

Connaught Junior School Play Policy

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Introduction

This policy sets out Connaught Junior School's commitment to ensuring high quality play opportunities are available to all children. Good play opportunities are a child's right, essential for children's well-being and balanced development regardless of age, sex, ability or background. As a school, we aim to improve the way we think, develop and provide opportunities for play. We believe that play is essential for a child's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.

Rationale

Good play opportunities are a child's right, essential for children's well-being and balanced development regardless of age, sex, ability or background. During a child's time at primary school, they will spend 1.4 years of their school attendance in playtime. This time is extremely valuable and needs strategic and coherent planning. Changes in culture and society have led to "play poverty" in childhood which has numerous negative impacts.

At Connaught Junior School, we believe high quality play experiences enable children to use their initiative, develop their confidence and self-esteem, problem solve, explore, be imaginative, creative, socialise, experience success and develop positive attitudes to learning. Better play means happier children. Happier children means fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school, more effective lessons, core skills development, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary problems, fewer accidents and happier staff.

Play England drew up The Charter for Children's Play that sets out a vision for play and states that:

- Children need time and space to play at school.
- Adults should let children play.
- Children value and benefit from staffed play provision.
- Skilled play workers enrich children's play.
- Children sometimes need extra support to enjoy their right to play.

We fully recognise its duties and responsibilities to support children's playtime while they are at school.

Through our belief in children's rights, we aim to provide a secure, caring environment where all children are happy, intrinsically motivated, relaxed and able to reach their potential.

Children have the right to be happy therefore to respect this right the children must follow instructions, use equipment without hurting others, help others who need it, assess risk and tidy equipment away and have fun. Adults respect this right by providing opportunities for creative,

exciting play, assessing risk daily, encouraging children to assess risk also and helping children to tidy up. Support is given to children who have additional needs at playtime.

Aims

- To give enjoyment.
- To promote play as a pleasurable, worthwhile activity.
- To provide children with a play setting that is both stimulating and challenging.
- To allow children to take measured risks.
- To develop self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and resilience and a positive attitude to learning.
- To encourage creativity, self-expression and imaginative thinking.
- To stimulate curiosity and encourage investigation.
- To develop motor skills.
- To help physical development and co-ordination.
- To enhance language development.
- To foster social and emotional skills necessary for integration within the classroom and beyond.
- To stimulate curiosity and foster skills of observation, investigation and problem solving in all areas of the curriculum.
- To increase social awareness through role-play and co-operative play.
- To give children the opportunity to investigate the differing properties of varying materials.

Links to Learning

Play is recognised for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning, a finding confirmed by many studies of early childhood. Research shows that play can enhance problem solving; it is also widely regarded as providing opportunities for social interaction and language development. The contribution of play to educational development is suggested through the inherent value of different play types e.g. through risk taking and exploratory play in formal and informal settings, allowing children to experiment, try new things and push their boundaries. The other area of focus for the impact of play and play work on education and learning is the role of play at school break periods and the impact on children's behaviour and learning in class.

As a result of implementing this policy we believe that children will:

- be happier;
- increase self-awareness and self-esteem;
- improve language and communication skills;
- improve concentration;
- improve their imagination, independence and creativity;
- improve social skills;
- be resilient, confident, good problem solvers;
- be ready for anything as a result of negotiation and independence of thought;
- be better at problem solving;
- develop life skills; and improve physical development, co-ordination and fitness.

Definition

Play is recognised as any activity that a child enters into that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated and that actively engages the child. This activity meets the four components of a child's development:

Physical: direct impact on physical development, co-ordination and fitness;

Intellectual: cognitive development, imagination;

Educational: the knowledge and understanding of academic outcomes; and

Social: the development of values, beliefs and self-perception and the parallel communication skills, leadership and teamwork this enhances.

Connaught Junior School recognises that:

- high quality play allows children to be creative and co-operative;
- adults' roles in great play is to be responsive to children's invitations and requests;
- great quality play may be solitary or social;
- great play invites investigation; and
- great play makes children happy and happy children are better learners.

Rights, Equality and Access

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

Connaught Junior School acknowledges General Comment 17 from the UN which reminds all state parties they have a duty to uphold children's right to play and to choose the kind of play that is suitable for them whatever their age, gender or background.

Health, Safety, Benefit and Risk

Children should be encouraged and supported to encounter and 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 must be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments.

Connaught Junior School will use the Health and Safety Executive's 'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach' (2012) as its primary guidance source in decisions related to risk and play. The school will use a 'risk benefit' approach to balance its duty of care to protect and its duty of care to provide.

The Adults' Role in Play

We believe that The Playwork Principles should be the main source of information and guidance for adults whose principle roles are to supervise, resources and support children's free play.

We believe that it is the job of a play worker to ensure that the broadest possible range of play opportunities are available to children, to observe, reflect and analyse the play that is happening and select a mode of intervention or make a change to the play space if needed.

Play workers ensure that the play space is inclusive – supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way.

Environment

At Connaught, we will:

- use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning and playing
- include the children when planning for playing and learning outdoors
- ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity;
- encourage the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things; and
- give children the opportunity to manage, play in and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors.
- enrich the quality of the environment to maximise variety of play types and increase play value

Strategic Aims and Practices

Connaught Junior School has entered into an agreement with OPAL Outdoor Play and Learning CIC to support the development of the quality of our playtime provision.

1. The Outdoor Environment

Connaught Junior School will create plans to transform the school grounds over several years to promote the continued creation and recreation of the play space by the children. Our ultimate aim is to enable children to use large areas of our school during their free play times. In order to do this we have provide plenty of open ended materials for play opportunities.

2. Resources - Loose Parts

Research shows that the greater the range of experiences presented by a play environment, the more children will naturally explore and learn through play. The vital ingredients for these experiences are loose parts: attractive, flexible materials that children can readily change, manipulate and control for themselves.

Play sheds will provide a fully accessible and controllable environment for children to play how they want to. These elements lead to a high level of ownership which is a powerful ingredient in providing a positive play and learning experience for a child.

3. First Aid

Lunchtime supervisors carry a First Aid bag, which contains basic First Aid equipment. There is also additional First Aid equipment stored in the office. **All of the lunchtime staff and Teaching Assistants are First Aid trained.** Any head bumps must be reported to parents via a phone call or text from the school's office. All First Aid incidents should be recorded using the First Aid file situated in the First aid room.

4. Clothing

During the colder and wet weather, staff and children when walking on the school field should wear wellies or trainers. Children should also wear coats during cold weather. If partaking in muddy or wet play, children could also wear waterproof trousers.

5. Monitoring

The school will continue to use the OPAL audit tool and pupil surveys to monitor implantation of its play policy, strategy and action plan.

6. Health and Safety

All activities, play areas and equipment will be subject to standard checks on a daily and/or periodic basis. These checks will be kept on file in the office.

Risk-benefit assessments for areas, equipment and activities will be held on file in the office for inspection. All new activities which involve potential significant risk will be subject to individual or generic assessment as part of the planning process. All previous assessments will be reviewed as and when appropriate.

It is the responsibility of all staff, visitors and staff to work within agreed policy and procedures and to adhere to all control measures imposed as a result of assessments.

It is the responsibility of all carers to bring any potential hazard or concerns regarding the site, equipment or activities to the attention of the Head teacher.

Policies

This policy links to our other school's policies on:

Anti-bullying Policy

Behaviour Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Appendices

'The Playwork Principles' (2004) -Play England

'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balances Approach' (2012) - HSE