



Risk Benefit Assessment

Risk Benefit Assessment Record Sheet and Advice

The purpose of **Risk Benefit Assessments** are to enable us to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in our play environment. They cannot and will not provide complete 'safety' and this is not their purpose.

They can help us to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm. We have two approaches to managing risk: Standing Benefit-Risk Assessments and Dynamic

Risk Management

Standing Risk Benefit Assessments means we look at our 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.

Dynamic Risk Benefit Management means that staff should be aware of 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 or harm with preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible, and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Common areas that need standing assessment include:

Boundaries to dangerous areas, trees management and tree climbing, fixed equipment and inspection, broken loose parts, rope tying especially at height, water use and water features.

Staff will carry out daily, on-going risk assessment and pass on any potential hazards to a member of SLT or a caretaker.





Risk Benefit Assessment

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	Nominat ed person	Action Date	Reviewed on
Pupils playing with heavy loose play equipment whilst den building: Potential for splinters, crush injury from cable drums, ply sheets and Pallets, large cable reels. Potential injury when lifting heavy objects.	Pupils able to lift and move heavy play parts and use in a safe, creative way.	Pupils briefed in assemblies about safe holding, moving and stacking. Staff principles of dynamic risk assessment and guide children in movement and of heavier play parts.	OPAL Team	April 2026	April 2027
Trees unsafe to climb: potential injury falling from trees with thin or weak branches. In dry weather the children can climb the trees up to the no-go lines ONLY Risk of falling injuries.	Tree climbing allows for extension of motor skills and assessment of own risk	All children briefed not to climb trees. Supervision by staff to enforce this. We will lay gym mats underneath selected trees to enable safe climbing as part of the project at a later date. Children to only climb trees that have been identified to 1.5m.	OPAL team	April 2026	April 2027
Pupils playing in different environment with new potential dangers. There is an increased risk of minor injury. Pupils may require first aid.	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves.	Pupils with minor injuries (scratches minor first aiders. More serious injuries referred to SLT to contact hospital or parent.	OPAL Team	April 2026	April 2027





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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	Reviewed on
Pupils playing in sand pit: Sand pit possible attraction for cats, dogs and fox faeces. Sand in eyes.	Large two sand pits approx. 25m squared area enables creative, sensory play for a large number of children.	Pit checked daily by the OPAL team, caretaker and monitored throughout the day by staff. Sandpit covered at the end of every day. New Sand added annually.	OPAL Team Play Team	April 2026	April 2027
The use of tyres: the risk of tyres being rolled down the hill/ramp resulting in injury. Tyres collecting water that is turning stagnant	Increased freedom to play will foster more creative play and ensure pupils learn to manage risks more effectively themselves.	Children reminded of the potential risk during Play Assemblies. The school's supervision styles (Remote and Ranging) allow the OPAL Team to manage potential risk. Reminder to children when the water freezes not to lick or eat. Wash hands after use.	OPAL Team Play Team	April 2026	April 2027
Children slipping and injuring themselves in wet weather either on the bank or in the grassed area.	Active outdoor play at all times of the year is an important part of obesity prevention and helps to establish life-long patterns of healthy physical exercise.	Children to wear appropriate clothing (coats and wellies). Appointed First Aiders available if injury occurs. Leaves removed during autumn. Anti-slip paint on play equipment.	OPAL Team Play Team	April 2026	April 2027





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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	Nominate d person	Action Date	Reviewed on
Children using slack lines: risk of slipping off and falling onto the ground.	Children developing skills of balance, agility and core strength as well as teamwork and cooperation.	Children shown how to use the equipment appropriately. Slack lines are tied to trees no higher than two feet off the ground. One child at a time.	OPAL Team Play Team	April 2026	April 2027
Children using swings: risk of playing inappropriately and falling out of swings and causing injury.	Children are able to develop balance, coordination and gross motor skills. Other benefits include improving children's mental health and wellbeing.	Children shown how to use the equipment appropriately. Swings are tied to stable healthy trees. One at a time.	OPAL Team Play Team	April 2026	April 2027
Children using sticks to play: risk of injury by using sticks inappropriately.	Playing with sticks not only ignites children's imaginations, but also has other therapeutic benefits. Branches and other large sticks can build strength and muscles as children lift, drag, or carry them to and from places outdoors. Teamwork happens when a stick is too large for just one child to move.	Children shown how to play appropriately with sticks. Regular reminders during Play Assemblies.	OPAL Team Play Team	April 2026	April 2027





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Bikes/Trikes/Wiggle Boards/scooters, trolleys	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, crashing into others with bikes and injury while pushing others on bikes. Awareness of finger trap risks. Staff to make sure all bikes and scooters have proper rubber handles or taped off Caretaker to check the bikes annually.	Play Team All Staff	April 2026	April 2027
Shipping container:	Necessary for storage of loose parts	Risk of children trapping fingers in the door. Children could become trapped by loose or falling loose parts. Risk of being locked inside while hiding inside.	Play Team ALL STAFF	April 2026	April 2027
Water play – hose pipe and water butts around garden	Children to explore water. Use of water supports sensory and creative play. Kids to be shown how to use hose sensibly and instructed to NOT drink from pipe. Water butts to be tethered and secured. Butts be allowed to run dry and re-filled to ensure no stagnant water.	Risk of drowning very minor. Risk of falling heavy water butt.	Play Team	April 2026	April 2027





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Netting/ropes/ladders to assist hill climbing	Improved strength and agility by using materials to assist ascent of woodland slopes	Risk of slipping, falling or rope burns from materials. Children to be shown responsible use of these items, not too many children to use at once. JB to ensure installation done in as safe a manor as possible	Play Team	April 2026	April 2027
Digging areas	Encourages independent and/or cooperative play and mastery play - fine motor skills improved. Knowledge of gardening improved through digging and planting in Garden area	Designated areas to be created for digging, muddy sides and plant borders.	Play Team	April 2026	April 2027
Tranquility Garden area	Sensory and exploratory play - Children to be introduced to the space as a quiet/sensory space with yoga mats and wind chimes installed. Team of children to help with gardening and planting - encouraging responsibility taking	Quiet space of contemplation. Children to be shown responsible management of plans within the space. Play team to monitor growth of any hazardous plants. Children shown how to use any tools correctly and safely.	Play Team OPAL Team	April 2026	April 2027
Chalk/water paints	Beneficial in all ways, develop creativity and fine motor skills	chalks and paint brushes to be maintained by children and play team - Board to be cleaned on Fridays.	Play Team	April 2026	April 2027





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Ball games - Various	develop social play, fine and gross motor, hand/eye coordination	Show children and role model sensible play with balls - alert children to risk of injury and make sure they are aware of how to keep games contained so they don't impact on whole school play	OPAL Team	April 2026	April 2027
Pupils playing with large loose equipment: tunnels (uncovered)	Plastic tunnels support gross motor skills, balance and coordination while encouraging imaginative play, teamwork and problem-solving. Crawling through and climbing on them also helps children build confidence, spatial awareness and resilience through active risky play.	Regular checks for cracks, sharp edges and stability. Tunnels to be placed on suitable surfaces, spaced safely and supervised during play. Children taught safe use, including no pushing or overcrowding. Damaged tunnels removed immediately for repair or disposal.	OPAL Team	April 2026	April 2027
Pushchairs, wheelchairs, dolley trolley	Locomotive play Imaginative play	Fully checked over to ensure sturdiness and the collapse mechanism broken in place to stop the risk of getting fingers caught. Rules in place of where pushchairs can be used (not to be pushed down verges)	OPAL Team	April 2026	April 2027
Tree swing Risk of children grazing themselves on the ground if they miss the swing. Risk to other children who are too close	Physical play turn taking	Checked to ensure correct positioning against the tree. Children told not to climb up onto the branch Regular checking of the integrity of the ropes and that the knots are sound.	All staff opal team	April 2026	April 2027



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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	Reviewed on
Stage Small risk of falling from the sides. If children are under the stage there are bolts to be aware of	Area to sit, play games, perform and use as a forest school activities area	Small drop at front and side, minor risk of fall injury. Children should be told not to push others off the stage. Minor risk of banging heads on the wood.	All staff to watch children	April 2026	April 2027
Cut logs from tree felling. Balance beams. risk of falling and dropping logs. Risk of rolling them down the hill.	The children are using the logs to balance on and create walkways with the balance beams. Used in den building etc.	Children have been told not to use the larger logs that will be too heavy to lift. No rolling the logs down the hill.	OPAL team	April 2026	April 2027
Traffic cones	Fun for role play, also as instruments	Children told to be careful lifting as they are a bit heavy.	OPAL team	April 2026	April 2027
Skipping ropes	Children learning how to skip, playing in a group with friends	Risk of being whipped with a rope as they are plastic, and sometimes used to attach bikes together Children told to use the ropes as intended and not to tie onto other equipment or people	OPAL team	April 2026	April 2027





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