



EPIC play

Slides shared with parents at the EPIC meetings

What is play?

Play is a process which is...

1. **Is freely chosen by the child**
2. **Is directed by the child**
3. **Is for the child's own motivations and reasons**

The **benefits** of play are broad, encompassing:

- ✓ Health and wellbeing ✓ Cognitive development ✓ Physical activity & literacy
- ✓ Mental health ✓ Social development ✓ Learning about risk and challenge
- ✓ Resilience and character



Respectful

Engaged

Ready

At Merley First School we are going to create
EPIC Play!



E - Explore

P - Play

I - Imagine

C - Create

Our school believes that **all** children need opportunities to explore, play, imagine and create within the environment. We believe play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of differences enhancing their sense of belonging within the school and promotes our school values of Respectful, Engaged and Ready.



Aims of EPIC play

In relation to play our school aims to:

- Provide an environment that is varied and challenging which encourages children to become risk aware not risk averse.
- Equip the children with skills to broaden relationships and develop resilience through independence and collaboration.



Merley First School EPIC Play Charter



We have the right to play and enjoy EPIC Play.

We have the responsibility to make sure everyone is engaged and enjoys playtime by making sure:

- Everyone chooses what to play
- We are ready to play by sharing equipment fairly and kindly
 - We take care of the equipment
- We treat each other respectfully - how we like to be treated
 - We keep everybody safe
 - We are kind to others
 - We help people if they need us
- We allow people to join in games and share a sense of belonging
- We ask grownups or peer mediators if we need help to sort out our problems
- We listen and show respect to one and another
 - We play safely.



This Play Charter was created with the Pupil Voice representatives from across the school. All children have seen this charter and have agreed to adhere to it.



Play Zones

Risk and negotiation



Every EPIC zone/activity will be individually risk assessed. This risk assessment will be shared with all pupils, in an age appropriate way, before they are able to access the zone/activity. This will take place in a whole school assembly.

Children who are absent from school when risk assessments are shared, will take part in a follow-up assembly to ensure all children receive the same safety messages.

Adults and children will work together to ensure play is safe.

Benefit and risk



'Play is great for children's wellbeing and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool.' Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 2012)

We will be supporting the children to become risk aware rather than risk averse.
If the children are seen, they are safe.
For each Zone, adults and children we be aware of the main "dos and don'ts"

What does this mean for parents and carers?



- Waterproof coats must be in school everyday, we will only stay in when it is too wet to be outside.
- All children will need wellies in school all of the time - we will start to allow children onto the field from 10th March whether it is wet or dry.
- Children may come home with mud/dirt on them or their clothing but we will teach the children to be sensible when on the field.

For the wheels zone (Summer 2)

- Cycle helmets will need to be in school each day if children want to use the wheels zone. We will let parents and carers know nearer the time about this.

What will happen next?



- We will start EPIC play in Spring 2 - after the February half term.
- First steps will be small world, music and dance, chalk
- A launch assembly will be held for each zone and the risk assessment shared with the children
- **Year 4 - EPIC leaders** will be selected
- We will continue to collect any kind donations in our new donation drop box located to the right of the main entrance near the staff car park.

