



Highwood Primary School

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Promoting Resilience, Achieving Potential

Headteacher Mrs B Rai

Friday 31st March 2023

Dear parents and carers,

We are excited to tell you that our school is now starting to participate in the **Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme**, which is endorsed and supported by Sport England and runs in hundreds of schools across the UK.

You can watch a video of what we want play to look like at our school here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrQb0PSXwzE

We believe that enriched, outdoor play for children greatly improves child wellbeing and is deeply connected to their learning and achievement in the classroom. This is an initiative that works best when everyone in the school understands and supports the changes that will be happening in our approach to play.

A small team at Highwood (the OPAL working group) will be working with OPAL to create a plan for change over the next 12 months. In February, Neil Coleman our OPAL mentor, delivered training for all staff and we will have future sessions on playwork theory and managing risky play for the play team (that means anyone outside at playtime).

The kind of play you will see developing at our school:

- Creative and open-ended ways to play outside with upcycled materials and natural loose parts.
- Opportunities for children to take responsibility for their play.
- Outdoor play in all weather and all seasons.
- Risk-benefit approach to supervision which allows children to experience managing risk in their play.

The kind of approaches the school will be taking to play:

- We supervise and support play that is challenging, creative, and child-led; we supervise play with an understanding of respect, trust, and support for children. (See below for more information.)
- Play is a right not a privilege; we protect all children's right to play and ensure that playtimes and access to the outdoors is not a privilege.
- We play in rain, snow, mud and sunshine; we promote all weather play and have resources in place for children to be able to get outside and play in all weather (e.g. indoor shoes, outdoor clothing).



To facilitate this project, we will need to buy some new resources, move some things around on the school site and require some loose parts. Loose parts are any materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play. The items we are looking for will enable us to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime (see below for some examples).

We will be holding a collection week beginning **Wednesday 19th April**. The sooner we do this, the sooner the children will be able to play with the items! Please do not bring your donations in before this date, as we will have nowhere to store them. If objects are really large, such as wooden pallets, we will ensure that there is someone available to help you carry them into school. If you can bring any donations to the amphitheatre area through the key stage 2 gate from 8:45am there will be staff available to receive them.

There will be more information to follow at a parents' session later in the year, when you will be invited to come and play with your children. We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all children.

Yours sincerely

Best wishes

Mrs Bindu Rai
Headteacher

Mrs Caroline Paton
OPAL Lead

Loose Parts Donations – please kindly donate washed and clean items

- Suitcases of any size and type
- Anything on wheels/castors
- Plastic milk crates/supermarket delivery crates/plastic bread trays
- Briefcases, especially hard cased ones
- Road signs and cones
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, work tables, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Tools like small spades, shovels, trowels and brooms
- Tubes of various sizes and various materials
- Buckets
- Nets and thick ropes
- Keyboards/torches/laptops/calculators/mobile phones/deskphones/webcams/cameras that are no longer working
- Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
- Foam sheets/bodyboards/camping roll mats/yoga mats
- Wooden pallets
- Metal frames
- Cable drums
- Guttering
- Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)
- Hats/scarves/jazzy shirts/elasticated skirts/waistcoats/wedding dresses/character costumes
- Pegs (to help to set up dens), towel clips
- Handbags, costume jewellery

Are you an electrician? builder? tree surgeon? plumber?

Please let us know if you work in a trade where you could donate some of these items or have skills we could use in the future.

Please be mindful about any items you are bringing in. We want to make sure we have safe and appropriate resources for our children that can be used, and not be left having to dispose of large quantities.

Thank you!