

EYNESHAM PARISH COUNCIL PLAY POLICY

"People don't stop playing because they grow old; they grow old because they stop playing." George Bernard Shaw



1 Introduction

Play and free time should be fun for children and young people. Play is fundamental to children's health and wellbeing, their relationships, their development and their learning.

This policy is based on OALC guidance "**Good Practice Note - PLAY POLICY** January 2009 and should be read in conjunction with those guidance notes.

2 Background

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises '*the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*'

We recognise that we have a duty under this convention to protect and promote play opportunities for all children and young people under 18 years of age.

National and County play strategies both point to a need to establish a common sense approach to the development and maintenance of play spaces, which is based on an understanding of the meaning and value of play.

What is Play? The following is taken from *A Charter for Children's Play (Play England)*:

The essence of play is that it arises from children's innate need to express themselves, to explore, learn about and make sense of their world. Its benefits for children derive from them making their own choices, following their own instincts. At play, children have a certain freedom and autonomy from adult direction. This freedom – to choose, to explore, to associate, to create, to move around, to challenge themselves and others – is an important part of their lives now; and vital to their development. The charter, therefore, is underpinned by some key understandings:

Play is an essential part of every child's life – vital to his or her development. It is the way that children explore for themselves the world around them; the way that they naturally develop understanding and practise skills.

Play is essential for healthy physical and emotional growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills.

Play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious.

Children's own culture is created and lived through their play.

3 The Policy

Parish Council adopts this policy and asks its members to support the principles outlined below.

The policy does not prescribe age ranges for play provision. It is based on the understanding that children and young people need and like to play, and benefit from doing so. While few teenagers would describe what they do as 'play', they also need the time, space and freedom associated with play.

This policy applies to the Witney Road, Oxford Road and Wytham View Play areas managed by Eynsham Parish Council.

1. The value of Play

Eynsham Parish Council recognises the importance and value of play in the development of children and of society as a whole.

Play is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth and for intellectual and educational development.

2. Design and Risk Management

We acknowledge the need to allow challenge and risk in play settings. We will assess risk in conjunction with the likely benefit of any provision including any risk to unintended users and neighbours of the play area and equipment.

'Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury...In play provision, exposure to some risk is actually a benefit: it satisfies a basic human need and gives children the chance to learn about the real consequences of risk taking. (Managing risk in play provision: A position statement.

www.playengland.org.uk)

3. Access for All

We believe that all children and young people want and need opportunities to play.

Play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin, or individual abilities.

Although the play space should be accessible to all, this does not mean that all children need to be able to do everything within a play space.

4. Provision for All Ages

The Parish Council wants people of all ages to be able to share play spaces. Subject to local discretion and conditions, there should be no presumption against children, young people and adults of all ages having access to quality play opportunities.

5. Design and funding

We will aim to create beautiful spaces that inspire engage, challenge and are well maintained. We will always seek to commission experienced play /landscape designers in the process of developing or upgrading play spaces. We will ensure that an appropriate budget is allocated to the design and build when creating or redeveloping a play area. We will seek grant aided funding where appropriate to enhance play provision for the community.

6. Working with the Community

We will engage local children, young people, parents, carers and residents in the development of play spaces and will take their views into account.

7. Our objectives in the provision of play spaces are to:

- Extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
- Recognise the child's need to test boundaries and responds positively to that need.
- Manage the balance between the need to offer excitement and challenge, which may involve a degree of risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm.
- Maximise the range of play opportunities.
- Foster independence and self- esteem.
- Foster children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction.
- Foster the child's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn. ([Best Play](#) – what play provision should do for children NPFA, 2000).