



Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA)

This Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA) has been adapted for Beacon Primary Academy. It is a working document and will be continually updated and reviewed as and when new equipment is added or the environment adapted. The assessment follows OPAL’s RAPID approach to risk management and has been approved by the Academy Leadership Team.

Risk Assessment: OPAL equipment and environment.			
Assessed by:	Date of initial assessment:	Review Dates:	
Lisa Wright	01/09/2025		
Amy Short	01/09/2025	01/09/2026	

1. Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA)

At Beacon Primary Academy, all activities supporting children include thorough risk benefit assessments. For play provision, where activities may involve some risk but also deliver significant developmental benefits, it is essential that those benefits are made explicit from the outset. This approach has been recommended practice for play since 2012.

Our RBA serves as a judgement tool, drawing on staff expertise, professional judgement, and consideration of the benefits to children. It is a living document, reviewed regularly, and actively used by staff and children to guide safe and purposeful play. Whenever new equipment or play areas are introduced, they are added to the assessment. Any updates are shared with both children and staff so that everyone is informed and engaged.

Our assessments focus on risks and hazards that could present an unacceptable likelihood of serious injury or, in rare cases, death.

2. Assemblies Focused on Play

At Beacon Primary Academy, regular OPAL play assemblies are held with children to discuss, explain, and negotiate play-related risks and responsibilities.

Assemblies are designed to:

- Celebrate the school's culture of play and children's creativity.
- Inform children of changes, rights, and agreements.
- Negotiate with children on matters such as risk, tidying up, and expected behaviours.
- Explore and extend current play interests to deepen engagement.

The purpose of play assemblies is twofold:

- To ensure children, staff, and parents recognise the value and respect our school places on play.
- To help children understand risks and their responsibilities, while involving them in shaping rules and practices that underpin this RBA.

3. Policy for Play

Beacon Primary Academy has a play policy. This policy guides staff decision-making and risk management in play. It formally adopts the Health and Safety Executive's guidance and sets clear expectations for how pupils will be supervised during play.

3. Inspections

Staff carry out ongoing visual inspections, with accurate records maintained.

Play team members also check daily for hazards, removing them where possible. Staff are trained to know what to record, when to escalate, and how to respond appropriately.

4. Dynamic Risk Management and Staff Intervention

All staff with responsibility for children at play are expected to be alert to the dynamic and changing nature of play. Staff support children to assess and manage risks themselves wherever possible, while stepping in if there is a risk of serious harm.

When intervention is needed, staff actions should aim to reduce the likelihood or severity of harm, while preserving as much of the benefit of play as possible. Children should be empowered to learn how to manage risk for themselves in future.

Dynamic risk management at Beacon requires staff to maintain relaxed vigilance. Overly cautious or intrusive supervision can diminish play quality. Instead, staff are encouraged to assume most play is safe and recognise that children can develop competence with practice over time.

Staff remain observant, mobile, and attentive. Intervention is expected only when necessary, with three levels of response:

- Immediate action: Stop the activity or manage the risk if serious harm (death, life-changing injury, or hospitalisation) appears imminent or probable.
- Negotiated response: Engage with children to agree safer approaches if serious harm is possible but not likely.
- Ongoing supervision: Continue general observation if the likelihood of serious harm is very low.

OPAL's RAPID approach to risk is an essential part of the OPAL Primary Programme

“Health and safety law in Great Britain has an enduring principle – that those who create risks are best placed to control them, and that they should do so in a reasonable and sensible way.”

Dame Judith Hackitt HSE Chair 2015

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| R: | Risk-benefit assessment |
| A: | Assemblies focused on playtime |
| P: | Policy for play ratified by your governors or equivalent |
| I: | Inspections carried out regularly |
| D: | Dynamic risk management embraced by all staff |

The purpose of **risk-benefit assessments** is to enable Beacon Primary Academy to provide challenge, progression, excitement, creativity and fun in our play environment. They cannot and will not provide complete 'safety' and this is not their purpose. They help to think about, predict, and manage the most serious and most likely potential causes of harm.



Beacon Primary Academy's Risk Benefit Assessments of Equipment and Resources

Description of activity, principle or object, who might be at risk and what kind of harm.	Benefit	Description of risk management and maintenance agreed	Nominated person	Action date
Large loose parts Falling on children Crushing injuries Heavy lifting Risk to players or bystanders	All those listed in play policy plus – core strength, coordination, cooperation, creativity. Items are essential to a rich play environment.	Agree stacking heights in play assembly Lifting expectations shared in assembly	OPAL lead	01/09/25 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
Digging area use of real spades Chopping feet Accidental blows Use as weapon Risk to players and bystanders	Upper body strength Creativity Core strength Enjoyment	Tools not toys training in play assembly Only diggers in the digging zone Only spades, not forks Small tool area Large tool area	Play Workers	01/09/25 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies



Use of elastic in crafts	All those in the play policy – plus	Play Workers are vigilant on the use of elastic and any other loose strings that has the potential for injuries.	Play Worker	01/09/25
Strangulation	Fine motor skills for knot tying		OPAL Lead	Ongoing updates during Play
friction burns	Problem solving			
bruises and cuts	Enjoyment	Play assembly stating correct use.		
trapped limbs	Creativity			
Risk to players				
Wooden Loose Parts – Pallets, Cable Reels, Planks, long branches, logs, ladder	Body strength	Agreed rules in play assembly.	Opal Lead	01/09/25
	Large motor skills	Agreed technique for lifting in play assembly.	Play Workers	Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
	Construction skills			
Splinters, cuts and bruises.	Enjoyment	Reporting if parts are broken		
	Creativity			
Broken Limbs or crushing		Inspection of parts		
Injury from lifting				
Risk to players and bystanders				



Plastic loose parts – water butts, crates and guttering pipe	Body strength	Agreed rules in play assembly	Opal Lead	01/09/25
Cuts and bruises.	Large motor skills		Play Workers	Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
Fingers trapped	Balance	Inspections of parts		
Broken Limbs.	Construction skills	Report if parts are broken		
Risk to players and bystanders	Enjoyment	Ventilation added to water butts		
	Creativity			
Tyres	Body strength	Agreed rules in play assembly	Opal Lead	01/09/25
Cuts and bruises, broken limbs by falling tyres or rolling tyres.	Large motor skills		Play Workers	Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
	Construction skills	Inspections of parts		
Risk to players and bystanders	Enjoyment	Drainage of water removed		
	Creativity			
Scissors in the craft area	Fine motor skills	Agreed rules in play assembly	Opal Lead	01/09/25
Cutting or stabbing, bruises and cuts if not used or stored correctly	Crafting and creativity		Play Workers	Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
Risk to players and bystanders				



Fabrics and Tarps Suffocation, strangulation, trapped, Cuts and bruises. Fingers trapped Broken Limbs Risk to players and bystanders	Creativity Problem solving Role Play Enjoyment Creativity	Agreed rules in play assembly.	Opal Lead Play Workers	01/09/2025 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
Wheeled Items –scooters, pushchairs, bikes Falling off, crushing under wheels, hit by item, whiplash, fingers trapped, Cuts and bruises. Fingers trapped, Broken Limbs. Risk to players and bystanders	Body Strength Hand-eye coordination Body Coordination Balance Fitness – raising of heart rate	Agreed rules in the play assembly	Opal Lead Play Workers	01/09/2025 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
Water Play Drowning, illness from stagnant water, slipping. Risk to players and bystanders	Creativity Problem solving Role Play Enjoyment Creativity	Water source is a fresh water tap not a water butt. All water buckets to be emptied at the end of each play sessions. Ranging supervision check play is following the agreed rules.	Opal Lead Play Workers	01/09/2025 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies



		Agreed rules and expectations in play assembly.		
Tree Climbing Falling, scratches, bumps, slipping, scratched, grazes, broken limbs, eye injury Risk to players and bystanders	Body Strength Hand-eye coordination Body Coordination Balance	Agreed rules and expectations in play assembly. Only trees assessed as safe and identifies to children can be climbed. 3 points of contact at all times No climbing on branches thinner than your wrist.	Opal Lead Play Workers	01/09/2025 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
Tree swings falling, bumps, bruises, rope burns, trapped fingers, or entanglement, broken bones. Risk to players	Builds upper body and core strength Improves coordination and balance Encourages creativity, role play, and shared play Develops confidence through managed risk-taking	Swings only attached to trees assessed as safe by staff No loops or knots that could cause entanglement Ground area beneath swing cleared of hazards and regularly checked Rules explained in assemblies: one at a time, safe waiting zones, no pushing too high Ranging supervision	OPAL Lead Play Workers	01/09/2025 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies



Mud/Texture Kitchen Slipping on mud, ingestion of mud, minor cuts from utensils, or contamination from stagnant water. Risk to players	Fosters creativity and imaginative play Develops fine and gross motor skills Encourages teamwork and cooperation Sensory exploration and problem-solving	Only fresh water from tap used; no stagnant water permitted Kitchen utensils checked regularly and limited to safe items (no sharp edges) Clear rules in assemblies: no eating mud, utensils are for play only Area checked daily for hazards (broken equipment, sharp stones, etc.) Buckets and containers emptied at the end of play sessions	OPAL Lead Play Workers Site Staff	08/09/2025 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies
Sandpits slipping, ingestion of sand, sand in eyes, potential contamination Risk to players and bystanders	Fine motor skill development Creativity and construction play Sensory experience and relaxation Social skills through shared play	Sandpit covered when not in use to avoid contamination Sand replaced and topped up regularly in line with hygiene standards Children reminded not to throw sand; expectations set in assemblies Tools provided are age-appropriate and inspected regularly	OPAL Lead Play workers	01/09/2025 Ongoing updates during Play Assemblies



Daily visual inspection
by play staff