

# Use of Playground and Play Equipment

## Risk Assessment

Risk assessment carried out by: PB/WL	Job title: CLC/HT	Date of Assessment: Sept 2023
Review interval: Annual	Date review due: 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2025	
Staff covered by the assessment: All school staff	Activities involved: Use of playground and play equipment (OPAL)	



RISK RATING		Likelihood				
		Certain 5	Very Likely 4	Likely 3	Unlikely 2	Very Unlikely 1
Severity	<b>Fatality</b> 5	25	20	15	10	5
	<b>Major</b> 4 Major injury, permanent disability or ill-health	20	16	12	8	4
	<b>Serious</b> 3 Injury requiring medical treatment	15	12	9	6	3

	<b>Significant</b> <b>2</b> Requires time off school	10	8	6	4	2
	<b>Minor</b> <b>1</b> First Aid Treatment	5	4	3	2	1

### Key Considerations

Whilst writing Waverley Primary School's risk assessment for outdoor play and learning, the following statements from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) document have been taken into account.

"HSE fully supports the provision of play for all children in a variety of environments. HSE fully understand 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 danger."

"HSE fully recognises that play brings the world to life for children. It provides for an exploration and understanding of their abilities; helps them to learn and develop; and exposes them to the realities of the world in which they will live, which is a world not free from risk but rather one where risk is ever present. The opportunity for play develops a child's risk awareness and prepares them for their future lives."

"Striking the right balance" does mean:

- Weighing up risks and benefits when designing and providing play opportunities and activities
- Focusing on and controlling the most serious risks, and these that are not beneficial to play the activity or foreseeable by the user.
- Recognising that the introduction of risk might form part of play opportunities and activity
- Understanding that the purpose of risk control is not the elimination of all risk, and so accepting the possibility of even serious or life-threatening injuries cannot be eliminated, though it should be managed.
- Ensuring that the benefits of play are experienced to the full

"Striking the balance" does not mean:

- All risks must be eliminated or continually reduced
- Mistakes and accidents will not happen”

Dynamic Risk Assessment:

This means that staff should be aware of the 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 of harm while preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible, and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Without Controls			Controls already in place	Risk With Current Controls		Further action required/comments	Potential Risk		By whom and when	Key Rules
	S	L	R		L	R		L	R		
<b>General Playground Activities</b>											
<b>Injury from activities in the playground</b>	1	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil are allowed to use equipment in designated zones</li> <li>• Pupils are only allowed to play with equipment that are considered within the children’s capabilities</li> <li>• Games can be stopped at any time if staff consider them to be unsafe or inappropriate. Discussion regarding safety will take place</li> <li>• Activities to be age appropriate and reflect the mix of ages within school as well as the special needs of pupils</li> <li>• School behaviour policy applies on the playground. Staff record incidents on CPOMs.</li> <li>• Ball games and equipment are only permitted in certain zones</li> </ul>	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunchtime staff to discuss any unusual uses of play equipment with SLT</li> <li>• Decisions about playtimes to be discussed with the children in monthly assemblies</li> <li>• Display rules in the playground</li> </ul>	2	2	All staff	School Rules apply on the playground

Lack of supervision	1	5	5	<p>Supervision required on duty:  <u>Break times:</u>  <i>Lower school</i>  Bottom Yard – 1 teacher, 1 LSAs  Top Yard – 1 teacher, 1 LSAs  <i>Upper School</i>  Bottom Yard – 1 teacher  Top Yard – 1 LSA</p> <p>Lunchtimes: (See Appendix A)</p> <p>Supervision will always be provided in adequate numbers when children are using the outdoor play equipment</p>	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lunchtime supervisors have zones of responsibility for supervision timetable</li> <li>Playground has specific zones for adults to monitor and actively interact with pupils</li> </ul>	2	2		Inform staff members of any broken equipment
Unsafe condition and/or use of	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-use checks of play equipment (RD/all staff at zone)</li> </ul>	2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspections of play equipment carried out termly and recorded</li> </ul>	1	4	All staff to monitor condition	Regular termly checks to be planned in (RD/PB)
play equipment and furniture				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All furniture is kept in good condition, i.e. free from protruding bolts or screws (RD/PB)</li> <li>Staff supervising the equipment understand how it should be used</li> <li>Playground surface maintained in good, sound condition to minimise slips and trips (ALL)</li> <li>• Check free of ice before use in winter</li> <li>• Kept free from build-up of leaves etc. by caretaker</li> <li>Broken parts barrel for children/staff to place items – checked by PB</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff monitor the condition of the playground when they are on duty and report problems to SLT</li> </ul>			of equipment	Daily checks (RD) – all staff vigilance

<b>Risk presented by weather – both summer and winter</b>	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLT will decide if weather conditions are suitable or not for outdoor activities</li> <li>• Staff to ensure that pupils have appropriate clothing</li> <li>• Gritting takes place by Caretaker</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLT to decide as required which equipment can be used</li> <li>• If it is wet, children will not be allowed on the grass verges</li> </ul>	1	3	Leadership Team	
<b>Manual handling</b>	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to move equipment around designated play zones to encourage outdoor play, physical activity and collaboration</li> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to store equipment away in designated zones encouraging teamwork</li> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to keep zones tidy</li> <li>• Early Years children are 'trained' in not doing a 'drop and leave' of items on the yard and moving on. Put back.</li> <li>• Staff encourage the children to tidy up supervising the moving of equipment and items to the correct places</li> </ul>	1	3		1	6	All staff	Children encouraged to keep equipment in selected zones Adults supervise the '4 minute' tidy up time
<b>Grass verge and tree line</b>	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial boundary of playgrounds are tree and shrub lined</li> <li>• Grounds maintenance contract in place</li> <li>• Staff visually inspect areas when on duty</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are counted in, when lining up to ensure everyone is there</li> <li>• During assemblies, children discuss all aspects of OPAL</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are not allowed to climb up trees (LA tree inspection – Arbour)</li> <li>• School rules in places to stop climbing in trees</li> </ul>							

<b>Surrounding roads</b>	5	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gates locked and secure at all times</li> <li>• Caretaker inspects and checks boundaries daily looking for escape/dug holes.</li> <li>• Wear and tear is monitored</li> <li>• Staff report any signs of wear and tear</li> <li>• Staff check gate is shut when entering the playground</li> </ul>	1	5		5	All staff		
<b>Specific Playground Zones</b>											
<b>Sit on Scooters and skateboards</b>  (Benefits – social skills, gross motor skills, coordination, spatial awareness)	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit on scooters/skateboards are used in a designated area</li> <li>• Children have to sit on the scooters on their bottoms or kneel</li> <li>• Staff to enforce school rules and report behaviour problems on CPOMS</li> <li>• Storage of equipment to be reviewed</li> <li>• The designated zone does not use any other equipment or free play</li> <li>• Equipment removed when broken</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemblies focusing on making safe choices</li> <li>• Education and short timeout for those not adhering to the rules.</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	Children sit on scooters and keep them in the designated areas
<b>Lego and small world area, dice games</b>  (Benefits – creativity, social skills, physical development – fine motor development)	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules for not putting small world items in mouths</li> <li>• Small world equipment used in the main yard, ensure that equipment does not get knocked over by the children</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designated member of staff to supervise the area</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	

<b>Gross motor equipment e.g. hula hoops, skipping ropes,</b>	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff supervising use of play equipment understand how the equipment is meant to be used</li> <li>Checks are carried out as equipment is put out</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play assemblies take place regularly, with safety discussed</li> <li>Consistent rules shared with staff about how equipment can be used</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	Bricks can be stood on as part of imaginative play
<b>walkers, foam bricks</b>  (Benefits-creativity, social skills, physical development – gross and fine manipulative)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All equipment is checked to ensure it is in good condition</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storage of equipment to be reviewed regularly and altered accordingly.</li> </ul>				
<b>Music area</b>  (Benefits, creativity, social skills, physical development- gross motor skills)3	5	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaker is only used in fair weather</li> <li>Children can stand on benches If benches are wet, children need to assess if they are safe</li> <li>Children not allowed to touch the speaker</li> <li>Area cordoned off</li> <li>PAT inspections</li> <li>Pre-use inspection by staff</li> <li>Speaker is by outside fence ensuring there is no trip hazard</li> </ul>	1	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check if speaker is double insulated and/or connected to an RCD</li> </ul>	1	5	All staff	Cover for speaker to be considered or sited under cover
<b>Dynamic play</b>  (Benefits-creativity, social skills, physical development – gross and fine manipulative)	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All play areas are supervised by members of staff</li> <li>Activities are modelled by lunchtime staff</li> <li>Set zones for free play</li> <li>School rules followed</li> <li>No rough play allowed</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No handstands/head stands on hard surface</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	No handstands or head stands No rough play

<b>Slippery surface e.g. mud/rough and tumble area</b>  (Benefits – creativity, social skills, physical development – fine motor development)	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All play areas are supervised by members of staff</li> <li>Activities are modelled by lunchtime staff</li> <li>Children follow school rules on the playground</li> <li>No rough play allowed</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellies or suitable footwear to be worn when accessing the ‘bushes’ area</li> <li>Footwear not to be worn on rough and tumble slide</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	No rough play
<b>Den building – injuries sustained from equipment</b>	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff supervising use of play equipment understand how the equipment is to be used</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playground assemblies take place regularly and feature safety and making good choices</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	Limited numbers, to be assessed

(Benefits- collaboration, cooperation, physical movement, creativity, communication)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assemblies demonstrate how to safely play with the equipment All equipment kept in good condition</li> <li>Area checked for loose branches or debris (litter), fireworks, needles, drink cans, gas cylinders thrown into school. Items to removed by caretaker using litter picker – needles to be placed into needle dispose box.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All fixing items, hammer, pegs and rope to be accounted for and stored when task complete</li> </ul>				
<b>Walking on the long bench</b>  (Benefits – physical development - gross motor skill)	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children encouraged to make their own choice about whether they feel safe or not</li> <li>Children asked to make way for smaller children</li> <li>All play areas are supervised by members of staff</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playground assemblies take place regularly and feature safety and making good choices</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	Regular reminders about how to move safely around the playground and making safe choices.

<p><b>Large Item Area</b></p> <p>(Benefits – creativity, social skills, physical development – fine motor development)</p>	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff supervising use of play equipment understand how the equipment could be used safely</li> <li>Checks are carried out as equipment is put out</li> <li>All equipment is checked to ensure it is in good condition</li> <li>Any damaged items removed from use – placed in damaged items barrel next to the Science hub.</li> </ul>	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playground assemblies take place regularly and feature safety and making good choices</li> <li>Long items (broom shanks etc) not to be used as weapons – items removed from child and explanation given.</li> <li>Rolling items not to be rolled near to or down steps to bottom yard (including on hand rails).</li> </ul>	1	3	All staff	Regular reminders about how to move safely around the playground and making safe choices.
<p><b>Dressing up/performance area</b></p> <p>(Benefits – creativity, social skills, physical development, communication)</p>	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costumes only used in fair weather</li> <li>All instruments to be checked for damage</li> <li>Stage area checked for slip and trip hazard</li> </ul>	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children to be assisted or guided with dressing if necessary (no beads/jewellery – choking or strangulation risk).</li> <li>All individual costumes to be returned to storage after each use</li> <li>All dirty costumes to be laundered – washing machine in nursery and tumble dryer staff room.</li> </ul>	1	3	All Staff	Regular checks for trip/slip hazards and damage to items.
<p><b>Craft Area/Edible Playground</b></p>	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff supervising use of play equipment understand how the equipment should be used safely</li> </ul>	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised beds only to be accessed by children with a member of school staff</li> </ul>	1	3	All Staff	Monitor discarding of
<p>(Benefits – creativity, social skills, physical development, communication, plant germination, nutrition, consumption)</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checks are carried out as equipment is put out</li> <li>All equipment is checked to ensure it is in good condition when returned following task</li> <li>Any damaged or spent items removed from use – placed in damaged items barrel in Science hub.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watering of plants only to be carried out by class allocated to their own class allocated raised bed</li> <li>No grown item to be consumed without the presence and permission of a member of school staff</li> </ul>				small items on floor.

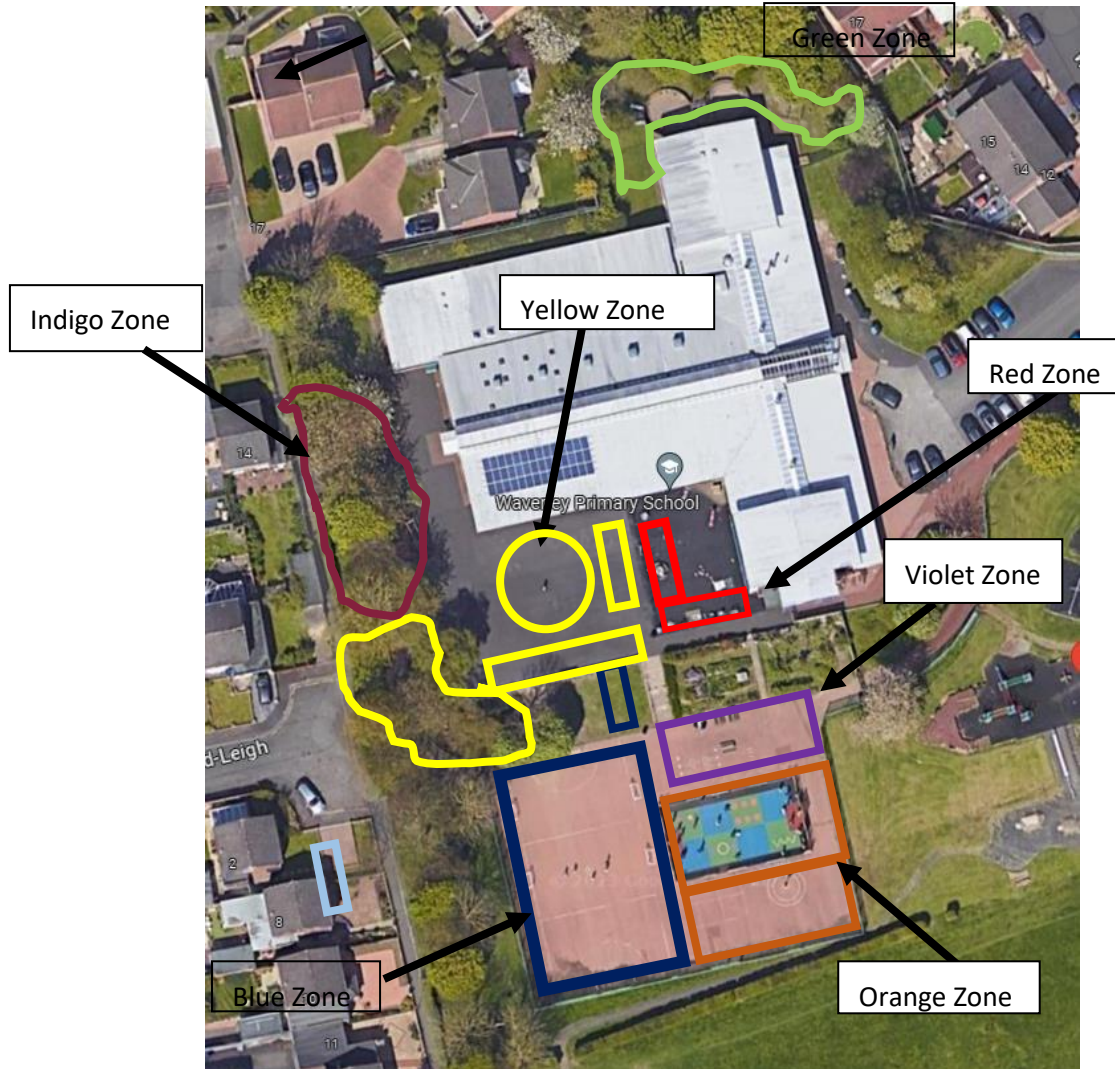
Appendix A: Weekly outdoor lunchtime plan. \*

Day	Dining Hall	EYFS Yard (first aid bag)	Classes & Dining Hall	Top Yard (first aid bag)	Bottom Yard (first aid bag)	Trail (first aid bag)
Mon	LC	RT/GD	JH	AD	CT/JoR	JI
Tues	LC	RT/GD	AD	CT/JH	JI/TH	JoR
Wed	LC	RT/GD	JI	JoR	CT/JH	AD
Thurs	LC	RT/GD	JoR	JI	AD/TH	JH
Fri	LC	RT/GD	JH	AD	TH/ED	JoR

- EYFS are to be kept in small yard at lunchtime.
- Everyone except RT/GD should be on the yard from 12pm prompt.
- All others lunch will be from 1pm – 1.30pm
- GD to cover EYFS with WL & ML from 1 to 1.30pm

Appendix B – Supervision Zones

Waverley Primary School OPAL zone map - Supervision



Appendix C – Activity Map  
Waverley Primary School OPAL live activity map as at Dev 2

