets are stacked too highly and children are injured. Main risk for this will be from unstable stacks, or from toppling of pallets when balanced on their edge.</p> | <p>Play policy deems what is appropriate and inappropriate play.</p> | <p>Children are aware of the rules for stacking any crates and pallets. This has been communicated clearly to the children. DPT remain vigilant in the areas where pallets/crates are in play.</p> | <p>ND DPT</p> | |
| <p>Risk of using baskets as stepping stones or being piled up on each other.</p> | <p>Enabling children to play with the loose parts play enables children to develop their creative play.</p> | <p>Through regular assemblies children are made aware themselves to be able to identify broken pieces of loose parts and to highlight this to different adults. Regular check are made of all equipment.</p> | <p>ND DPT</p> | <p>ongoing</p> |
| <p>Tyre use At Risk pupils: Harm - category: Knocks – low Scrapes – low</p> | <p>Play Policy, Benefits of children engaged in an exciting and engaging activity. Exploration of movement and imaginative play Useful knowledge and skills of construction. Healthy living link to core strength, cardiovascular and mental health. Challenge for gross motor skills when moving and</p> | <p>Tyres chosen for: Reasonable tread, no metal showing, Size and weight medium/low – moving Large tractor - climbing. No slope long/steep enough to produce dangerous inertia when tyre rolled down. Risks managed by (pupils worked with through play assembly): Don't build above waist height,</p> | <p>ND</p> | <p>ongoing</p> |

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| | lifting types. | Don't move tractor tyres for climbing/balancing only. If rolling down | | |
| Bikes/Trikes/ Scooters/ramps | 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/scooters, crashing into others with bikes/scooters and injury while pushing others on bikes/scooters Children to be shown possible pitfalls of falling off ramps Children to be shown how to use the ramps safely <i>Awareness of finger trap risks.</i> <i>Staff to make sure all bikes and scooters have proper rubber handles or taped off</i> | ND LTS | ongoing |

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Appendix 1

What are Loose Parts?

Loose parts are any materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play.

Fabricated Loose Parts (see list A) are anything man-made that is not a toy or a specific piece of sport equipment.

Natural Loose Parts (see list B) is any moveable natural material that children can transport, mix, construct with or incorporate into their play.

The five rules of loose parts are:

1. Plentiful; large quantities, many items (4 per child)
2. Accessible; always available, got-out and put-away by children, available across the whole environment
3. Varied; lots and lots and lots of different stuff and material
4. Safe-enough; regularly checked, monitored and disposed of
5. Replaced: you will need to keep replacing and refreshing your loose parts

Loose parts are such an essential element of all play environments that they will require their own Loose Parts Action Plan (at the end of this document).

Health and Safety when using Loose Parts:

When using loose parts, the health and safety considerations are simple and practical.

Before putting Loose Parts into the play environment all scrap should be checked that it is safe enough to play with. Pockets, bags etc should all be cleared out, cable cut-off etc

With more unusual items, it pays to run your hands lightly over surfaces and bend and wiggle bits to test if they are going to flake, fracture or break

Ensure that all part edges and surfaces are smooth not rough, i.e. wooden items. If they have become rough, sand before use

Create a 'broken-zone' and encourage children to put broken items in it

Stop and think, what concerns do you have about risk? If you think an item is really dangerous then don't use it. If you need to negotiate with children to manage risk then inform children and staff about high and low risk uses of the items (e.g. pencil - writing low risk, stabbing - high risk!)

OPAL recommends not more than 4 minutes of playtime should be tidy up. Use a traffic light system. Lots of greens get bonus playtime. Lots of reds means a one day closure. Orange brings a discussion to the play assembly.

During play:

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Inform those playing that as some items are heavier or long, they should not be carried or held above head height and that some should ideally be moved using two people to ensure that no injuries occur

Good playwork practice will always involve risk-benefit discussions with children and about safe-enough use

Be clear of the purpose when intervening in play.

After play:

Children should tidy up. Five-minute warning, everyone pick-up three things, throw them into the play-store or the broken zone.

Whilst tidying up take stock of all the loose parts and identify any breakages, damage or dirt which needs to be sorted out before next playtime.

Issues of dispute and difficulty e.g.: tidy-up, safety and sharing, are learning opportunities and should be discussed in play assemblies and circle times.

| List A Fabricated loose parts | |
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| Fabricated | Sources |
| Astro Turf Off cuts | Landscapers |
| Boards, Old Cabinet Doors, Panels | Parents, trades people |
| Bread, milk, bottle and grocery crates | Traders |
| Brief cases | Parents, charity shops |
| Buggies, push chairs | Parents |
| Cable drums | Trades people |
| Cardboard boxes | Trades, deliveries, parents |
| Carpet samples | Carpet shops |

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| Carpet squares | Carpet shops |
| Cuddly Toys | Charity Shops |
| Fabrics - all shapes and sizes | Parents, Jumble Sales, Charity Shops. Fabric shops, Markets |
| Foam pipe covers and noodles | Plumbers, Pound shops |
| Guttering | Trades people, suppliers |
| Plastic trugs and bins | DIY Stores and Internet |
| Ropes | Ships Chandlers, Internet |
| Small Children's Bike Wheels, wheels | Parents, DIY stores, internet |
| Small wheely bins | Online |
| Sofa and chair cushions | Parents |
| Steering Wheels | Scrap dealers |
| Suitcases - all sizes | Parents, charity shops |
| Tarps | DIY and Building Merchants |
| Traffic Cones | Internet, Highway Companies |
| Tubes of all kinds | Parents, trades |
| Tyres; car, Go-kart, motorbike, cycle, tractor | Garages, Qwick Fit etc |
| Waterproof Cot Mattresses | Parents |
| Wooden block and off cuts | Carpenters, Builders |

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| List B Natural loose parts | |
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| Natural | Sources |
| Branches and sticks | Parents, Local woodland, tree surgeons |
| Feathers | Internet |
| Fruit | Fruit trees |
| Grass | Plants |
| Leaves | Plants |
| Logs | Firewood companies, Local Authority, Tree surgeons |
| Mud | Nature, Landscape suppliers, Builders Merchants |
| Pea gravel | Builders Merchants, Landscape Suppliers |
| Peat | Garden Centres |
| Pinecones | Woods and Forests |
| Play bark/woodchip | Landscape Suppliers, Play Companies |
| Sand (Washed dredged not 'Sharp') | Builders Merchants, Landscape supplies |
| Sea Pebbles | Landscape suppliers |
| Shells | Seaside |

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| Water | Clouds, tap |
| Wood off cuts | Carpenters, Builders, Woodworkers |

| <p>Loose Parts Safe Enough Guidance In all cases talking with children in play assemblies and in the playground is an essential part of the risk management process</p> | | |
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| Items | Risk | Management |
| Suitcases | Being Locked In Suffocation | Remove or break lock Make holes in airtight cases |
| Buggies and pushchairs | Finger traps on folding | Cable tie open |
| Tyres | Puncture, cuts, crushing | Reject tyres with exposed wires, check for nails and remove. Don't roll very heavy tyres |
| Pallets | Splinters Scratches and punctures Sharp wood Crushing | Select quality pallets Children sand down rough pallets Remove exposed nails with pliers as soon as exposed Don't use very heavy pallets apart from flat on ground. |
| Bags, clothing | Hidden | Check all pockets and compartments |

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| | hazardous items | |
| Electrical Items, Hoovers, toaster etc | Suffocation from cords | Cut off all electrical cords |
| Other | Puncturing Cuts Entrapment Strangulation | Remove pointed items, items with very sharp edges or that will shatter Assess risk of fingers getting stuck remove if too high Remove thin wires, cords and strings. Keep rope play in view and use thicker ropes. |