



Dear Parents/Carers,

We are about to launch our exciting new project to make our playtimes even better, in conjunction with Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL). OPAL is supporting us in improving our playtime, giving opportunities for socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment for your child. The benefits of OPAL include: more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and greatly improved behaviour. Play is not messing about. It is the process evolution has come up with to enable children to learn all of the things that cannot be taught, while also having so much fun.

The project will start straight after February half term and our hopes are that it will change the way we think and how we play together.

How will this change our playtimes?

As we improve play opportunities for children, we will be making changes to how they use the school grounds. It is our aim that we utilise more of our ground, in all weathers. Your children may get a bit messier, be exposed to more challenges and have greater freedoms to play where, with whom and how they like.

To facilitate this, it is vital that:

- **Every child comes to school everyday with a waterproof coat** as we will be going outside even when it is raining.
- **All children will also need a pair of wellington boots in a named bag that can be left in school** so they can access all the grounds (if you have spare wellies, please also donate these to help others). If your child does forest school and currently has wellies in school, these will be used.

How can you help?

We would love it if you could support us by donating materials that can be easily moved, and incorporated into children's free play. The items we are looking for will enable the children to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime.

The list of items we can use is endless, however, as we start on our journey with Opal we are specifically looking for the following donations:

- Guttering
- Keyboards/torches/laptops/calculators/mobile phones/desk phones/webcams/cameras that are no longer working
- Tarpaulin
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, worktables, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Tools like small spades/shovels, trowels and brooms
- Tubes of various sizes and various materials
- Tires (big or small)
- Den making equipment
- Board games and jigsaws
- Small world toys, e.g. dinosaurs, dolls, characters, Lego, Duplo, trains, cars, playmobile etc.
- Dressing up clothes
- Anything on wheels/castors



- Road signs and cones
- Buckets
- Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
- Foam sheets/bodyboards/camping roll mats/yoga mats
- Cable drums
- Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)
- Clothes Pegs (to help to set up dens)
- Wellington boots
- Waterproof coats

From Monday 13th February there will be two large blue bins at either entrance to the academy for you to leave your donations. If you are dropping off something that is particularly large, e.g., tractor tires, please let us know in advance so that we can ensure someone is available to assist you. Please do not bring your donations in before this date as we will have nowhere to store them.

If you have something that you think would really support children's play but is not on the list above please contact the academy on 01905 453530 where someone will be able to discuss the item with you as we have to ensure that we can store anything we get until it is ready to be used.

There will be more information to follow at a parent's 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

Miss A Spicer and Miss K Jauncey