



OPAL Newsletter



January 2024

OPAL is getting closer! Due to various factors, we have delayed the launch by a week and will be launching during the week beginning 29th January. We are communicating systems, rules and expectations to the children through our OPAL assemblies and they are all very excited!

Wellies

A huge thank you to all who have given resources or time to build our welly racks. Look out for a message to say when it is your child's turn to bring in their wellies. Please make sure wellies are clearly named!



Starting Activities

We have talked to the children about the activities that will be available to them when we first start OPAL in 2 weeks time.

- small world play
- small construction resources
- wheeled toys - pushchairs, scooters, suitcases
- dressing up
- colouring and drawing
- messy kitchen
- music

Outdoor layers

We have a small number of small pairs of waterproof trousers in school but we will be inviting you to send your child with their own waterproof trousers/splash suits. Before we do that, we need to build some storage out of pallets. All help to construct with pallets gratefully received so please let us know if you can help!



OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)

Here at Brookside we are committed to ensuring quality play opportunities are available to all our children. Play is an integral part of the school day and, on average, takes up 20% of a child's time in school around 1.4 years of their primary school life!

We are working with OPAL to provide amazing opportunities for play for all the children at Brookside.

Website

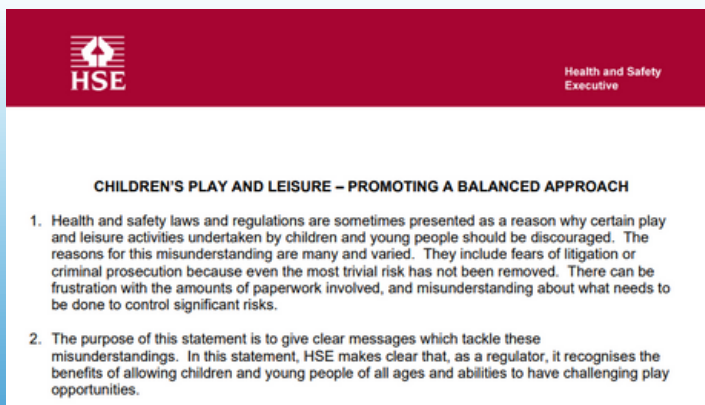
The school website now has a dedicated OPAL page. It has some background information about OPAL play and we will update it with relevant information and photographs.

Taking Risks

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play. Our play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. Keeping children safe in school is very important, that hasn't changed. What we will be doing with the children is working with them to help them learn how to identify risk, assess it and decide what they need in order to proceed. The continuous discussions with the children will help us to form effective risk-benefit assessments. We hope this will give children lifelong skills that they can take with them into adulthood.



The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) agrees that play which carries some risk is not only allowed but should be actively encouraged. Children, by law, have the right to play. Their document 'Children's Play and Leisure - Promoting a Balanced Approach' is available for you to read on our website.



OPAL parents booklet 'The Power of Playtime' is also available on the website for your information.

Rachel Clark and Sarah Evans