

Drake Primary School with 'Little Pirates'

A Play Friendly School



Drake Primary School and 'Little Pirates' Child Care centre

recognise the importance of play in the whole of school life, and sets out a whole school approach, incorporated in the values and principles below.

The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child Article 31 states that every child has the right to play. The General comment on Article 31 states:

‘Fundamental to the quality of childhood, to children’s entitlement to optimum development, to the promotion of resilience and to the realisation of other rights, play and recreation are essential to the health and well-being of children and promote the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, self-efficacy and physical, social, cognitive emotional strength and skills. This contributes to all aspects of learning. ‘

Drake's School and 'Little Pirates' hereafter referred to as **the school** is to include all management, year leaders and staff, parents, carers, wider stakeholders.

The school management, head, teachers and auxiliary staff are committed to providing space, time and play facilities that encourage a quality play environment which is flexible, adaptable, varied and interesting.

The school recognises that playing is children's default setting and that the culture of the school will support playing and its characteristics of self-organisation, emergence, unpredictability, flexibility and 'goal less ness'.

It must maximise the potential for resilience, socialising, creativity, resourcefulness, challenge, and choice amongst the playing and learning children. The school is a trusted play space where children feel free to play in their own way, on their own terms and therefore be more receptive to learning.

The school will manage the playtimes and ensure they are programmed throughout the school day. These will be times when there are no other demands on the children, and that the children's self-organised play is not directed by adults unless asked for by the children.

The whole school recognises that the parameters for behaviour at playtimes are discussed, and open to change, with the prime focus and essence to support and facilitate the play process. Play behaviour will be on the agenda of school meetings.

The playtime supervisors must understand the play needs of the children and not interfere. All playtime supervisors will be given help and direction by the play work specialist.

The whole school needs to make play accessible for all children: children with disabilities, children with differing cultures and backgrounds and recognises gender difference by making sure no child misses out on play or playtime. At Drake, the children within the classroom referred to as 'the Pod', have SEN, SEBD and further complex needs and these children must have access to a stimulating play area as close as possible to the classroom.

Little Pirates is the Early Years day care facility with children from 1 month to 5 years old within the school. Here the demand is for developing facilities with the stated aim to provide more outdoor playable space for the children so that they are motivated by the environment as well as the adults. This will ensure the foundation of best practice from the earliest interaction with the school.

Families and carers are to be involved fully in the school including provision for appropriate clothing, and although subject to powerful and contradictory messages about keeping children safe, should be encouraged to not over-regulate or restrict play through fear.

The school management will implement designing spaces and introducing practices that facilitate all children's play, indoor and outdoor. This to include 'Loose parts' from the simple, like chalk, to the more challenging, like den or go cart building, dressing up and sand and water play.

The whole school recognises risk on the basis of 'Risk-Benefit' and uses this basis to inform all decision-making and implementation of improvements to play areas and play times including bespoke play structures to the children's designs.

In agreement and in line with the proposal from the Forest School lead, the vision must encompass and encourage the ethos and values of forest schools which are at its core, the play principles.

Linking with the curriculum is vital, so using the template of the Forest School and the current lead person, the school should aim to promote and provide more outdoor learning environments/space.

The school should take steps to further develop the Forest School offsite into woodland areas in conjunction with other agencies such as the Woodland Trust as well as with parents/carers within the community. Forest School should be further developed from the primary school into the secondary school, to continue the development and wellbeing of all children as they grow into young people, to reinforce the resilience and risk benefit built by play.

In agreement with the Playwork principles, management and staff recognise intervention in children's play is a reflective process based on a style of leaving children to improve their performance and to organise

their own uninterrupted play, and as adults, to wait to be invited to participate. Both observation and supervision of play is thoughtful and reflective as many adults have differing views on acceptable play behaviour which can lead to misunderstanding.

The whole school recognises the need for the staff, management and parents to have professional development in the value of play in the whole learning process, and to this end, employs a trained playwork specialist as part of the school team.

The school will check progress by establishing criteria based on this statement, measuring and reviewing development with a clear and concise action and implementation process of review. The agreed quality criteria will clearly state how, what, when and which action and which person is responsible for that implementation. Through each stage an agreed audit process will ensure that the children's rights remain, whilst also encouraging staff professional development, parental involvement, and the wider stakeholders and community understanding and support.

'Prepare the Child for the Road

not the Road for the Child'