



IGNITE INNOVATE INSPIRE

Policy for Adventurous Play

*“Children need the freedom and time to **play**. **Play** is not a luxury. **Play** is a necessity.” – Kay Redfield Jamison*

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Curriculum Vision: Why we facilitate Adventurous Play in our curriculum.

At Monkhouse, we believe all children will be ambitious, courageous, resilient, respectful and kind so that they fulfill their unique potential and become active members of the wider global community. Play is a huge part of our school day at Monkhouse, and both children and staff look forward to getting outside to play and explore together. The Outdoor Adventurous Play is focussed on improving the quality of play for all children.

What we facilitate through our Adventurous Play curriculum

At Monkhouse, we aim to ignite a passion for learning and exploring by facilitating imaginative outdoor play. We give children the freedom to choose where to play and who and what to play with. Through adventurous play, all ages are integrated in an inclusive playtime environment, where we hope to inspire children and unlock their imaginations. We believe high quality play leads to happier children and that happier children show more positive behaviours and attitudes, which creates effective minds ready for learning and increases mental well-being.

How we facilitate our play curriculum

At Monkhouse, we provide an adventurous play environment with a wide-range of play opportunities to ensure outdoor learning provision across school meets the wider social and emotional needs of our children. We regularly evaluate the play environment to ensure we are improving the quality of play. Adventurous play and the adult facilitation of play at Monkhouse offers children the opportunity to increase their self-awareness and self-esteem, improve their language and communication skills, develop their imagination, independence and creativity, whilst also building resilience, confidence and social interactions within a range of problem solving experiences. Staff may question, offer an alternative idea or take on a role within the imaginative play to allow the child to get the maximum from each experience whilst also staying safe through ongoing risk assessment. Children who struggle with imaginative play, unstructured times, busy surroundings and social skills will be supported by staff and play leaders who will offer them a choice of activities linked to all play types in quieter and more enclosed spaces. Adventurous play works alongside our Behaviour for Learning and Wellbeing, PSHE and learning environment policies, to create a respectful, welcoming and kind playing environment to allow all children to explore the world around them. The pupil leaders will work in collaboration with parents, school staff, play team and children in all key stages to gather views and implement necessary changes, ensuring a high quality of provision is maintained.

In EYFS, play is an integral part of the school day. Children are taught about risk and how to use apparatus as safely as possible. Being exposed to adventurous play develops the child's ability to

make sound judgement and stretch their physical capability. Adventurous play is sometimes called risky play which is thrilling and challenging that involves a (managed) risk of physical injury. Each time a child has a minor accident, learning and adaptation happen. Throughout the EYFS, it helps children to develop independence and problem-solving and provides direct experience of cause and effect. Children develop coordination and bodily control whilst gaining a boost in their self-confidence and emotional resilience, promoting self-regulation and thereby reducing stress and fears. Children are given freedom to truly play and the opportunity to explore with high awareness/low intervention from adults who lend guidance and support or intervene when there is a real risk for serious injury. Monkhouse Primary EYFS provides experiential learning (learn by doing) and creates environments that are child-centred. Children will be observed playing games such as tag, climbing and jumping off structures, superhero play, racing, building structures and using tools.

Risk and Benefit

A range of research studies have found that the social, physical and mental benefits to children of managed risks are vast. Children become more resilient, adaptable and are keen to try new experiences. Children should be provided with opportunities to challenge themselves and also to experience successes and failures. At Monkhouse, we are committed to providing these experiences for our children in a managed way to get them ready for adult life - where risk assessment is crucial. The Health and Safety Executive offer guidance on the provision of play in educational settings and state that:

'HSE fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE understands and accepts that this means children will often be exposed to play environments which, whilst well managed, carry a degree of risk and sometimes potential dangers'. (HSE, 2013)

We facilitate opportunities for children 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 should be balanced with any potential risk when carrying out risk assessments. We will adopt a risk-benefit approach to manage our duty of care to protect and our duty of care to provide for children's needs. Where new equipment is introduced, appropriate use will be demonstrated and rules of use clearly communicated. This will be regularly updated in our risk assessment.

Monkhouse will use the Health and Safety Executive's guidance on Managing Risk in Play and Leisure (www.hse.gov.uk) and 'The Statement on Managing Risk in Play Provision' (Appendix 1) as its principle guiding documents in making decisions relating to risk and play.

Assessment and Monitoring for engagement and sustainability

The assessment and monitoring of adventurous play at Monkhouse happens daily to correspond with AFL principles used in teaching and learning and to our dedication to safety and safeguarding in school. Pupil-voice questionnaires, staff and parental feedback have been used to evaluate the effectiveness and the impact of adventurous play. Regularly monitoring behaviour incidents in school, using our behaviour for learning policy, informs assessment into its effectiveness in supporting positivity and mental well-being for our children.

Participation - Community, School, Local, Regional, National and Global

At Monkhouse, we recognise the importance of community links with pupils, parents and the wider community. We have involved our local community by asking for support to maintain our provision; getting to where we are now has been a community driven project with families and local companies joining together to make a difference.

Impact

Children enjoy playtimes; they feel safe and happy playing. When adventurous play is offered, children assess risks and make judgements on what is safe for their play. Adults interact and add to their play through facilitation and supervision. Children are happier, more sociable and resilient. As a result of the freedom and responsibility that comes with adventurous play, behavioural

incidents have reduced and children return to the classroom ready to learn. We have an abundance of play equipment that has been kindly donated by our community. Children have the opportunity to play on scooters, wheely trays. They can perform with their friends on the stage, use instruments and fancy dress clothes, build dens, experiment in the mud kitchen and create their own small world play. Adventurous play has not only improved the opportunities and experiences at break times, it has also having an impact on the children's creativity, stamina and confidence within the classroom.

APPENDIX 1

Play, Challenge and Risk - Statement

Play is an essential part of children's development. Quality active play can not only provide opportunities to develop a wide range of physical skills, but also allow for choice, introduce challenge and self risk assessment, develop problem solving skills, promote cooperation, and increase confidence and independence. Active play provision will vary with age and ability, and the setting in which it is provided, but it is always important to provide opportunities for active play outdoors wherever and whenever possible.

Play is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. "Freely chosen" means that the children choose when and which play activity to undertake. It is not part of a set programme or curriculum and does not have any steps that need to be completed. "Personally directed" means that the children themselves agree with the roles or rules of the activity, they decide what outcomes they desire, if any. "Intrinsically motivated" means that it is done for its own sake and not for any externally provided reward or certificate. In short it is done for fun.

Play and Risk

Children need and want to take risks during active play. Quality play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities, striking a balance between the risks and the benefits. This is done through risk assessment which:

- Ensures the likelihood of serious injury is extremely low
- Makes sure potential hazards are clear
- Uses practical ways to manage reasonable risk

Supervision

The law requires that children in school have supervision but for primary school playtimes there are no stated ratios. During the school day there should be one or more adults present outdoors. The school recognises three models of supervision Direct, Remote and Ranging. Except for new children in reception the school does not believe direct supervision is possible or beneficial. Supervision will take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

Managing Risk in Play Provision

"Safety in play provision is not absolute and cannot be addressed in isolation." Play is first and foremost for children and if it is not exciting and attractive to them it will fail, no matter how 'safe' it is. Designers, managers and providers will need to reach compromises in meeting these sometimes conflicting goals. These compromises are a matter of judgement, not of mechanistic assessment. The judgements should be based on both social attitudes and on broadly-based expert opinion informed by current best practice. They should be firmly rooted in objectives concerned with children's enjoyment and benefit. And they should take into account the concerns of parents." Managing Risk in Play Provision, Play Safety Forum, National Children's Bureau, 2002

"It makes clear that safety must be considered at all stages of play provision but that inevitably there will be risk of injury when children play, as there is risk of injury in life generally. We must not

lose sight of the important developmental role of play for children in pursuit of the unachievable goal of absolute safety. The important message is though that there must be freedom from unacceptable risk of life-threatening or permanently disabling injury in play.” Health and Safety Executive, in *Managing Risk in Play Provision*, 2002

Health & Safety Executive Key message: ‘Play is great for children’s well-being and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool’.

CHILDREN’S PLAY AND LEISURE – PROMOTING A BALANCED APPROACH, HSE, 2012