

EASTLING PRIMARY SCHOOL

OPAL Play Safety and Risk-Benefit Assessment -

Supporting children to grow, learn and flourish through adventurous play.

Review Date: September 2026

Next Review: On-going working document as equipment is added to provision

Responsible Person: Staff, OPAL Team, Headteacher, Governing Body

Approved by: Headteacher and Governing Body

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood." – Fred Rogers

At Eastling Primary School, we believe that children deserve opportunities to experience challenge, adventure, uncertainty and joy through play. This document explains how we create those opportunities safely, responsibly and thoughtfully.

1. Statement of Intent

At Eastling Primary School, we believe high-quality play is fundamental to achieving our vision that every child will grow, learn and flourish socially, emotionally and academically. Through adventurous, child-led play, children develop the confidence, resilience, curiosity and relationships that enable them to become caring, responsible citizens within our school, our local community and the wider world.

We believe that every child has the right to experience rich, engaging and challenging play as part of their everyday school life. We recognise that play is fundamental to children's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development and is an integral part of our curriculum and school ethos.

We are committed to providing an environment that encourages curiosity, creativity, resilience and independence. Through high-quality play opportunities, children learn to assess risk, solve problems, build relationships, develop confidence and make informed decisions. We believe these experiences prepare children not only for learning in school but for life beyond the classroom.

In accordance with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Play Safety Forum, Eastling Primary School adopts a **risk-benefit approach** to managing children's play. Our aim is not to eliminate risk, but to identify and control foreseeable risks of serious harm whilst preserving the significant developmental benefits that challenge and managed risk provide. We recognise that minor bumps, scrapes and falls are a natural part of childhood and contribute to children's understanding of their own abilities and limitations.

This document demonstrates how Eastling Primary School manages play in a sensible, balanced and proportionate manner through effective leadership, staff training, routine inspection, dynamic supervision and ongoing review. Decisions are based on professional judgement, current legislation, recognised guidance and the individual needs of our children and school environment.

2. Eastling Principles for Play

At Eastling Primary School we believe that:

- Every child has the right to high-quality play every day.
- Play should be freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated wherever possible.
- Children learn best when they are able to explore, experiment and challenge themselves within an environment that offers appropriate levels of uncertainty and managed risk.
- Exposure to manageable risk helps children develop confidence, resilience, judgement, perseverance and independence.
- Minor injuries are an inevitable part of healthy childhood play and, where risks have been managed appropriately, do not indicate that play has failed.
- Adults should facilitate children's play rather than unnecessarily direct or interrupt it.
- Intervention should be proportionate and should seek to preserve the developmental benefits of play wherever possible.
- Decisions about risk are based on the likelihood of serious harm rather than the elimination of all possible accidents.
- Our play environment should be inclusive, enabling every child to access meaningful opportunities for play regardless of ability, background or need.
- High-quality play contributes positively to children's wellbeing, behaviour, relationships, attendance and readiness to learn.

3. Legal and Professional Framework

This Risk-Benefit Assessment has been developed in accordance with the principles and guidance contained within:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- Children Act 1989
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)
- Health and Safety Executive *Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach*
- Play Safety Forum *Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide*
- OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) guidance and principles
- Relevant BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177 playground standards where applicable to installed equipment

The school recognises that the Health and Safety Executive supports the provision of challenging play opportunities and expects providers to focus on controlling real and significant risks, rather than attempting to eliminate all risk through unnecessary restriction or excessive paperwork

4. Roles, Responsibilities and Competency

Overall Responsibility

The Governing Body and Headteacher have overall responsibility for ensuring that Eastling Primary School provides a safe, stimulating and inclusive play environment in which children can experience appropriate challenge whilst being protected from foreseeable significant harm.

The Governing Body recognises that high-quality play is fundamental to children's development and supports the school's commitment to managing risk through a balanced risk-benefit approach rather than risk avoidance.

The Headteacher retains overall accountability for ensuring that appropriate systems are in place for inspection, maintenance, supervision, training and review of the school's play provision.

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Approve the school's Play Policy and Risk-Benefit Assessment.
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to maintain safe, high-quality play provision.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's OPAL provision through governor visits, reports and annual review.
- Support a balanced approach to risk management in accordance with current HSE and Play Safety Forum guidance.
- Ensure appropriate insurance arrangements are maintained.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that the school's play provision reflects the school's vision, values and strategic priorities.
- Ensure appropriate staffing, supervision and training arrangements are in place.
- Ensure that appropriate inspection and maintenance programmes are implemented.
- Ensure that recommendations arising from inspections are risk assessed, prioritised and acted upon within appropriate timescales.
- Approve significant additions or alterations to the play environment.
- Ensure serious incidents are investigated and that learning informs future practice.
- Report significant developments to governors.

Curricular Lead for Play

The Curricular Lead will:

- Lead the strategic development of OPAL across the school.
- Monitor the implementation of this Risk-Benefit Assessment.
- Carry out regular monitoring of play provision.
- Observe playtimes and evaluate the balance between challenge and safety.
- Review accident trends, pupil voice and staff feedback.
- Lead the annual review of this document.
- Work alongside the Headteacher to identify future developments.

Play Co-ordinator

The Play Co-ordinator will:

- Manage the day-to-day organisation of play.
- Ensure resources are available, safe and appropriately stored.
- Lead weekly operational inspections.
- Brief and support the Play Team.
- Carry out dynamic risk-benefit assessment throughout playtimes.

- Report maintenance concerns promptly.
- Maintain inspection records.

Site Team and Business Manager

The Site Manager will:

- Undertake repairs within their competence.
- Secure or isolate unsafe equipment until repairs are completed.
- Arrange external contractors where required.
- Maintain records of repairs and maintenance.
- Liaise with the Curricular Lead and Headteacher regarding site improvements.
- Maintain external inspection records

Kent County Council Health & Safety Playground Inspection Service

The school's installed play equipment is inspected annually by the Kent County Council Health & Safety Playground Inspection Service.

This inspection provides an independent assessment of the condition, structural integrity and ongoing suitability of installed play equipment and surfacing.

Recommendations arising from these inspections are:

- reviewed by the Headteacher, Business Manager and Curricular Lead for Play;
- risk assessed according to the level of risk presented;
- prioritised for action;
- recorded;
- monitored until completed.

Arboricultural Contractor

The appointed arboricultural contractor will:

- Carry out professional inspections of trees in accordance with the school's inspection programme.
- Identify defects that may present an unacceptable level of risk.
- Recommend remedial work where necessary.
- Advise on the suitability of trees used for climbing or supporting suspended play equipment.
- Provide written inspection reports.

Staff Competency

Eastling Primary School recognises that effective risk management depends upon competent staff making informed professional judgements.

Therefore:

- All Play Team staff receive induction before supervising play.
- Staff receive regular OPAL training and updates.
- Staff understand the principles of dynamic risk-benefit assessment.
- Staff are expected to use professional judgement rather than relying solely upon prescriptive rules.
- Staff understand when observation is appropriate and when intervention is necessary.

- Staff understand safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid procedures relevant to playtimes.
- New staff are supported through coaching alongside experienced colleagues before supervising independently.

The school recognises that professional judgement is an essential component of effective play provision and supports staff in making reasonable, proportionate decisions that balance children's developmental needs with their safety.

All Staff

- Facilitate rich, child-led play.
- Undertake dynamic visual checks before and throughout playtimes.
- Maintain awareness of changing risks, weather conditions and children's needs.
- Intervene proportionately where foreseeable significant harm becomes likely.
- Encourage children to assess and manage risk independently where appropriate.
- Report hazards, defects and incidents promptly.
- Record concerns in accordance with school procedures.

5. Risk Management Philosophy

Our Approach to Risk

At Eastling Primary School, risk is recognised as an inherent and valuable part of children's play.

Children naturally seek challenge, excitement and uncertainty. Through these experiences they develop confidence, resilience, judgement, physical competence and the ability to recognise and manage risk independently.

The purpose of this Risk-Benefit Assessment is therefore not to remove all risk, but to ensure that foreseeable significant risks are identified, understood and managed in a sensible and proportionate manner.

When making decisions, adults will ask:

1. **What are the developmental benefits of this activity?**
2. **What are the foreseeable significant risks?**
3. **Can those risks be reduced without unnecessarily reducing the play value?**
4. **Does this activity remain acceptable once proportionate controls are in place?**

Where the answer to Question 4 is **Yes**, the activity should generally be supported.

Where the answer is **No**, appropriate action should be taken to reduce the likelihood of significant harm before the activity continues.

Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities for challenge wherever reasonably practicable.

6. Inspection, Maintenance and Monitoring Framework

Our Approach

Eastling Primary School recognises that effective risk management relies upon regular inspection, ongoing maintenance and informed professional judgement.

No single inspection can identify every issue that may arise within a dynamic play environment. For this reason, the school operates a layered system of inspection and monitoring that combines daily observations, routine recorded inspections, independent technical inspections and ongoing dynamic risk-benefit assessment.

Inspection arrangements focus on identifying **foreseeable significant risks** arising from equipment failure, environmental change or deterioration, whilst preserving the developmental benefits of adventurous play.

Where defects are identified, the school takes prompt and proportionate action to reduce the likelihood of serious harm whilst minimising unnecessary disruption to children's opportunities for play.

Inspection Hierarchy

Inspection Type	Carried out by	Frequency	Purpose	Record
Dynamic Visual Check	Play Co-Ordinator / Site Team	Before and throughout every play session	Identify immediate hazards such as broken equipment, fallen branches, flooding, vandalism, damaged resources, animal fouling or weather-related concerns.	Daily visual checks (Dynamic Risk Assessment Checklist for Play Supervisors).
Weekly Operational Inspection	Play Co-ordinator / Site Manager	Weekly	Check equipment condition, stability, fixings, surfacing, loose parts, storage, ropes, nets, suspended equipment and site condition.	Weekly inspection record. (Play Equipment & Loose Parts Safety Inspection Checklist / Site and Grounds Safety Inspection Checklist)
Termly Play Environment Review	Curricular Lead for Play / Play Co-Ordinator	Termly	Review overall quality of play provision, emerging risks, pupil voice, accident trends and environmental developments.	Planning templates, Play Supervision Positioning Map Play team meeting minutes, TA meeting minutes, accident book.
Annual Playground Inspection	Kent County Council Health & Safety Playground	Annually	Independent inspection of all installed play equipment and surfacing, including structural integrity,	KCC inspection report and school action plan.

Inspection Type	Carried out by	Frequency	Purpose	Record
	Inspection Service		wear, compliance and maintenance requirements.	
Tree Inspection	Qualified Arboricultural Contractor	Annually in accordance with the school's arboricultural inspection programme and following significant storms where required	Assess tree health, structural integrity and suitability for climbing or supporting suspended equipment.	Arboricultural inspection report and school action plan.
Ashford FM Legionella's Inspection	Qualified legionella Contractor	Annually	Checks all water fountains and water butts used for OPAL Play.	Legionella inspection report and school action plan.
KCC Health & Safety Inspection	KCC H&S Inspector	Every 3 years	Checks on all aspects of H&S.	Inspection report and school action plan.
H&S Governor Monitoring	Business Manager	3 times per year	Business Manager produces H&S report for COG's relating to all aspects of school.	Governor reports.

Dynamic Risk-Benefit Assessment

Play environments continually change throughout the day. Staff therefore undertake dynamic risk-benefit assessment before and during every play session.

This involves continually observing:

Environmental conditions

- Heavy rain
- Frost or ice
- Strong winds
- Excessive heat
- Standing water
- Mud
- Reduced visibility
- Fallen branches
- Flooding
- Ground erosion

Equipment condition

- Broken equipment
- Loose fixings

- Damaged ropes
- Torn hammocks
- Worn nets
- Loose climbing holds
- Damaged surfacing
- Unsafe loose parts

Children's play

- Numbers of children
- Congestion
- Speed of play
- Confidence and competence
- Emerging risks
- Unsafe behaviour
- Children's ability to recognise and respond to challenge

Dynamic assessment enables adults to adapt supervision, restrict access to specific equipment where necessary or temporarily withdraw equipment from use whilst preserving the widest possible range of play opportunities.

Maintenance Arrangements

Routine maintenance is essential in preserving both the safety and play value of the school's environment.

The school will ensure that:

- Minor repairs are undertaken promptly where they fall within the competence of the Site Manager.
- Specialist repairs are commissioned where required.
- Damaged equipment presenting an unacceptable level of risk is removed from use immediately.
- Repairs are recorded.
- Replacement parts meet the manufacturer's specification where appropriate.
- New equipment receives a competent post-installation inspection before being opened for use.
- All installed equipment becomes part of the annual Kent County Council Health & Safety inspection programme.

Temporary Closure of Equipment

Equipment or play areas may be temporarily withdrawn from use where there is evidence of:

- Structural failure.
- Loose or missing fixings.
- Significant deterioration.
- Unsafe surfacing.
- Flooding.
- Ice.
- High winds affecting suspended equipment.
- Tree damage.
- Fire damage.

- Vandalism.
- Contamination.
- Any defect that presents a foreseeable significant risk of serious harm.

Where possible, only the affected equipment or area will be closed to preserve children's access to the remainder of the play environment.

Weather Guidance

The school recognises that children benefit from experiencing a wide range of weather conditions and that wet or muddy play is not, in itself, a reason to restrict outdoor play.

Play provision will normally continue during:

- Rain.
- Cold weather.
- Mud.
- Light snow.
- Warm weather.

Additional dynamic assessment will be undertaken during:

- Heavy rain.
- High winds.
- Ice.
- Thunderstorms.
- Extreme heat.
- Severe snow.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- Slippery surfaces.
- Falling branches.
- Visibility.
- Flooding.
- Wind loading on suspended equipment.
- Children's clothing and footwear.

Recording Defects

Any member of staff identifying a defect should report it immediately to the Play Co-ordinator or Site Manager.

Where appropriate, the equipment will be:

1. Removed from use.
2. Clearly identified as unavailable.
3. Recorded within the school's maintenance system.
4. Risk assessed.

5. Reopened only once repairs have been completed or the risk has been judged acceptable.

Incident Review

Following any serious accident, near miss or recurring incident, the school will undertake a balanced review considering:

- Was the activity providing significant developmental benefit?
- Was the risk foreseeable?
- Were inspection arrangements followed?
- Was maintenance appropriate?
- Was supervision proportionate?
- Did equipment fail?
- Were environmental conditions a contributing factor?
- Does this Risk-Benefit Assessment require amendment?
- Is further staff training required?
- Are additional controls proportionate without unnecessarily reducing play opportunities?

The purpose of this review is to improve practice rather than to remove challenge unnecessarily.

The Eastling Decision-Making Model

Adult Response	Examples
Observe	Children are managing the challenge safely and independently.
Encourage	Children need reassurance or confidence to continue.
Facilitate	Adults provide equipment, ideas or support without taking over the play.
Coach	Adults help children reflect, solve problems or manage disagreements while allowing them to remain in control.
Intervene	Adults step in only when there is a foreseeable significant risk of serious harm, safeguarding concerns, or behaviour that places others at unacceptable risk.

7. Standing Risk-Benefit Assessments

Guiding Philosophy

At Eastling Primary School, we recognise that children develop confidence, resilience and sound judgement by engaging in rich, varied and appropriately challenging play experiences. Our standing risk-benefit assessments are designed to support these opportunities by balancing the developmental benefits of play with the foreseeable significant risks associated with each activity.

These assessments are not intended to eliminate risk or prescribe every possible scenario. Instead, they provide a consistent framework to support professional judgement, dynamic risk-benefit assessment and proportionate decision-making. They are used alongside daily observations, routine inspections and staff knowledge of the children, environment and prevailing conditions.

The controls identified within each assessment focus on preventing foreseeable significant harm whilst preserving the value, challenge and enjoyment of child-led play.

"Children need and want to take risks when they play." – **Play Safety Forum**

Introduction

The following standing risk-benefit assessments apply to the school's regular play opportunities and outdoor environment. These assessments consider both the developmental benefits and the foreseeable significant risks associated with each activity. They are intended to support professional judgement and dynamic risk-benefit assessment rather than replace it. The controls described represent the school's agreed approach to managing foreseeable significant risks whilst preserving the value of child-led play. All staff are expected to apply these assessments alongside dynamic observations and current site conditions.

Supporting Our School Values Through Play

Play is one of the most powerful ways in which children experience and develop Eastling Primary School's values. The opportunities provided within this section enable children to practise these values in meaningful, authentic situations every day.

School Value	How this section develops it through play
Excellence	Children challenge themselves, develop new skills, reflect on their experiences and strive to improve.
Kindness	Children show empathy, include others, offer encouragement and support one another during play.
Honesty	Children learn to recognise and communicate their own capabilities, make responsible choices and understand their limits.
Respect	Children care for one another, the environment and the resources they use, understanding that shared spaces belong to everyone.
Collaboration	Children negotiate, solve problems together, share ideas and work cooperatively to achieve common goals.
Perseverance	Children experience challenge, learn from mistakes, adapt their approach and continue trying when things become difficult.

Standing Risk-Benefit Assessments

Section A – Natural Play

- Tree Climbing
- Woodland Play
- Soil Mounds
- Tunnels
- Pond
- Gardening
- Digging

Section B – Loose Parts Play

- Tyres
- Crates
- Pallets
- Cable Drums
- Planks
- Barrels
- Kayaks
- Rope
- Fabric
- Den Building

Section C – Fixed Play Equipment

- Trim Trail
- Climbing Wall
- Hanging Bars
- Tree Swing
- Hammocks
- Rope Ladders
- Slide

Section D – Wheeled & Sliding Play

- Scooters
- Ski Slope
- Ski Sleds
- Mud slide
- Mats

Section E – Creative & Social Play

- Mud Kitchen
- Sand
- Creative Tools
- Buggies
- Suitcases
- Small World Play

Section A – Natural Play

Guiding Philosophy

***"The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky."* – Margaret McMillan**

Natural environments provide children with opportunities to explore, imagine, create and experience managed risk in ways that cannot be replicated by manufactured equipment. At Eastling Primary School, we recognise that trees, soil, uneven ground, vegetation and changing weather conditions are valuable elements of children's play. Rather than removing these experiences, we manage foreseeable significant risks through thoughtful planning, dynamic supervision and proportionate risk management, enabling children to develop confidence, resilience and a lifelong appreciation of the natural world.

Supporting Our School Values Through Natural Play

Play within the natural environment provides children with authentic opportunities to develop and demonstrate Eastling Primary School's values.

School Value	Natural Play develops this because...
Excellence	Children continually challenge themselves as they climb, explore and investigate the natural environment, developing new skills and confidence.
Kindness	Children learn to care for one another, living things and the natural environment, showing empathy and consideration during shared play.
Honesty	Children learn to recognise and communicate their own capabilities, making responsible decisions about the level of challenge they are ready to undertake.
Respect	Children develop an appreciation of nature, treating trees, plants, wildlife and shared outdoor spaces with care and responsibility.
Collaboration	Children work together to solve problems, build dens, explore and create imaginative play experiences within the natural environment.
Perseverance	Children learn that success often comes through repeated effort, adapting their approach and continuing when tasks become physically or mentally challenging.

Tree Climbing

Play Value

Tree climbing is one of the richest forms of natural play, providing children with opportunities to develop physical competence, confidence, resilience and judgement. It encourages children to assess challenge, understand their own capabilities and experience managed risk in a meaningful and enjoyable way. Eastling Primary School recognises tree climbing as an important part of children's play and seeks to preserve these opportunities through sensible and proportionate risk management.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops upper and lower body strength, balance, coordination and agility • Improves spatial awareness and body control. • Encourages children to assess their own capabilities and make informed decisions. • Builds confidence, resilience and perseverance through progressive challenge • Develops problem-solving, planning and decision-making skills. • Promotes independence, self-	• Minor slips. • Small scratches from bark or branches • Minor bumps and bruises. • Low-level falls resulting in minor injury. These are recognised as an expected and acceptable part of adventurous play and contribute to children's understanding of their own capabilities.	• Falls from excessive height. • Failure of branches. • Falling onto another child. • Climbing during unsuitable weather conditions. • Climbing trees that have not been designated for use. • Failure to recognise changing environmental conditions.	• Only designated trees identified within the school's play environment may be climbed. • Maximum climbing heights are clearly identified and reviewed following tree growth, changes to ground levels or inspection recommendations. • Children are encouraged to climb within their own abilities and are never lifted into trees by adults. • Adults undertake dynamic risk-benefit assessment throughout playtimes and intervene only where foreseeable significant harm becomes likely. • Children are encouraged to maintain awareness of others and avoid climbing directly above another child. • The fall zone beneath climbing trees is kept free from	Daily Dynamic visual inspection before and throughout each play session. Weekly Recorded operational inspection of climbing areas, surrounding ground and tree condition. Annual Tree Management Professional arboricultural inspections undertaken in accordance with the school's tree inspection programme, with additional inspections	Before and during play, adults should consider: • Weather conditions, including wind, rain and ice. • Ground conditions beneath the tree. • Children's confidence, competence and behaviour. • Congestion beneath or around the climbing area. • Visibility across the play space.	<i>Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable.</i> Tree climbing enables children to develop confidence, resilience and sound judgement through first-hand experience. Adults should facilitate rather than direct children's play, intervening only where the likelihood of foreseeable	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following significant tree works. • Following severe weather events. • Following a serious incident or recurring pattern of incidents. • Following recommendations arising from arboricultural or Kent County Council Health &

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
regulation and emotional wellbeing through adventurous outdoor play.			unnecessary obstacles wherever practicable. • Tree climbing may be temporarily restricted following severe weather, high winds, tree works or concerns regarding tree condition. • Significant incidents are reviewed to identify learning and inform future practice.	following severe weather where required. Review as part of the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment review.	• Recent inspection findings or signs of damage. Supervision should be adapted to reflect changing conditions whilst maintaining opportunities for adventurous play wherever reasonably practicable.	significant harm becomes unacceptable. Decisions should always seek to retain the developmental value of the activity whilst protecting children from serious harm.	Safety inspections. • Following significant changes to the play environment or national guidance.

Woodland Play

Play Value

Woodland play provides children with opportunities to explore, discover and connect with the natural environment in ways that encourage curiosity, creativity and independence. Natural spaces offer endless possibilities for imaginative play, problem-solving and collaboration whilst allowing children to experience managed risk, develop environmental awareness and build resilience through exploration.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
- Encourages curiosity, exploration and independent learning. - Develops imagination and creative thinking. - Promotes communication, collaboration and	- Trips on uneven ground. - Minor scratches from vegetation. - Contact with mud, leaves and natural materials. - Small insect bites or stings.	- Hidden hazards such as discarded sharp objects - Falling branches. - Boundary breaches. - Children becoming temporarily out	- Woodland areas are inspected before use and monitored regularly - Boundaries are clearly defined and understood by children.	Daily: Dynamic visual inspection before use. Weekly: Recorded inspection of woodland areas,	Adults should consider: - Visibility within the woodland. - Changing weather conditions. - Ground stability. - Children's location and supervision.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Woodland play encourages exploration, imagination and independent discovery. Adults should allow children to investigate and solve problems	This assessment will be reviewed: - Annually. - Following severe weather. - Following significant changes to the woodland environment.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
negotiation through imaginative play. • Increases environmental awareness and appreciation of nature. • Develops resilience, confidence and problem-solving skills. • Supports emotional wellbeing through connection with natural spaces.	• Minor bumps and bruises. These are recognised as an expected and acceptable part of outdoor play and contribute to children's understanding of the natural environment.	of sight of supervising adults. • Contact with harmful plants or fungi. • Significant deterioration of ground conditions following severe weather.	• Staff undertake ranging supervision throughout woodland areas. • Known hazardous plants, fungi or objects are removed or managed appropriately. • Fallen branches, storm damage and unsafe areas are isolated until assessed. • Children are reminded not to consume berries, plants or fungi found within the woodland. • Significant concerns are reported immediately and the area closed if necessary.	boundaries and ground conditions. Following Severe Weather: Additional inspection for fallen branches, tree damage and unstable ground. Annual: Review as part of the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment and tree inspection programme.	• Signs of damaged vegetation or fallen branches. • Numbers of children using the area simultaneously. Supervision should adapt to changing conditions whilst preserving opportunities for exploration.	for themselves wherever possible, intervening only when the likelihood of foreseeable significant harm becomes unacceptable.	• Following serious incidents. • Following recommendations arising from tree inspections or site inspections. • Following changes to national guidance.

Soil Mounds

Play Value

The soil mounds provide children with opportunities to experience changes in height, gradient and terrain through freely chosen play. They encourage climbing, balancing, rolling, imaginative games and physical exploration whilst helping children develop coordination, confidence, resilience and an understanding of how their bodies move across different landscapes.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
- Develops balance, coordination and core strength. - Encourages climbing, rolling and physical exploration. - Develops spatial awareness and judgement. - Promotes imaginative and cooperative play. - Builds confidence through progressive physical challenge. - Supports resilience and perseverance.	- Slips on grass or soil. - Minor tumbles whilst climbing or descending. - Grass stains, mud and dirty clothing. - Minor bumps and bruises. These are recognised as an expected and acceptable part of adventurous outdoor play.	- Falls from the highest point of the mound. - Collisions between children running over the mound. - Erosion creating hidden trip hazards. - Instability following prolonged heavy rain. - Unsafe use during icy conditions.	- Mounds are professionally constructed and inspected before use. - Grass cover and erosion are monitored routinely. - Significant holes or erosion are repaired promptly. - Adults dynamically manage congestion where necessary. - Temporary closure may be required during icy conditions or following severe weather where stability is affected. - Children are encouraged to be aware of others when moving over the mound.	Daily: Visual inspection of ground conditions. Weekly: Recorded inspection of grass cover, erosion and surrounding surfaces. Following Severe Weather: Inspection for erosion, settlement or instability. Annual: Review as part of the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment and KCC Health & Safety inspection programme.	Adults should consider: - Ground firmness. - Weather conditions. - Congestion. - Children's confidence and speed of play. - Any signs of erosion or instability. Dynamic supervision should maintain opportunities for adventurous movement whilst responding proportionately to changing conditions.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The soil mounds provide valuable opportunities for children to experience changes in height, speed and terrain. Adults should support children in developing their own judgement and physical competence, intervening only where foreseeable significant harm becomes likely.	This assessment will be reviewed: - Annually. - Following significant erosion or repair work. - Following severe weather. - Following serious incidents. - Following inspection recommendations. - Following significant changes to the play environment.

Tunnels

Play Value

The tunnels built into Eastling's soil mounds provide children with opportunities for crawling, hiding, travelling, imaginative play and social interaction within an unusual and enclosed environment. Moving through tunnels develops spatial awareness, coordination and confidence while supporting imaginative,

collaborative and exploratory play. The experience of entering, moving through and emerging from an enclosed space also enables children to develop independence and judgement within a carefully managed environment.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops spatial awareness, coordination and body control. • Provides opportunities for crawling and whole-body movement. • Encourages imaginative, exploratory and role play. • Develops confidence when navigating enclosed and less visible spaces. • Promotes communication, negotiation and cooperative play. • Supports independence, decision-making and problem-solving. • Provides opportunities for children seeking quieter or more enclosed play experiences.	• Minor bumps when entering, exiting or moving through tunnels. • Mud or dirty clothing. • Minor grazes or scrapes. • Brief disagreements about access or direction of travel. • Minor slips around tunnel entrances. These are recognised as manageable features of exploratory play and do not in themselves require restriction of the activity.	• Structural movement, collapse or failure of the tunnel or surrounding mound. • Significant obstruction of an entrance or exit. • Entrapment of the head, neck, limbs or clothing. • Flooding or significant accumulation of water. • Sharp edges, exposed construction materials or deterioration within the tunnel. • Collision or distress caused by excessive congestion within an enclosed space. • Contamination, animal fouling or hazardous objects concealed within the tunnel.	• The tunnel construction and surrounding earthworks are subject to competent post-installation inspection before opening for play, with installation/construction information retained by the school where available. • The school maintains unobstructed entrances and exits and monitors the tunnel for settlement, movement, erosion and deterioration. • Internal and external surfaces are maintained free from exposed sharp construction materials, hazardous protrusions and foreseeable entrapment points. • Drainage and water accumulation are monitored, particularly following prolonged or heavy rainfall. • Dynamic supervision takes account of numbers using the tunnel and patterns of movement through entrances and exits. • Access is temporarily withdrawn where structural condition, flooding, obstruction,	Daily: Dynamic visual check of entrances, exits, visible internal space, surrounding ground and obvious contamination or obstruction before and throughout play. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection covering tunnel condition, earth settlement, erosion, drainage, entrances/exits and accessible internal surfaces. Following Severe Weather: Additional inspection following heavy rainfall, flooding, frost, significant	Adults should consider: • Number of children using the tunnel. • Visibility at entrances and exits. • Direction and speed of play. • Ground and weather conditions. • Water accumulation or mud. • Signs of erosion, settlement or damage. • Whether objects have been taken into or placed across the tunnel. • The needs and confidence of individual children. Supervision may be repositioned or increased where changing patterns of play make congestion, obstruction or significant collision more likely.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Tunnel play provides valuable opportunities for exploration, independence, imaginative play and confidence in enclosed spaces. Adults should avoid unnecessarily controlling how children use the space, while responding proportionately where structural condition, obstruction, congestion or the nature of the play creates an unacceptable likelihood of significant harm.	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following significant ground movement, erosion or repair. • Following flooding or severe weather affecting the feature. • Following a serious incident or recurring pattern of incidents. • Following recommendations from KCC Health & Safety or another competent inspection. • Following significant alteration to the tunnels, mounds or surrounding environment. • Following relevant changes to guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			contamination or another defect increases the likelihood of significant harm beyond an acceptable level. • Significant defects are recorded and referred for competent assessment or repair before reopening.	ground movement or other conditions likely to affect the mound or tunnel. Annual: Included within the school's annual KCC Health & Safety inspection of installed play equipment/play features and annual Risk-Benefit Assessment review.			

Pond

Play Value

Eastling's pond provides a rich natural environment through which children can observe wildlife, experience seasonal change and develop curiosity about the living world. Access to the pond supports environmental awareness, scientific enquiry, sensory engagement and calm, reflective play. Because water presents a potentially serious hazard, pond access is managed more closely than most areas of the OPAL environment while preserving opportunities for children to engage meaningfully with nature.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops understanding and appreciation of	• Muddy or wet hands and clothing.	• Falling into the pond, with consequent risk	• Pond access is managed in accordance with the school's agreed	Before Use: Visual inspection of access points, water edge, surrounding surface and any	Adults should consider: • Number	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience	This assessment will be reviewed:

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
wildlife, habitats and biodiversity. • Supports observation, questioning and scientific curiosity. • Provides sensory experiences and opportunities for calm, reflective engagement with nature. • Develops environmental responsibility and respect for living things. • Encourages communication and shared discovery. • Provides first-hand experiences of seasonal and environmental change.	• Minor slips on damp ground away from the water's edge. • Contact with soil, vegetation and pond organisms. • Minor insect bites or stings. These are accepted features of meaningful engagement with a natural environment and are managed through appropriate hygiene and supervision.	of drowning or serious injury. • Slipping directly into the water from a wet or unstable edge. • Unsafe or deteriorated pond edging, decking or access structures. • Contact with contaminated water resulting in illness. • Hazardous objects, significant algal growth or contamination within or around the pond. • Unsupervised access where the school's agreed pond controls require direct adult supervision.	arrangements and takes place under direct adult supervision when children are permitted within the pond area. • Access arrangements prevent uncontrolled entry when the pond area is not available for supervised use. • The school maintains pond edges, access points and any barriers, decking or associated structures in serviceable condition. • Staff position themselves to maintain effective oversight of children close to the water. • Suitable hygiene arrangements are maintained following contact with pond water, equipment, soil or organisms. • The school monitors water and surrounding conditions for obvious contamination,	associated structures whenever the pond is opened to children. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of the pond area, access arrangements, edges, barriers/decking where present and surrounding ground. Seasonal/Environmental: Additional attention following storms, prolonged rainfall, freezing conditions, significant vegetation growth or changes in water condition. Annual: Review through the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment process, with installed structures included in KCC Health & Safety inspection arrangements where applicable.	and age of children accessing the area. • Individual additional needs and levels of water awareness. • Condition of pond edges and surrounding ground. • Weather and visibility. • Water level and signs of contamination. • Condition of access structures. • Whether adult positioning provides effective direct supervision. Changes in any of these factors may require closer supervision, reduced numbers or temporary withdrawal of access.	appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The educational and wellbeing benefits of direct contact with a pond environment are considerable; however, the potential consequences of uncontrolled water access are significantly greater than for many other play opportunities. Professional judgement should therefore preserve meaningful access to the pond while maintaining the school's agreed direct-supervision and access controls.	• Annually. • Following a water-related incident or significant near miss. • Following changes to pond depth, edging, access or surrounding structures. • Following significant flooding or environmental change. • Following evidence of contamination. • Following relevant inspection recommendations. • Following changes to national or local guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			hazardous objects or significant deterioration. • Access is withdrawn where ice, flooding, unstable edges, contamination, damaged structures or other changing conditions create an unacceptable risk. • First-aid and emergency arrangements remain consistent with the school's wider procedures.				

Gardening

Play Value

Gardening gives children purposeful opportunities to care for and shape their environment. Planting, growing, tending and harvesting support children's understanding of natural processes while developing responsibility, patience, practical competence and collaboration. Gardening also provides valuable sensory experiences and allows children to see the tangible results of sustained care and perseverance.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops responsibility and care for the environment. • Builds understanding of	• Contact with mud and soil. • Minor scratches from vegetation. • Small	• Cuts or puncture injuries from damaged or inappropriate tools. •	• The school provides gardening tools that are appropriate for the intended activity and	Before Use: Visual check of tools and	Adults should consider: • The tools being used and their condition. • Space	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following introduction of

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
plants, growth, seasons and natural processes. • Develops fine and gross motor control through practical activity. • Encourages patience, perseverance and sustained involvement. • Promotes teamwork, communication and shared responsibility. • Provides rich sensory experiences. • Develops practical competence and confidence in using appropriate tools. • Supports wellbeing through purposeful engagement with nature.	blisters or minor grazes during practical work. • Minor insect bites or stings. • Dirty or wet clothing. These are recognised as manageable features of practical outdoor learning and play.	Impact injury from unsafe use of gardening tools. • Contact with poisonous, irritant or otherwise unsuitable plants or substances. • Infection associated with contaminated soil, animal faeces or poor hygiene. • Significant manual-handling injury from unsuitable loads. • Unsafe use of chemicals, fertilisers or garden products.	maintains them in serviceable condition. • Damaged tools, hazardous protrusions or unsuitable equipment are withdrawn from use. • Tool storage arrangements reduce uncontrolled access to equipment requiring greater levels of supervision. • Dynamic supervision reflects the type of tool, activity, space available and competence of the children involved. • Gardening areas are managed to reduce exposure to known poisonous or significantly irritant plants. • Soil visibly contaminated by animal faeces, hazardous waste or other concerning material is isolated and managed before gardening resumes. • Handwashing facilities and routines support appropriate hygiene following contact with soil, compost and plants and before eating. • Chemicals, pesticides and other substances requiring controlled handling are not made freely available as play resources and are stored and used in accordance with the school's COSHH arrangements where	the immediate gardening area Weekly: Recorded inspection of regularly available gardening tools, storage arrangements and gardening spaces during periods of active use. Seasonal: Planting areas are reviewed as vegetation changes and before introducing new plants or resources. As Required: Damaged tools are repaired within appropriate competence or removed/replaced. Annual: Review as part of the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	between children undertaking practical tasks. • Soil and ground condition. • Plants or substances being handled. • Children's experience and physical competence. • The weight or size of materials being moved. • Hygiene requirements. • Weather conditions affecting tool or ground use. Adult positioning and support should change where the nature of the gardening task introduces a greater level of foreseeable risk.	appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Competent use of real, appropriate tools can provide greater developmental value than removing practical responsibility from children. Adults should enable children to develop these skills progressively, with the level of supervision reflecting the tool, task and individual child rather than unnecessarily restricting practical gardening experiences.	significantly different tools or gardening activities. • Following a serious or recurring tool-related incident. • Following identification of hazardous plants, contamination or environmental concerns. • Following significant changes to the gardening area. • Following relevant changes to guidance or school procedures.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			applicable. • Loads and tasks are selected so that lifting and moving can be undertaken safely and collaboratively.				

Digging

Play Value

Digging is a highly versatile form of child-led play that combines physical exertion, sensory exploration, creativity and problem-solving. Children may dig to construct, investigate, transport materials or transform their play environment. The activity develops strength and coordination while allowing children to explore cause and effect, depth, volume, soil conditions and collaborative construction through first-hand experience.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops upper-body strength, coordination and stamina. • Provides rich sensory experiences involving soil, mud, texture and resistance. • Encourages investigation, experimentation and understanding of cause and effect. • Develops planning, construction and problem-solving skills. • Promotes communication and collaboration when	• Mud and dirty clothing. • Minor slips or trips on disturbed soil. • Small scratches, grazes or blisters. • Shallow holes and uneven surfaces within the designated digging area. • Contact with worms, insects and other ordinary soil organisms. These are recognised as expected features of meaningful digging and sensory play.	• Impact or puncture injury from digging tools. • Deep or unstable excavations capable of collapsing or trapping a child. • Excavation exposing underground services, construction material, glass, metal or other hazardous objects. • Significant trip hazards extending into established circulation routes.	• Digging takes place within areas assessed by the school as suitable for this purpose, with known underground services or other site constraints considered before areas are designated. • The school provides suitable digging tools and removes damaged or inappropriate equipment from use. • Dynamic supervision considers the spacing	Daily: Dynamic visual check of designated digging areas, tools, excavation condition and surrounding routes during periods of use. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of digging areas and regularly available tools. Following Heavy Rain/Frost: Ground and excavation stability are reassessed where conditions may have materially changed. Following	Adults should consider: • Depth and stability of current excavations. • Distance between children using tools. • Ground saturation, frost or unusually dry/unstable soil. • Location in relation to paths and other play. • Tool condition and suitability. • The nature of any materials uncovered. Children's	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The value of digging lies partly in children being able to alter their environment, test ideas and experience the consequences of their decisions. Adults should therefore avoid unnecessarily prescribing the	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following significant changes to designated digging areas. • Following discovery of underground services or hazardous materials. • Following a serious incident or recurring pattern of incidents. • Following

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
children work together. • Supports imaginative and small-world play. • Develops persistence as children modify and extend their ideas. • Provides purposeful opportunities to use real tools responsibly.		Contaminated soil or animal faeces. • Injury caused by overcrowding or swinging tools within insufficient space.	of children, tool movement and the changing depth and shape of excavations. • Excavations are monitored so that depth, side stability and location do not develop into an unacceptable entrapment, collapse or fall risk. • Holes or excavations affecting established routes are managed, made conspicuous or reinstated as appropriate to the circumstances. • Unexpected glass, metal, building material, suspected services or other hazardous objects result in work stopping in the affected area until the material has been safely assessed and removed. • Soil contamination is managed before access resumes. • Appropriate hand hygiene arrangements are maintained after soil contact and before eating.	Discovery of Unexpected Material: The affected area remains unavailable until appropriately assessed. Annual: Review as part of the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	competence and the intensity of play. Because digging changes the environment as play develops, dynamic assessment should respond to the current excavation , rather than relying solely on how the area appeared at the beginning of the session.	outcome of digging play, while intervening proportionately where excavation depth, instability, tool use or unexpected materials create a foreseeable significant risk of serious harm.	substantial groundworks or site alterations. • Following relevant inspection findings. • Following changes to national or local guidance.

Section B – Loose Parts Play

Guiding Philosophy

Loose parts play empowers children to become designers, engineers, inventors and problem-solvers. Resources without a fixed purpose encourage imagination, collaboration and creativity while allowing children to experiment, assess risk and learn through trial and error. At Eastling Primary School, adults support children in managing weight, balance and stability, intervening only where foreseeable significant harm becomes likely, so that the play value of these resources is preserved.

Value	Loose Parts Play develops this because...
Collaboration	Children become engineers together, solving problems and sharing ideas.
Perseverance	Structures rarely work first time; children redesign, rebuild and improve.
Excellence	Every creation reflects children's creativity, imagination and willingness to improve their designs.

Tyres

Play Value

Tyres are highly versatile loose parts that can be rolled, stacked, carried, climbed upon, incorporated into constructions or transformed through imaginative play. Their weight, shape and movement provide children with opportunities to develop strength, coordination, spatial awareness and problem-solving while learning to judge stability, weight and movement.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops strength, balance and coordination. • Encourages lifting, carrying, rolling and construction. • Develops understanding of	• Minor bumps and bruises. • Low-level falls from tyres. • Minor trapped fingers during stacking. • Tyres tipping or rolling unexpectedly at low	• Collapse of an excessively high or unstable stack. • Significant fall from a tyre stack. • A heavy tyre rolling into another child at	• Tyre stacks are limited to a maximum of six tyres high. • The school provides tyres considered suitable for play and withdraws those exposing wire, sharp material or significant structural	Daily: Dynamic visual check for damage, hazardous positioning and developing constructions. Weekly: Recorded inspection of tyre condition and storage/play areas. During Play: Stack height and stability	Adults should consider: • Stack height and stability. • Number and size of tyres. • Ground condition. • Direction and speed of rolling. • Children within or	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Lifting, rolling, stacking and	Review annually and following a serious/recurring incident, significant change to provision, identification of equipment deterioration, site

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
weight, stability and movement. • Encourages creativity and imaginative play. • Develops teamwork and communication when moving larger resources. • Builds confidence, perseverance and problem-solving skills.	speed. • Mud and dirt associated with outdoor resources. These are recognised as manageable aspects of physically challenging loose-parts play.	speed. • Entrapment beneath or between tyres. • Damaged tyres exposing wire or other sharp material. • Large stacks falling onto children. • Uncontrolled rolling on a significant gradient.	damage. • Dynamic supervision considers the stability, height and location of constructions as they develop. • Adults respond where rolling tyres develop sufficient speed, direction or momentum to create a foreseeable significant collision risk. • Teamwork is supported where tyre size or weight makes collaborative moving appropriate. • Tyre constructions are dynamically assessed in relation to nearby play and landing areas rather than being restricted solely because children have stacked or climbed them. • Water accumulation within stored tyres is monitored and managed as appropriate.	dynamically monitored. As Required: Damaged tyres withdrawn. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	beneath constructions. • Nearby incompatible play. • Condition of individual tyres. The fact that a construction moves slightly or eventually falls does not necessarily make it unsafe; judgement should focus on the foreseeable consequences of that movement.	discovering that constructions can become unstable are central to the developmental value of tyres. Adults should allow children to experiment while maintaining the six-tyre limit and intervening where weight, position, instability or movement creates a foreseeable significant risk.	changes or relevant changes to guidance.

Crates

Play Value

Crates allow children to build, stack, carry, balance and create structures that can be continually adapted. They support imaginative construction while providing first-hand experience of height, stability, weight distribution and structural failure. Children learn through experimentation which designs work, which need changing and how their own movements affect a construction.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance and coordination. • Encourages construction and engineering thinking. • Develops understanding of stability and weight distribution. • Supports imaginative play. • Encourages teamwork and negotiation. • Develops perseverance and problem-solving. • Provides opportunities for progressive physical challenge.	• Low-level falls. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Crates tipping during construction. • Minor trapped fingers. • Collapse of small constructions without significant consequence.	• Significant fall from an unstable elevated construction. • Large construction collapsing onto a child. • Broken crates exposing sharp edges. • Head, neck or limb entrapment within damaged or unsuitable openings. • Structures positioned close to fixed hazards. • Excessive loading causing structural failure.	• Crates are selected for suitability and significantly cracked, broken or weakened crates are withdrawn. • Dynamic supervision considers construction height, stability, loading and the consequences of foreseeable collapse. • The surrounding environment is considered where children create elevated structures. • Adults intervene where a construction presents a foreseeable significant fall, crush or entrapment risk rather than simply because it is unconventional or unstable. • Children's freedom to dismantle, rebuild and combine crates with other loose parts is preserved wherever reasonably practicable.	Daily: Dynamic visual check of crates and constructions. Weekly: Recorded inspection for cracks, broken sections, sharp edges and deterioration. During Play: Stability and location dynamically assessed. As Required: Damaged crates withdrawn. Annual: RBA review.	Adults should consider construction height, stability, loading, ground condition, fall environment, children beneath structures and interaction with other loose parts. Ordinary construction failure can provide useful learning; intervention should focus on failures capable of causing significant harm.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Experimenting with stability and experiencing manageable construction failure are important elements of crate play. Adults should preserve this experimentation while controlling significant fall, crush, structural and entrapment risks.	Review annually and following serious/recurring incidents, significant equipment changes or relevant inspection/guidance changes.

Pallets

Play Value

Pallets provide larger-scale construction opportunities and allow children to collaborate in creating platforms, dens, boundaries, stages and imaginative structures. Their size and weight require planning, teamwork and physical effort, giving children meaningful opportunities to develop practical judgement.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops strength and gross motor control. • Encourages teamwork and communication. • Supports large-scale construction. • Develops planning and problem-solving. • Develops understanding of weight and stability. • Encourages imaginative transformation of the environment.	• Minor splinters. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Minor trapped fingers. • Low-level trips or falls. • Physical effort involved in moving resources.	• Exposed nails, staples or significant splintering. • Pallet collapse or structural failure. • Crush injury while moving or stacking. • Significant fall from an elevated construction. • Entrapment within openings. • Pallets of unknown/unsuitable provenance or contamination.	• Pallets entering provision are checked for suitability and condition. • Pallets with exposed nails, hazardous staples, significant rot, contamination or structural failure are not made available for play. • Dynamic supervision considers weight, stability, lifting arrangements and developing constructions. • Collaborative moving is supported where size and weight make this appropriate. • Elevated pallet constructions are assessed in relation to stability, fall consequences and surrounding objects. • Significantly deteriorated pallets are withdrawn rather than repeatedly repaired where their structural integrity is uncertain.	Daily: Visual check for obvious damage and hazardous positioning. Weekly: Recorded inspection for nails, staples, splintering, rot, contamination and structural deterioration. During Play: Developing structures dynamically assessed. Following Prolonged Wet Weather: Timber condition considered where deterioration is evident. Annual: RBA review.	Adults should consider pallet condition, weight, number of children moving it, construction height/stability, openings, fall environment and interaction with other resources.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The size and weight of pallets contribute to their play value by requiring genuine cooperation and practical judgement. Adults should support children to manage these characteristics while intervening where structural deterioration, significant crush, entrapment or fall risks arise.	Review annually and following serious incidents, significant deterioration, changes to provision or relevant guidance.

Cable Drums

Play Value

Cable drums provide substantial, versatile resources for construction, balancing, tables, stages, imaginative environments and physical play. Their shape introduces opportunities to explore rotation, stability and weight while their size encourages cooperation and large-scale creative thinking.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops strength and coordination. • Supports balancing and climbing. • Encourages large-scale imaginative construction. • Develops understanding of weight, rotation and stability. • Promotes teamwork and problem-solving. • Develops spatial awareness.	• Minor bumps and bruises. • Minor trapped fingers. • Low-level falls. • Small unexpected movements during manipulation.	• Heavy drum rolling into or over a child. • Significant crush injury. • Structural failure or protruding fixings. • Significant fall from stacked/elevated drums. • Uncontrolled movement on sloping ground. • Entrapment within openings or between resources.	• Cable drums are checked for structural integrity, protruding fixings, significant splintering and other hazardous deterioration before entering and during their life within provision. • Dynamic supervision responds to uncontrolled rolling, unstable elevated positioning and significant crush or entrapment potential. • Movement on gradients is managed where the weight and momentum of a drum could create significant collision consequences. • Collaborative moving is supported where the size and weight of a drum make this appropriate. • Developing constructions are assessed according to stability and foreseeable	Daily: Dynamic visual check. Weekly: Recorded inspection of timber, structural fixings, edges and overall integrity. During Play: Rolling and construction dynamically monitored. As Required: Defective drums withdrawn. Annual: RBA review.	Adults should consider weight, speed, gradient, structural condition, stability, children's positioning and the consequences if a drum moves unexpectedly.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The weight and potential movement of cable drums provide meaningful physical and problem-solving challenge. Adults should preserve these opportunities while controlling situations where their mass or momentum creates significant crush or collision risk.	Review annually and following serious/recurring incidents, structural deterioration or significant changes to provision.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			consequences rather than simply because drums are being climbed or repositioned.				

Planks

Play Value

Planks enable children to create bridges, ramps, pathways, platforms and complex constructions. They provide particularly valuable opportunities to investigate balance, leverage, gradient, strength and stability while combining naturally with crates, tyres, pallets and other loose parts.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance and coordination. • Encourages engineering and construction thinking. • Develops understanding of leverage, gradient and stability. • Supports imaginative play. • Develops teamwork and communication. • Builds confidence and problem-solving skills.	• Minor splinters. • Low-level falls. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Planks slipping during experimentation. • Minor trapped fingers.	• Plank breaking under load. • Significant fall from an unstable bridge/ramp. • Plank striking another child during carrying or movement. • Sharp edges, exposed nails or severe splintering. • Unstable leverage causing sudden significant movement. • Planks positioned at unsafe height	• Planks are maintained free from exposed nails, significant rot, severe splintering and structural defects likely to cause failure. • Dynamic supervision considers span, height, support, loading and likely consequences of movement or failure. • Space around children carrying long planks is considered dynamically. • Elevated constructions are assessed in relation to the landing environment. • Adults allow experimentation with balance and	Daily: Visual/dynamic check. Weekly: Recorded inspection for rot, splits, protruding fixings, significant splintering and structural deterioration. During Play: Developing constructions dynamically assessed. Annual: RBA review.	Consider plank length/weight, span, supports, height, loading, ground conditions, children carrying planks and surrounding play.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Discovering how planks balance, flex, move and occasionally fail to support an intended construction provides valuable learning. Intervention should focus on situations where the foreseeable consequence of failure becomes significant.	Review annually and following serious incidents, significant deterioration or changes to provision/guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
		against fixed structures.	movement while intervening where foreseeable failure could cause significant harm.				

Barrels

Play Value

Barrels provide children with unusual opportunities to explore rolling, rotation, enclosed space, movement and imaginative play. They can be moved, incorporated into constructions or, where the barrel is suitable for this use, used for controlled rolling experiences. Rolling inside a barrel provides powerful vestibular and proprioceptive input and requires a specific body position to reduce the risk of neck injury.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
- Provides vestibular and proprioceptive sensory experiences. - Develops spatial and body awareness. - Develops strength and coordination. - Encourages cooperation and communication. - Develops understanding of rotation and momentum. - Supports imaginative play and physical confidence.	- Minor bumps and bruises. - Gentle rolling movement. - Temporary dizziness associated with controlled rotation. - Minor loss of balance entering or leaving a barrel.	- Neck/head injury caused by unsuitable body positioning while being rolled. - Barrel rolling uncontrollably or down a gradient. - Collision with another child or fixed object. - Entrapment. - Sharp/damaged barrel edges. - Excessive or uncontrolled rotational speed. - Another child climbing onto a barrel containing a child.	- Barrels used for children to enter are assessed as suitable in size, condition and design for that activity. When a child is inside a barrel that is being rolled, the child adopts a lengthways “log” position, with their head at one end of the barrel and their feet at the other. This positioning is maintained to reduce the risk of the head and neck being forced into an unsafe position during rotation. - Rolling takes place on	Daily: Dynamic check of barrels and rolling area. Weekly: Recorded inspection of barrel surfaces, edges, structural condition and openings. During Rolling: Body position, route, speed and surrounding children dynamically monitored. As Required: Damaged barrels withdrawn. Annual: RBA review.	Adults should consider: - Child’s body position. - Speed of rotation. - Ground gradient. - Barrel condition. - Clear rolling route. - Other children nearby. - Child’s response to rotational movement. Rolling should cease where the required lengthways body position cannot be maintained or movement becomes uncontrolled.	Adults should seek to preserve children’s opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Controlled barrel rolling provides a distinctive physical and sensory experience. Adults should preserve this opportunity while treating correct lengthways positioning, controlled movement, clear space and equipment integrity as essential controls against more significant injury.	Review annually and following a barrel-related injury/near miss, equipment replacement, significant deterioration or relevant changes to guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			ground where gradient and surrounding space allow the movement to remain appropriately controlled. • Dynamic supervision responds to excessive speed, unsafe body positioning, other children entering the rolling route or attempts to climb onto an occupied barrel. • The rolling route is kept sufficiently clear of fixed obstacles and incompatible play. • Damaged barrels, sharp edges or structural deterioration result in withdrawal from use.				

Kayaks

Play Value

Eastling's three kayaks provide large-scale imaginative resources that can become boats, vehicles, bases, dens and social spaces. Used on land, they encourage children to cooperate, negotiate roles and use whole-body movement while experiencing an unusual real-world object within imaginative play.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Supports imaginative and role play. • Encourages teamwork and communication. •	• Minor tipping while entering/leaving. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Minor	• Kayak overturning onto a child. • Entrapment beneath or within a kayak. • Significant collision	• Eastling's kayaks are provided for land-based play and are not used on the pond or other water. •	Daily: Visual/dynamic check. Weekly: Recorded inspection of hull, edges, openings and condition. Following	Adults should consider number of children, stability, terrain, movement, water accumulation,	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate	Review annually and following serious incidents, equipment deterioration/replacement

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
Develops balance and core strength. • Encourages large-scale problem-solving. • Develops spatial awareness. • Creates social spaces and shared narratives. • Encourages cooperative movement of substantial resources.	trapped fingers. • Low-level loss of balance. • Dirty or wet equipment following outdoor use.	while a kayak is being moved. • Sharp edges caused by cracks/damage. • Uncontrolled movement on a slope. • Water accumulation creating an additional hazard.	Kayaks are maintained free from significant cracks, sharp edges and structural deterioration. • Dynamic supervision considers stability, number of users, ground gradient and movement of the kayaks. • Collaborative moving is supported where the kayak's size makes this appropriate. • Kayaks are not positioned over another child or used in circumstances where overturning could foreseeably trap a child beneath them. • Storage and drainage arrangements prevent significant water accumulation and uncontrolled movement. • Damaged kayaks are withdrawn.	Severe Weather: Check for movement, damage and water accumulation. Annual: RBA review.	kayak condition and potential entrapment. The fact that a kayak rocks or tips slightly during play is not itself a reason for intervention where the foreseeable consequence remains minor.	challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The kayaks' unusual size and form contribute significantly to their imaginative and physical play value. Adults should preserve children's ability to reinterpret them while controlling significant overturning, entrapment, collision and equipment-condition risks.	or significant changes to provision.

Rope

Play Value

Rope is one of the most versatile loose parts available for play. Children can use it to connect, pull, measure, construct, create boundaries and develop imaginative scenarios. It provides opportunities to explore tension, force, knots and cooperation, but requires careful selection and dynamic management because inappropriate rope dimensions or configurations can create entanglement hazards.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops grip and coordination. • Encourages construction and problem-solving. • Develops understanding of tension and force. • Encourages cooperation and communication. • Supports imaginative and den play. • Develops knotting and practical skills. • Encourages experimentation.	• Minor rope friction to hands. • Minor trips over visible rope. • Knots becoming difficult to undo. • Low-level pulling and resistance during cooperative play.	• Strangulation or neck entanglement. • Rope tightening around limbs/body. • Significant trip hazard across active routes. • Rope attached to moving equipment or used to pull a child at unsafe speed. • Unsafe suspended structures. • Rope failure where used to support body weight without being designed/assessed for that purpose.	• Rope provided for loose-parts play is of a suitable thickness for its intended use; thin cord or rope presenting an increased strangulation or cutting risk is not provided as general loose-parts rope. • Loose-parts rope is distinguished from purpose-designed load-bearing rope equipment such as installed rope ladders or hammock attachments. • Dynamic supervision pays particular attention to rope around the head, neck or body and configurations capable of tightening under load. • Rope stretched across busy movement routes is dynamically managed where it creates a significant foreseeable trip/collision hazard. • Rope is not assumed to be suitable for suspending children or supporting body weight merely because it is available for loose-parts play. • Frayed, significantly deteriorated or contaminated rope is	Daily: Dynamic visual monitoring of rope condition and configurations. Weekly: Recorded inspection for fraying, deterioration and contamination. During Play: Particular attention to loops, tensioned ropes and attachment points. As Required: Unsuitable/damaged rope withdrawn. Annual: RBA review.	Adults should consider rope thickness, length, loops, tension, attachment points, whether rope can tighten, proximity to neck/body, movement routes and whether children are attempting to suspend weight from it.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Knotting, tying, pulling and connecting objects are central to rope's play value. Adults should preserve these experiences while treating neck entanglement, tightening loops and unsupported load-bearing use as significant risks requiring proportionate intervention.	Review annually and following rope-related significant incidents, introduction of substantially different rope or changes to relevant guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			withdrawn. • Adults assess the actual configuration created by children rather than unnecessarily prescribing what rope may represent within imaginative play.				

Fabric

Play Value

Fabric provides a lightweight, adaptable resource for dens, costumes, imaginative environments, flags, screens and collaborative constructions. It allows children to transform spaces rapidly and supports creativity, storytelling and social interaction while combining naturally with other loose parts.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Encourages imagination and creativity. • Supports den building and role play. • Develops cooperation and communication. • Provides sensory experiences. • Encourages spatial thinking and construction. • Allows children to transform	• Minor trips on loose fabric. • Fabric becoming muddy/wet. • Minor tangling during ordinary play. • Lightweight constructions collapsing without significant consequence.	• Fabric around the head/neck creating suffocation or strangulation risk. • Significant entanglement. • Obscured hazards or exits. • Fabric attached to unsuitable moving equipment. • Damaged fabric exposing hazardous fixings/components. • Large fabric acting unpredictably in strong winds.	• Fabric is selected for suitability and significant hazardous deterioration is managed through removal/replacement. • Dynamic supervision responds to fabric tightly wrapped around the head or neck, significant entanglement or configurations obstructing essential routes. • Adults assess enclosed fabric structures in relation to access/egress and the ability to identify significant distress or hazards. • Large sheets are dynamically	Daily: Dynamic check during use. Weekly: Recorded condition/storage check. Following Wet Play: Fabric appropriately dried/stored to reduce deterioration. As Required: Damaged/contaminated fabric withdrawn. Annual: RBA review.	Adults should consider fabric size, wind, entanglement, head/neck involvement, visibility, attachment points and interaction with other equipment.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Fabric's value comes from its ability to transform children, objects and spaces. Adults should preserve this open-ended use while responding proportionately to	Review annually and following significant incidents, substantial resource changes or relevant guidance changes.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
environments independently.			managed during strong winds where they become difficult to control. • Wet or contaminated fabric is cleaned, dried or withdrawn as appropriate. • Ordinary covering, wrapping, screening and imaginative transformation remain available unless the actual configuration creates significant risk.			significant entanglement, suffocation, obstruction or environmental risks.	

Den Building

Play Value

Den building brings together many elements of Eastling’s loose-parts provision and enables children to design and construct spaces that have meaning to them. Dens support collaboration, negotiation, engineering, imaginative play, privacy and belonging. Construction naturally involves experimentation with stability and occasional manageable failure, giving children valuable opportunities to assess and refine their ideas.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
- Develops design, engineering and problem-solving skills. - Encourages collaboration, negotiation and communication. - Develops understanding of stability and structure. - Encourages imagination and	- Minor bumps and bruises. - Low-level construction collapse. - Minor trapped fingers. - Trips over visible building materials. - Minor scratches/splinters from suitable loose parts. - These are manageable aspects	- Heavy or elevated materials collapsing onto children. - Significant structural instability. - Entrapment within a collapsed structure. - Unsafe load-bearing roofs or platforms. - Neck	- Den building is supported using loose parts covered by the relevant individual assessments within this section. - Dynamic supervision considers the combined effect of materials, height, weight, stability and attachment methods as structures	Daily: Dynamic assessment of developing dens during play. Before Subsequent Reuse: Dens left standing between sessions are reassessed because weather, movement or interference may have altered their stability. Weekly: Loose-parts resources incorporated into dens	Adults should consider: - Materials being combined. - Height and weight. - Stability and potential direction of collapse. - Children inside/beneath structures. - Rope and fabric configurations. - Access and exit routes. - Ground/weather conditions. - Whether a	Adults should seek to preserve children’s opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Trial, error and manageable structural failure are fundamental to den building. Adults should not require	This assessment will be reviewed: - Annually. - Following a serious or recurring den-building incident. - Following significant changes to available loose parts. - Following introduction of

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
sustained role play. • Builds perseverance through testing and redesigning. • Develops physical strength and coordination. • Provides opportunities for privacy, belonging and quieter social interaction. • Encourages ownership of the play environment.	of authentic construction play.	entanglement involving rope/fabric. • Den construction obstructing emergency access, gates or essential routes. • Hidden hazardous materials within enclosed structures. • Significant fall from an elevated den.	develop. • Adults distinguish between manageable construction failure, which provides valuable learning, and collapse capable of causing significant crush, entrapment or fall injury. • Heavy materials positioned overhead are dynamically assessed in relation to their stability and the consequences of foreseeable collapse. • Rope and fabric configurations remain subject to the controls within their respective assessments, particularly around head/neck entanglement. • Essential emergency routes, gates and required access points remain available. • Adults maintain sufficient awareness of enclosed dens to identify significant hazards or distress without unnecessarily removing children's experience of privacy. • Unsafe elements may be modified or removed while preserving the remainder of a	remain subject to their relevant operational inspections. Following Severe Weather: Standing structures reassessed before use. Annual: RBA review.	standing den has changed since it was constructed. Because every den is different, dynamic risk-benefit assessment is the principal means of managing the changing construction during play.	children's structures to replicate professionally engineered structures; intervention should instead focus on foreseeable significant consequences such as heavy overhead collapse, entrapment, significant falls or hazardous rope configurations. Wherever possible, adults should help preserve the child's overall play intention while addressing the particular significant hazard.	substantially heavier/larger construction resources. • Following relevant site or inspection findings. • Following changes to relevant guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			construction wherever reasonably practicable rather than automatically dismantling the entire den.				

Section C – Fixed Play Equipment

Guiding Philosophy

Fixed play equipment provides opportunities for progressive physical challenge, helping children develop strength, coordination, balance and perseverance. We recognise that learning to judge height, movement and personal capability is an important part of growing up. Through regular inspection, maintenance and dynamic supervision, we ensure equipment remains structurally safe whilst retaining the level of challenge that supports children's physical and emotional development.

Value	Fixed Equipment develops this because...
Excellence	Children challenge themselves physically and celebrate personal progress.
Honesty	Children learn to judge their own abilities and make sensible decisions about what they are ready to attempt.
Perseverance	Children build confidence through repeated practice and determination.

Trim Trail

Play Value

The trim trail provides children with a sequence of physical challenges involving climbing, balancing, traversing and moving between different pieces of equipment. It develops whole-body strength, coordination and spatial awareness while enabling children to assess their own capabilities, select an appropriate level of challenge and develop confidence through repeated practice.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance, coordination, strength and agility. • Improves spatial awareness and body control. • Builds confidence through progressive physical challenge. • Develops perseverance and resilience. • Encourages children to assess their own physical capabilities. • Supports problem-solving and route planning. • Promotes active physical play and wellbeing.	• Minor slips and low-level falls. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Small grazes. • Temporary loss of balance. These are recognised as foreseeable and acceptable aspects of challenging physical play and contribute to children developing physical competence and judgement.	• Significant fall from height. • Structural or fixing failure. • Significant deterioration of timber or other components. • Entrapment of head, neck, limbs or clothing. • Collision with another child. • Unsafe surface or equipment conditions caused by extreme weather. • Failure or significant deterioration of impact-attenuating surfaces where provided.	• The trim trail is maintained as installed play equipment and significant defects result in the affected element or complete trail being withdrawn from use as appropriate. • The surrounding fall/impact areas are maintained free from unnecessary obstacles. • Dynamic supervision responds to congestion, developing patterns of movement and equipment condition without unnecessarily directing children's routes. • The trim trail is closed during extreme weather conditions where wind, ice, snow, excessive surface water, extreme heat or other conditions make continued use unsafe. • Wet or slippery conditions are assessed dynamically rather than automatically treated as unacceptable unless they materially increase the likelihood of significant harm. • Repairs or alterations	Daily: Dynamic visual check of equipment, surrounding ground and obvious defects before and throughout use. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of structural components, accessible fixings, surfaces, signs of deterioration and impact areas. Following Extreme Weather: Additional inspection before reopening where conditions may have affected the equipment or surrounding surface. Defects: Significant defects result in isolation of the affected equipment pending repair/assessment. Annual: Included within the annual KCC Health & Safety playground inspection and annual Risk-Benefit Assessment review.	Adults should consider: • Weather and surface conditions. • Wetness, frost or ice. • Condition of equipment. • Congestion. • Children's competence and confidence. • Interaction between different directions of travel. • Condition of landing/impact areas. Closure should be proportionate to the actual conditions, with extreme weather or identified significant defects triggering withdrawal from use.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Minor falls and temporary loss of balance are inherent within the developmental purpose of the trim trail. Adults should enable children to select and progressively master physical challenges, intervening where equipment condition, environmental factors or patterns of use make significant injury foreseeably more likely.	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following significant repair or alteration. • Following a serious incident or recurring pattern of incidents. • Following significant weather-related damage. • Following KCC Health & Safety inspection recommendations. • Following significant changes to relevant guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			affecting structural integrity are undertaken by appropriately competent persons.				

Climbing Wall

Play Value

The climbing wall provides children with opportunities to develop strength, coordination, route planning and confidence through progressive climbing challenges. Children learn to coordinate hands and feet, judge reach and body position and make decisions about when to continue, change direction or descend. Repeated use enables children to recognise their increasing competence and experience the satisfaction of mastering physical challenge.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops upper and lower body strength. • Improves grip strength and coordination. • Develops balance and spatial awareness. • Encourages route planning and problem-solving. • Builds confidence, resilience and perseverance. • Develops self-assessment of physical capability.	• Minor slips from holds. • Low-level falls. • Minor bumps, grazes and bruises. • Temporary loss of grip or balance. These are foreseeable aspects of climbing and contribute to the development of physical competence.	• Significant fall from excessive height. • Climbing hold becoming loose or detached. • Structural failure of the wall or fixings. • Collision with another climber or child below. • Entrapment or hazardous gaps. • Inadequate or significantly deteriorated landing/impact surface. • Climbing	• The wall is used within its installed design and intended climbing parameters. • The permitted climbing height is clearly understood within the school's play arrangements and children do not access the top or reverse side unless specifically designed for this purpose. • Holds, fixings, wall surfaces and	Daily: Visual check of wall, obvious hold movement, landing area and surrounding environment. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection including holds, accessible fixings, wall condition and impact surface. Following Damage/Alteration: Competent inspection before reopening where structural integrity may have been affected. Annual: Included within the annual KCC Health & Safety	Adults should consider: • Condition and dryness of holds. • Landing surface. • Congestion. • Children beneath climbers. • Individual confidence and competence. • Unusual routes or developing patterns of play. Unconventional climbing should not automatically result in intervention where the equipment and fall environment remain suitable and significant	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The climbing wall exists to provide progressive physical challenge. Adults should allow children to make decisions about routes and capability while intervening where equipment	This assessment will be reviewed annually and following significant repair or alteration, a serious or recurring incident, structural concerns, KCC Health & Safety recommendations or significant changes to relevant guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
		beyond the designed upper limit of the wall.	structural components are maintained in serviceable condition. • Loose, spinning, cracked or damaged holds result in the affected route or wall being withdrawn as appropriate. • The landing/impact area is maintained clear from unnecessary objects and incompatible play. • Dynamic supervision responds to significant congestion and children positioning themselves directly beneath climbers. • Adults do not lift or position children onto climbing holds beyond the level they can access independently.	playground inspection and annual Risk-Benefit Assessment review.	harm is not foreseeably likely.	condition, excessive height, congestion or the position of other users creates a foreseeable significant risk.	

Hanging Bars

Play Value

Hanging bars provide opportunities for children to develop grip strength, upper-body strength, shoulder stability, coordination and confidence. Hanging, traversing and transferring body weight require significant physical effort and allow children to progressively develop competence through repetition and experimentation.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops grip and upper-body strength. • Develops shoulder stability and core strength. • Improves coordination and body control. • Builds confidence and perseverance. • Supports progressive physical challenge. • Develops awareness of personal physical capability.	• Hands slipping from bars. • Controlled falls onto the safety surface. • Minor bumps or bruises. • Temporary muscle fatigue. These are recognised features of hanging and traversing play.	• Significant fall caused by unexpectedly slippery bars. • Structural or fixing failure. • Collision with another child beneath the bars. • Significant deterioration, displacement or inadequacy of safety matting. • Finger or limb entrapment. • Injury caused by pulling or interfering with another user.	• Hanging bars, supports and fixings are maintained as installed play equipment. • Safety matting beneath and around the equipment is maintained in its intended position and condition. • A towel is kept available so that hanging bars can be wiped dry where rain, condensation or other moisture creates a slipping hazard. • The condition of the bars is assessed before use following rain or wet weather, and moisture is removed where necessary before access resumes. • The area beneath the bars is maintained free from unnecessary objects and incompatible play. • Dynamic supervision responds to congestion or interaction between users where this significantly increases collision or fall consequences. • Structural, fixing or matting defects result in withdrawal from use	Daily: Visual check of bars, moisture, supports and safety matting. Wet Conditions: Bars checked and wiped using the available towel where required to provide an appropriate gripping surface. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of bars, frame, accessible fixings and matting. Following Damage: Affected equipment withdrawn until appropriately assessed/repaired. Annual: Included within the annual KCC Health & Safety playground inspection and annual Risk-Benefit Assessment review.	Adults should consider: • Whether bars are wet or slippery. • Condition and position of safety matting. • Number of children using the equipment. • Presence of children underneath users. • Equipment condition. • Individual competence and fatigue. Moisture should be managed through drying where practicable, allowing the activity to resume rather than automatically closing the equipment for an extended period.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Grip fatigue, temporary loss of grip and controlled falls are inherent within the physical challenge offered by hanging bars. Adults should preserve these opportunities while managing preventable hazards such as unexpectedly slippery surfaces, damaged equipment, unsuitable landing areas and significant congestion.	This assessment will be reviewed annually and following significant equipment/matting repair, serious or recurring incidents, KCC Health & Safety recommendations or significant changes to the equipment or guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			pending appropriate action.				

Tree Swing

Play Value

The tree swing enables children to experience movement, height, rhythm and momentum while developing balance, coordination and core strength. Swinging provides strong vestibular and sensory input and can support both active social play and emotional regulation. Managing the moving swing and its arc also develops spatial awareness and judgement.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance, coordination and core strength. • Provides vestibular and sensory stimulation. • Develops understanding of momentum and movement. • Builds confidence. • Encourages turn-taking and social negotiation. • Can support emotional regulation and wellbeing.	• Minor falls while mounting/dismounting. • Minor bumps or bruises. • Loss of balance at low height. • Ordinary movement and spinning associated with swing play.	• Failure of rope, attachment or supporting branch. • Significant collision with a person or fixed object within the swing arc. • Significant fall following equipment failure. • Entrapment or entanglement in rope/attachments. • Tree deterioration affecting the supporting branch. • Excessive loading beyond the equipment's intended capacity.	• The swing is attached only to a tree/branch considered suitable through the school's tree-management arrangements and competent arboricultural advice. • Rope, seat, connectors and attachment arrangements are suitable for the intended use and maintained in serviceable condition. • The swing arc and fall area are	Daily: Visual check of seat, rope, attachments, branch and swing area. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of the complete swing assembly and surrounding ground. Tree Management: Supporting tree included within the school's arboricultural inspection arrangements. Following Severe Weather: Additional check before reopening where appropriate. Annual: KCC Health & Safety inspection of installed play equipment where within	Adults should consider equipment condition, branch condition, ground condition, swing arc, congestion, weather, unusual loading and the manner in which children are using the swing. Dynamic intervention should focus particularly on significant collision and equipment/branch integrity.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Speed, height and movement provide much of the tree swing's developmental value. These should be preserved while the school manages the more significant risks associated with structural failure, the swing arc and unsuitable loading.	Review annually and following significant tree work, storm damage, equipment replacement or repair, serious/recurring incidents, arboricultural advice, KCC recommendations or changes to relevant guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
Develops spatial awareness around moving equipment.			maintained free from unnecessary fixed obstacles. • Dynamic supervision responds to children entering the active swing arc and to developing use that places excessive load on the equipment. • Significant wear, attachment movement, branch concerns or equipment damage result in immediate withdrawal from use. • Access is withdrawn following significant storms or where tree condition requires further assessment.	remit, alongside annual RBA review.			

Hammocks

Play Value

Hammocks provide children with opportunities for gentle movement, relaxation, sensory regulation, imaginative play and social interaction. They create a different type of play space within the outdoor environment and can provide an important quieter experience alongside Eastling's more physically demanding provision.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Supports relaxation and emotional regulation. • Provides vestibular and sensory input. • Develops balance and body awareness. • Supports imaginative and social play. • Provides quieter outdoor play opportunities. • Encourages negotiation and shared use.	• Low-level falls while entering or leaving. • Minor bumps. • Gentle tipping or rolling from the hammock. • Ordinary swinging movement.	• Failure of rope, attachment or supporting tree/branch. • Significant fall caused by attachment failure. • Entanglement or strangulation involving rope or fabric. • Collision with surrounding trees/objects. • Overloading. • Damaged fabric or stitching failure. • Damage to supporting trees affecting attachment security.	• Hammocks are secured using appropriate, purpose-suitable ropes/attachment systems capable of supporting the intended use. • Supporting trees and attachment points are suitable for the load and incorporated into the school's tree-management arrangements. • Attachments are positioned to minimise avoidable damage to bark and trees. • Hammocks are positioned at a managed height above a suitable, clear surface. • Manufacturer load/occupancy information is followed where applicable. • Dynamic supervision responds to excessive loading, significant entanglement, standing/jumping or movement likely to create serious collision. • Damaged fabric, stitching, rope, connectors or attachments result in withdrawal from use. • Access is withdrawn where severe weather or tree condition affects safe use.	Daily: Visual check of hammock, ropes/attachments, supporting tree and ground beneath. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection including fabric, stitching, rope condition, connectors, attachment points and signs of tree damage. Tree Management: Supporting trees incorporated within arboricultural inspection arrangements. Following Severe Weather: Additional check where required. Annual: Included in KCC inspection arrangements where applicable and annual RBA review.	Adults should consider: • Number of users. • Condition of fabric and ropes. • Attachment security. • Tree condition. • Height above ground. • Swinging intensity. • Potential entanglement. • Objects within the movement/fall area. Ordinary swinging and creative use should be preserved unless the developing activity creates a significant entanglement, loading or collision risk.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Hammocks provide both sensory movement and valuable opportunities for rest and regulation. Adults should avoid unnecessarily directing their use while ensuring attachment integrity, tree condition, loading and potential entanglement remain appropriately managed.	Review annually and following equipment replacement/repair, significant tree work, severe weather damage, serious or recurring incidents, arboricultural/KCC recommendations or significant changes to provision.

Rope Ladders

Play Value

Rope ladders provide a dynamic climbing challenge because they move in response to the child. Unlike rigid climbing equipment, children must continually adjust their grip, balance and body position. This develops strength, coordination, problem-solving and confidence while providing a valuable opportunity to assess and manage physical challenge.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops grip and upper-body strength. • Develops balance, coordination and core stability. • Encourages planning and problem-solving. • Develops confidence and perseverance. • Improves spatial awareness. • Enables progressive assessment of personal capability.	• Minor slips. • Low-level falls. • Minor bumps, grazes or bruises. • Movement of the ladder while climbing. • Temporary loss of balance or grip.	• Significant fall from height. • Failure of rope, rung, connector or supporting branch. • Head, neck, limb or clothing entrapment. • Entanglement. • Collision with another child. • Tree/branch failure. • Deterioration of the landing/fall area.	• Rope ladders are attached to trees/branches considered suitable through competent tree-management arrangements. • Purpose-suitable ropes, rungs, connectors and attachment systems are used and maintained in serviceable condition. • The climbing height, potential free-fall distance and landing environment are considered as part of the equipment's installation and ongoing assessment. • Attachment arrangements minimise avoidable tree damage. • The fall area is maintained free from unnecessary obstacles. • Dynamic supervision responds to congestion,	Daily: Visual check of ropes, rungs, attachments, tree/branch and landing area. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of the complete ladder and attachment system. Tree Management: Supporting trees included within arboricultural inspection arrangements. Following Severe Weather: Additional assessment where conditions may have affected tree or equipment integrity. Annual: KCC Health & Safety inspection where within the installed-equipment programme and annual RBA review.	Adults should consider: • Rope/rung condition. • Tree and branch condition. • Ground condition. • Climbing height. • Number of users. • Children beneath climbers. • Weather. • Movement of the ladder. • Developing entanglement risks. The normal movement of a rope ladder is part of its intended challenge and should not itself trigger intervention.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The instability of a rope ladder provides greater physical and cognitive challenge than a rigid climbing structure. Adults should preserve this characteristic while controlling significant risks associated with equipment integrity, tree condition, excessive fall consequences, entrapment and congestion.	Review annually and following significant equipment repair/replacement, tree works, severe weather damage, serious/recurring incidents, arboricultural or KCC recommendations, or significant changes to guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			children directly beneath climbers, significant entanglement or loading inconsistent with the equipment's design. • Rope wear, damaged rungs, attachment movement or tree concerns result in withdrawal from use pending appropriate action.				

Slide

Play Value

The slide provides children with opportunities to experience height, acceleration and movement while developing balance, coordination and confidence. Repeated use enables children to become increasingly competent in positioning their bodies, anticipating movement and navigating the interaction between climbing, waiting, sliding and leaving the run-out area.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance and coordination. • Provides experience of height, speed and acceleration. • Develops spatial awareness and body control. • Builds confidence.	• Minor slips while accessing the slide. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Low-level falls. • Minor collisions	• Significant fall from the access platform. • Collision with another child remaining in the run-out area. • Structural or fixing failure. • Head, neck, limb or clothing entrapment.	• The slide is maintained as installed play equipment in accordance with the school's inspection programme. • Access steps, handholds, platform, slide surface and accessible fixings	Daily: Visual check of access, platform, sliding surface, run-out and obvious structural defects. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of structural components, accessible fixings and surrounding surface. Following Severe Weather/Damage:	Adults should consider: • Surface condition. • Congestion. • Children remaining within the run-out. • Weather and ice. • Condition of access points and	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Speed, height and experimentation	This assessment will be reviewed annually and following significant repair or alteration, a serious or recurring incident, significant weather damage, KCC Health & Safety inspection

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
Encourages turn-taking and social negotiation. • Develops understanding of movement and momentum. • Supports active physical play.	during ordinary use. These are foreseeable and manageable features of slide play.	Damaged slide surface causing cuts or injury. • Significant deterioration of access steps/handholds or landing surface. • Unsafe conditions caused by ice or other significant contamination.	are maintained in serviceable condition. • The run-out and surrounding impact area are maintained free from unnecessary fixed obstacles. • Dynamic supervision responds to congestion and developing play where significant collision or fall consequences become foreseeable. • Damage creating sharp edges, structural concerns or significant entrapment hazards results in withdrawal from use. • Access is temporarily withdrawn where ice or another environmental condition makes the equipment unacceptably hazardous. • Alternative or imaginative use is assessed according to the actual risk presented rather than automatically prohibited simply because it differs from conventional sliding.	Additional inspection where appropriate. As Required: Significant defects result in withdrawal until appropriately repaired/assessed. Annual: Included within the annual KCC Health & Safety playground inspection and annual Risk-Benefit Assessment review.	equipment. • Developing alternative uses. • Interaction with surrounding play. Where children adapt the way they use the slide, adults should assess the actual foreseeable consequences rather than relying solely on whether use is conventional.	contribute to the slide's play value. Adults should preserve opportunities for children to develop confidence and judgement while intervening where equipment condition, significant congestion, collision potential or environmental conditions make serious injury foreseeably more likely.	recommendations or relevant changes to guidance.

Section D – Wheeled & Sliding Play

Guiding Philosophy

Movement-based play allows children to experience speed, momentum and changing levels of challenge in a controlled environment. Activities such as scootering and sliding help children develop balance, spatial awareness, coordination and confidence while learning to assess and respond to risk. At Eastling Primary School, we provide opportunities for these experiences through thoughtful design, clear routines and proportionate supervision that prioritises children's safety without unnecessarily limiting their enjoyment or independence.

Scooters and Bikes

Play Value

Scooters and bikes provide children with opportunities to develop balance, coordination, spatial awareness and physical confidence through self-directed movement. Wheeled play enables children to experience speed and momentum, negotiate shared space and develop increasingly sophisticated control while learning to judge distance, direction and the movement of others.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance, coordination and gross motor skills. • Builds leg and core strength and physical stamina. • Develops spatial awareness and judgement of speed and distance. • Encourages confidence and progressive physical competence. • Develops awareness of other users and shared spaces. • Supports negotiation, turn-	• Low-speed falls. • Minor bumps and collisions. • Grazed knees or hands. • Minor bruising. • Loss of balance when starting, stopping or turning. These are recognised as foreseeable and manageable aspects of learning to	• High-speed collision with another child, fixed object or pedestrian. • Significant falls caused by damaged equipment or surface defects. • Collision where wheeled play enters pedestrian or other incompatible play areas. • Mechanical failure of a bike or scooter. • Excessive congestion within the wheeled	• Wheeled play takes place on the playground within the designated wheeled play area marked by the yellow lines. • The defined area provides separation between wheeled activity and other forms of play as far as reasonably practicable. • Bikes and scooters available through the school are maintained in serviceable condition and equipment showing significant	Daily: Dynamic visual check of the wheeled area and available bikes/scooters before and throughout use. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of school-owned wheeled equipment, including wheels, handlebars, steering, frames, seats, pedals and accessible fixings as applicable. Surface: Yellow-lined area monitored for	Adults should consider: • Number of children within the wheeled area. • Speed and direction of travel. • Experience and competence of users. • Presence of pedestrians or other play crossing the area. • Surface condition. • Weather. • Condition of equipment. Dynamic supervision should respond particularly to congestion and developing patterns of movement rather than restricting ordinary speed	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Learning to manage balance, speed, stopping distance and other moving users is an important developmental	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following a serious collision or recurring pattern of incidents. • Following significant changes to the designated wheeled area. • Following introduction of substantially different wheeled equipment.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
taking and social interaction. • Provides vigorous physical activity and supports wellbeing.	control wheeled equipment.	play area. • Unsafe conditions caused by ice, significant surface water or other contamination.	defects is withdrawn from use. • The play team dynamically monitors speed, congestion, direction of travel and interaction with other playground users. • Adult intervention is proportionate to the developing play and focuses particularly on behaviours or conditions creating a foreseeable likelihood of significant collision. • Access is temporarily withdrawn where ice, significant standing water, contamination or another surface condition makes wheeled play unacceptably hazardous. • The designated boundaries and expectations for shared wheeled play are established through the school's OPAL routines.	deterioration, significant cracks, debris or other hazards. As Required: Defective equipment is withdrawn until repaired or replaced. Annual: Review through the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	and challenge unnecessarily.	benefit of wheeled play. Minor falls should not in themselves lead to unnecessary restriction. Intervention should focus on equipment, environmental conditions or patterns of use that make significant injury foreseeably more likely.	Following significant playground resurfacing or alteration. • Following relevant inspection findings or changes to guidance.

Ski Slope

Play Value

The ski slope provides an exciting opportunity for children to experience controlled speed, acceleration, balance and movement on a purpose-designed slope. Sliding from a higher to a lower level requires children to develop body awareness, confidence and judgement while learning to manage anticipation, momentum and stopping. The activity provides a high level of play value and physical challenge and is therefore supported by specific clothing requirements, restricted numbers and direct adult supervision.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance, coordination and core stability. • Provides experience of speed, acceleration and momentum. • Develops spatial awareness and body positioning. • Builds confidence and resilience through adventurous physical play. • Develops judgement of trajectory and stopping distance. • Encourages turn-taking and self-regulation. • Provides excitement and positive experiences of managed risk.	• Minor slips when mounting or leaving the slope. • Minor bumps or bruises. • Low-level falls from a sled or mat. • Minor friction against clothing. These are recognised as foreseeable features of sliding play where appropriate controls are maintained.	• High-speed collision with another user, person or fixed object. • Significant friction injury or abrasion from contact with the slope/netting. • Leaving the intended sliding route. • Collision within an insufficiently clear run-out area. • Entrapment within damaged or incorrectly positioned ski netting. • Failure or movement of netting, anchors or associated components. • Injury resulting from unsuitable clothing or inappropriate equipment. • Unsafe use without direct adult supervision.	• The ski slope is available only under direct adult supervision. • A maximum of 1–2 children use the ski slope at any one time. The supervising adult controls access according to the activity and ensures the previous user has cleared the relevant run before another descent begins. • Children using the ski slope wear clothing that completely covers the skin on their arms and legs. Access is not permitted where suitable clothing is not being worn. • The slope, ski netting, anchors, edges and run-out area are maintained in accordance with the installation arrangements and competent inspection recommendations. • Only equipment assessed as suitable for use on the slope is used for sliding. • The run-out area is maintained free from	Before Each Session: Visual and physical check, as appropriate, of the slope surface, ski netting, accessible fixings/anchors, start area and run-out zone. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of the complete feature and associated sliding equipment. Following Severe Weather or Damage: Additional inspection before reopening. Defects: Significant defects result in immediate withdrawal from use pending repair/competent assessment. Annual: Included within the annual KCC Health & Safety inspection programme for installed play equipment and the school's annual Risk-Benefit Assessment review.	The directly supervising adult should consider: • Condition of the slope and netting. • Clothing coverage. • Equipment being used. • Speed being generated. • Whether the run-out is completely clear. • Behaviour and competence of the children. • Wet, icy or otherwise altered surface conditions. • Interaction between the 1–2 children accessing the feature. The activity should pause whenever the supervising adult needs to restore a safe run or inspect a changing condition.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Speed and excitement are intrinsic elements of the ski slope's play value and should not be removed simply because they create minor foreseeable risks. Because higher-speed sliding can produce more significant consequences, direct supervision, clothing requirements, restricted numbers and maintenance of a clear run provide proportionate controls while preserving adventurous play.	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following a significant collision or serious incident. • Following movement, repair or replacement of the ski netting or slope components. • Following significant changes to the slope or run-out area. • Following KCC Health & Safety inspection recommendations. • Following changes to the equipment permitted on the slope. • Following relevant changes to guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			unnecessary obstacles and incompatible play during use. • Dynamic supervision controls the start of each descent and responds to changing surface conditions, speed and equipment use. • Access is temporarily withdrawn where the surface, netting, anchorage, weather or another defect creates an unacceptable likelihood of significant harm.				

Ski Sleds

Play Value

Ski sleds provide children with a different experience of movement from conventional wheeled play. Children experience acceleration, trajectory and changes in body position while developing the ability to anticipate movement and manage speed. When used on Eastling's ski slope, sleds add challenge, excitement and variety to the sliding experience.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance and core stability. • Develops awareness of speed, direction and momentum.	• Minor falls from a sled. • Bumps and bruises. • Minor slips while getting on or off.	• High-speed collision. • Sled overturning in a manner capable of causing significant	• Ski sleds are used within the school's designated sliding arrangements and subject to the controls established for the ski	Before Use: Visual check of each sled and its handles, base and accessible surfaces. Weekly:	Adults should consider: • Condition of each sled. • User position and control. • Speed generated.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following serious equipment failure or collision. • Following

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
Encourages anticipation and judgement. • Builds physical confidence and resilience. • Supports turn-taking and social interaction. • Allows children to experiment with body position and its effect on movement.	Occasional loss of balance. These are foreseeable aspects of learning to manage moving sliding equipment.	injury. • Trapped fingers associated with damaged equipment. • Structural failure, cracks or sharp edges. • Use of sleds on an unsuitable surface or outside the designated sliding activity. • Collision where a previous user has not cleared the run.	slope. • The direct adult supervision and maximum 1–2 children arrangement applying to the ski slope remains in force when sleds are used. • Skin on arms and legs remains completely covered when sleds are used on the ski slope. • The supervising adult manages the release of sleds so that the relevant route and run-out are clear. • Sleds are checked for cracks, sharp edges, deterioration and other significant defects and are withdrawn where necessary. • Sleds are not introduced into unrelated areas where the terrain has not been assessed as suitable for their use. • Storage arrangements prevent damaged or unsuitable sleds inadvertently returning to use.	Recorded operational inspection of the sleds. Following Significant Impact: Sled involved is checked before returning to use. As Required: Damaged sleds are withdrawn for repair or disposal. Annual: Reviewed alongside the ski slope Risk-Benefit Assessment.	Surface conditions. • Clear run-out. • Clothing coverage. • Whether another user remains on the route. Equipment or technique producing unexpectedly unstable or uncontrolled movement should be reassessed before further descents.	reasonably practicable. The developmental value of sledding includes experiencing movement that is faster and less predictable than ordinary ground play. Adults should preserve this experience while ensuring equipment condition, user numbers, clothing and the clear-run system prevent foreseeable significant risks from becoming unacceptable.	replacement or introduction of different sleds. • Following recurring incidents associated with a particular use. • Following changes to the ski slope. • Following relevant inspection recommendations.

Ski Mats

Play Value

Ski mats provide an alternative sliding experience that allows children to explore how different equipment affects speed, friction, balance and body position. Their flexibility creates a different physical challenge from rigid sleds and provides variety within Eastling's sliding provision.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance, core strength and body awareness. • Provides experience of speed, friction and momentum. • Encourages experimentation with body position. • Builds confidence and resilience. • Develops judgement and anticipation. • Provides variety within adventurous sliding play.	• Minor falls from the mat. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Slipping while mounting or dismounting. • Minor loss of balance during movement. These are accepted features of sliding play.	• High-speed collision. • Mat folding, twisting or moving unexpectedly in a way capable of causing significant injury. • Damaged mat creating sharp or hazardous surfaces. • Fingers becoming caught in damaged sections or handles where present. • Use on an unsuitable slope or surface. • Collision with another user within the run-out.	• Ski mats are used only within sliding arrangements assessed by the school as suitable for them. • When used on the ski slope, the ski slope controls apply in full, including direct adult supervision, no more than 1–2 children at one time, a clear run and complete coverage of skin on arms and legs. • Mats are inspected for tears, deterioration, damaged handles, sharp areas or other defects before use. • The directly supervising adult manages the start of descents and ensures the relevant route/run-out is clear. • Equipment producing unexpectedly uncontrolled movement is withdrawn while its suitability or the conditions are reassessed. • Mats are stored so that significant deterioration or contamination can be identified before reuse.	Before Use: Visual inspection of mat surfaces, edges and handles/fixings where applicable. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection. Following Significant Impact or Damage: Mat checked before returning to use. As Required: Damaged equipment withdrawn for repair or disposal. Annual: Reviewed alongside the school's sliding-play assessments.	Adults should consider: • Mat condition. • Surface condition. • Speed generated. • User position. • Clothing coverage when used on the ski slope. • Clear run-out. • Whether the mat is behaving predictably on the particular surface. Direct supervision should respond to the actual performance of the equipment rather than assuming all mats behave identically.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Variation in speed, balance and movement contributes to the play value of ski mats. Adults should preserve this experimentation while ensuring that the equipment, surface, supervision arrangements and run-out remain appropriate for the activity.	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following significant equipment failure. • Following a serious incident or recurring pattern of incidents. • Following introduction of different mat designs. • Following changes to the surfaces on which mats are used. • Following relevant inspection recommendations or changes to guidance.

Mud Slide

Play Value

The mud slide allows children to experience sliding, messy play and changing natural conditions in a highly sensory form of adventurous play. It combines physical movement with direct contact with mud and water and provides opportunities for laughter, social interaction, confidence and resilience. Its changing natural surface is an important part of its play value and is managed through direct adult supervision, suitable protective clothing and control of the number of children using it.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops balance, coordination and body awareness. • Provides rich tactile and sensory experiences. • Develops confidence when experiencing slippery and changing surfaces. • Supports resilience and willingness to try challenging experiences. • Provides opportunities for social interaction, shared enjoyment and turn-taking. • Develops understanding of speed, friction and changing ground conditions. • Supports wellbeing through active, joyful outdoor play.	• Muddy or wet clothing. • Minor slips and tumbles. • Minor bumps and bruises. • Contact with mud and ordinary soil organisms. • Minor splashing. These are inherent and accepted aspects of mud-slide play.	• Significant collision between users. • Impact with a fixed object or obstruction within the slide/run-out. • Hidden sharp objects, stones or hazardous materials becoming exposed by erosion. • Excessive erosion creating an unstable drop or significant ground hazard. • Contaminated mud, animal faeces or polluted water. • Uncontrolled use without direct adult supervision. • Injury associated with unsuitable clothing or exposed skin.	• The mud slide is available only under direct adult supervision. • A maximum of 1–2 children use the mud slide at any one time. The supervising adult manages access and ensures the slide/run-out is clear before subsequent use. • Children using the mud slide wear a puddle suit. Access is managed accordingly. • The slide and run-out are checked for exposed stones, sharp objects, hazardous debris, significant erosion and contamination before use. • The school maintains a suitable clear run-out and manages other play so that children do not enter the active sliding route unexpectedly. • Ground changes caused by repeated use, rainfall or erosion are monitored dynamically rather than treated as static conditions. • Access is temporarily	Before Each Session: Check the sliding surface, start point, run-out, exposed materials and signs of contamination. During Use: Directly supervising adult monitors changes caused by repeated sliding and changing water/mud conditions. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of the slide and surrounding ground. Following Heavy Rain/Frost: Additional assessment of erosion and ground stability. As Required: Exposed hazardous material is removed and significant erosion repaired before reopening. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	The directly supervising adult should consider: • Consistency and depth of mud. • Speed being generated. • Condition of the run-out. • Erosion during the session. • Presence of stones or other newly exposed material. • Number and behaviour of children. • Puddle-suit use. • Weather and temperature. • Evidence of contamination. Because the mud slide can change substantially within a single play session, active dynamic assessment is particularly important.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Being muddy, becoming wet and experiencing ordinary slips are fundamental aspects of the activity rather than hazards that need to be eliminated. Adult intervention should instead focus on significant collision, contamination, erosion, exposed hazardous material and other circumstances capable of causing significant harm.	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following significant erosion or alteration. • Following a serious incident or recurring pattern of incidents. • Following contamination of the area. • Following significant groundworks or drainage changes. • Following relevant site inspection findings. • Following changes to guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			withdrawn where contamination, erosion, exposed hazards, flooding or other environmental conditions create an unacceptable likelihood of significant harm. • Appropriate handwashing and hygiene arrangements are maintained following muddy play and before eating.				

Section E – Creative & Social Play

Guiding Philosophy

Creative and social play nurtures communication, cooperation, imagination and emotional wellbeing. Open-ended resources encourage children to explore ideas, express themselves and build positive relationships through play. At Eastling Primary School, we value these experiences as an essential part of childhood and provide an environment where children feel safe to create, collaborate and take ownership of their play, supported by adults who facilitate rather than direct their learning.

Mud Kitchen

Play Value

The mud kitchen provides rich opportunities for imaginative, sensory and collaborative play. Children can mix, pour, transport, create and experiment with natural and everyday materials while developing communication, creativity and problem-solving skills. The open-ended nature of the provision allows children to determine the direction of their play and supports sustained social interaction, cooperation and role play.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops imaginative and role play. • Encourages communication, negotiation and collaboration. • Provides rich tactile and sensory experiences. • Develops fine and gross motor skills through mixing, pouring and transporting. • Encourages experimentation, problem-solving and creativity. • Supports early mathematical and scientific concepts including capacity, volume, texture and change. • Supports wellbeing through freely chosen, absorbing play.	• Muddy or wet hands and clothing. • Minor splashes. • Minor bumps from utensils or equipment. • Minor slips associated with wet or muddy surfaces. • Contact with ordinary soil and natural materials. These are recognised as expected and manageable aspects of sensory outdoor play.	• Cuts from broken, damaged or sharp utensils. • Significant slips caused by excessive water or mud on unsuitable surfaces. • Contamination from animal faeces, hazardous waste or unsuitable substances. • Ingestion of mud, contaminated materials or non-food substances. • Injury caused by damaged or unstable kitchen structures. • Introduction of unsuitable containers or materials into the provision.	• The school provides utensils, containers and resources considered suitable for open-ended mud-kitchen play and removes items that become broken, sharp or significantly damaged. • The mud kitchen structure, work surfaces and storage areas are maintained in serviceable condition. • Materials are monitored for contamination and visibly contaminated soil, water or resources are withdrawn. • The play environment is managed so that excessive mud or water does not create an unacceptable slip hazard in adjoining circulation areas. • Food preparation and eating are kept separate from mud-kitchen play; resources used for mud play are not subsequently used for food preparation. • Handwashing	Daily: Dynamic visual check of the structure, utensils, surfaces and materials. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of the mud kitchen, associated resources and surrounding ground. Following Severe Weather: Additional check for structural damage, contamination and standing water. As Required: Damaged or contaminated resources are removed, cleaned, repaired or replaced as appropriate. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	Adults should consider: • Materials being introduced into play. • Condition of utensils and containers. • Levels of water and mud. • Ground condition. • Congestion around work surfaces. • Evidence of contamination. • Individual allergies or relevant needs identified through school procedures. Dynamic assessment should respond to what children create without unnecessarily directing the content of their imaginative play.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Mess, experimentation and the combination of different materials are central to the mud kitchen's play value. Adults should avoid unnecessarily controlling children's creations and intervene proportionately where contamination, damaged resources or developing play creates a foreseeable significant risk of harm.	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following significant alteration or replacement of the mud kitchen. • Following a serious or recurring incident. • Following contamination concerns. • Following significant changes to the surrounding environment. • Following relevant inspection findings or changes to guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			arrangements support appropriate hygiene following muddy play and before eating. • Dynamic supervision responds to the introduction of unusual objects, substances or developing patterns of play that could create significant harm.				

Sand Play

Play Value

Sand provides a highly adaptable sensory resource that children can dig, shape, pour, transport and combine with other materials. Sand play supports creativity, construction, scientific exploration and collaborative problem-solving while providing opportunities for both energetic and calm, sustained play.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
- Provides rich sensory experiences. - Develops fine and gross motor control through digging, pouring and transporting. - Supports creativity and imaginative play. - Develops understanding of	- Sand on hands, clothing and footwear. - Minor spills around the sand area. - Minor bumps from buckets, spades or containers. - Ordinary contact with sand and natural	- Sand entering eyes through deliberate or uncontrolled throwing. - Contamination from animal faeces, broken glass, sharps or other hazardous material. - Significant trip/slip hazards caused by excessive	- The school maintains the sand provision and surrounding area in suitable condition for play. - Sand is monitored for visible contamination and hazardous foreign objects, with affected areas withdrawn until	Daily: Visual check for contamination, hazardous objects and obvious deterioration. Weekly: Recorded inspection of the sand area, surrounding surfaces and associated equipment. As Required: Contaminated material is removed and replenished as appropriate. Following	Adults should consider: - Sand condition. - Objects being incorporated into play. - Depth of excavation. - Movement of sand beyond the designated area. - Congestion. - Condition of tools and	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The ability to move, reshape and experiment with sand	This assessment will be reviewed: - Annually. - Following significant contamination. - Following substantial alteration to the sand provision. - Following a serious or recurring incident. - Following

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
volume, capacity, texture, weight and change. • Encourages construction and problem-solving. • Promotes communication and collaborative play. • Provides opportunities for calm and sustained engagement.	materials. These are expected aspects of sand play and do not in themselves require restriction.	spread into circulation routes. • Damaged tools or containers causing cuts. • Unsafe excavation where the scale or design of the sand provision makes collapse or entrapment reasonably foreseeable.	appropriately managed. • Tools and containers are selected for suitability and significantly damaged resources are removed. • Sand spreading into established circulation routes is managed where it creates a significant slip or trip hazard. • Dynamic supervision responds proportionately to deliberate sand throwing or other use creating a foreseeable risk of eye injury. • Handwashing arrangements support appropriate hygiene after sand play and before eating. • Where the sand area can accommodate substantial excavation, adults dynamically monitor excavation depth and stability.	Severe Weather: Condition of the sand, drainage and surrounding area is reassessed. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	containers. • Evidence of contamination. • Patterns of throwing or vigorous play. Ordinary pouring, digging and energetic manipulation should not be confused with behaviour presenting a significant risk of injury.	is fundamental to its play value. Adults should permit children to transform the resource freely, intervening where contamination, significant instability or patterns of use create a foreseeable significant risk rather than simply because play becomes messy or energetic.	significant drainage or site changes. • Following relevant inspection findings or guidance changes.

Creative Tools

Play Value

Creative tools and resources allow children to design, construct, cut, join, decorate and transform materials according to their own ideas. Access to appropriate real tools, including resources such as scissors and craft equipment, develops dexterity, competence and responsibility while supporting creativity, perseverance and problem-solving. Children benefit from progressively learning how to use tools appropriately rather than having all manageable risks removed from creative play.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
• Develops fine motor control and hand-eye coordination. • Encourages creativity, design and self-expression. • Develops practical competence and responsible tool use. • Promotes planning, experimentation and problem-solving. • Builds perseverance when designs require adaptation. • Supports independence and confidence. • Encourages collaboration and sharing of ideas and resources.	• Minor paper cuts. • Small scratches or minor nicks during appropriate tool use. • Glue, paint and other washable creative materials on skin or clothing. • Minor breakage of disposable craft materials. • These are manageable features of practical creative activity.	• Significant cuts or puncture injuries from inappropriate or damaged tools. • Injury caused by tools being used in a manner significantly different from their intended creative purpose. • Access to unsuitable sharp tools or materials. • Hazardous substances being introduced into creative play. • Choking risk from small components for children for whom this is developmentally relevant. • Allergic or irritant reaction to particular materials.	• The school selects creative tools and materials appropriate to the age, competence and intended activity of the children accessing them. • Tools requiring different levels of competence or supervision are made available through appropriately managed arrangements rather than unrestricted access where this would create significant risk. • Damaged tools and resources developing hazardous sharp edges or other significant defects are withdrawn. • Creative substances are selected and stored in accordance with relevant manufacturer information and school procedures. • Dynamic supervision	Before/During Use: Adults remain alert to tool condition and suitability as resources are accessed. Weekly: Regularly available creative tools and storage arrangements are checked as part of the operational inspection process. As Required: Broken, damaged or unsuitable resources are withdrawn and replaced. New Resources: Suitability is considered before substantially different tools or substances are introduced. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	Adults should consider: • Type of tool or material. • Children's competence and experience. • Space available for the activity. • Condition of tools. • Small components. • Materials introduced by children. • Individual allergies or additional needs. Supervision should increase where the potential consequence of misuse increases, rather than applying the same level of restriction to all creative resources.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Learning to use appropriate tools safely is itself a valuable developmental experience. Minor manageable risks should not lead to the unnecessary removal of useful creative tools. Adult support should enable progressive competence while controlling tools, materials or uses capable of causing significant harm.	This assessment will be reviewed: • Annually. • Following introduction of substantially different tools or materials. • Following a serious or recurring tool-related incident. • Following identification of an unexpected material hazard. • Following changes to school procedures or relevant guidance.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			reflects the tool being used, the environment and the competence of individual children. • Small components are managed appropriately where individual children's developmental needs make ingestion or choking reasonably foreseeable. • The school maintains appropriate hygiene arrangements following use of creative materials.				

Buggies

Play Value

Buggies support imaginative, nurturing and social play and can become vehicles for a wide range of child-created games. Pushing, manoeuvring, loading and transporting objects develops physical coordination and spatial awareness while role play supports communication, empathy and collaboration.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
- Encourages imaginative and role play. - Supports nurturing behaviours and social interaction. - Develops gross motor	- Minor bumps and low-speed collisions. - Minor trips when manoeuvring buggies. - Buggies tipping during	- Significant collision at speed with another child or fixed object. - Entrapment in damaged folding mechanisms.	- Buggies available for play are checked for significant structural damage, sharp edges and accessible trapping hazards. - Damaged folding mechanisms or	Daily: Dynamic visual check of available buggies. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of frames, wheels, handles, seats and accessible folding mechanisms. Following	Adults should consider: - Speed of movement. - Congestion. - Ground gradient. - Condition of individual buggies. - Objects being	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Buggies are	This assessment will be reviewed: - Annually. - Following a serious or recurring

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
control and coordination. • Develops spatial awareness when manoeuvring around others. • Encourages communication, cooperation and negotiation. • Supports transporting and collecting within wider imaginative play.	ordinary play without significant consequence. • Minor trapped fingers during normal handling. These are manageable aspects of mobile imaginative play.	Structural failure creating sharp edges or trapping points. • Children being transported in buggies not designed or assessed for carrying them. • Use on unsuitable slopes creating uncontrolled movement. • Collision with incompatible wheeled or high-speed play.	unstable frames result in withdrawal from use. • Dynamic supervision considers where buggies are being used and their interaction with pedestrian and faster-moving play. • Buggies not designed or assessed for transporting children are managed as imaginative-play resources rather than ride-on equipment. • Use on gradients or within other activity zones is dynamically managed where uncontrolled movement or collision becomes foreseeable. • Storage arrangements allow damaged resources to be identified and removed rather than inadvertently returned to use.	Significant Impact: Equipment checked before returning to use where damage is suspected. As Required: Damaged buggies are repaired or removed. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	transported. • Interaction with wheeled play and other activities. • Whether children are attempting to use a buggy as ride-on equipment. Adult intervention should reflect the actual developing use rather than unnecessarily defining how a buggy may feature in imaginative play.	intentionally open-ended play resources and children may use them imaginatively in ways adults did not anticipate. This creativity should be preserved unless the developing use introduces a foreseeable significant risk, such as uncontrolled movement, entrapment, structural failure or unsafe carriage of children.	incident. • Following significant equipment failure. • Following introduction of substantially different buggy designs. • Following changes to the areas in which they are commonly used.

Suitcases

Play Value

Suitcases are versatile loose resources that support imaginative journeys, role play, transporting, collecting, building and social games. Their familiar real-world form encourages children to transform ordinary objects through imagination while lifting, carrying, opening, closing and moving them provides physical and practical challenge.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
- Encourages imaginative and role play. - Develops creativity through open-ended use. - Supports collaboration, storytelling and communication. - Develops strength and coordination through carrying and transporting. - Encourages problem-solving around size, weight and capacity. - Supports construction and den-related play. - Develops judgement when managing awkward objects.	- Minor bumps while carrying or moving suitcases. - Minor trapped fingers when opening or closing lids. - Minor trips associated with resources placed within the play environment. - Suitcases tipping during construction or imaginative play. - These are manageable aspects of open-ended loose-parts play.	- Significant finger entrapment in damaged hinges or closures. - Sharp edges, exposed metal or broken components. - A child becoming enclosed or trapped inside a suitcase. - Heavy suitcases falling from unstable constructions or height. - Significant manual-handling injury from an excessively heavy load. - Suitcases obstructing essential access or creating significant hidden trip hazards. Suffocation from closed suitcase	- Suitcases made available for play are assessed for condition, weight and suitability, with damaged items presenting sharp edges, hazardous hinges or other significant defects withdrawn. - The school avoids providing suitcases with locking arrangements capable of trapping a child inside. - Dynamic supervision responds where suitcases are incorporated into unstable elevated constructions or loaded to a weight that cannot be reasonably managed by the children involved. - Essential access routes, gates and emergency routes are maintained appropriately while allowing children freedom to reposition resources	Daily: Dynamic visual check for obvious damage and hazardous positioning. Weekly: Recorded operational inspection of cases, handles, hinges, wheels, closures and structural condition. Following Heavy Rain: Suitcases susceptible to water damage are reassessed where relevant. As Required: Damaged or deteriorated resources are removed. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	Adults should consider: - Weight and contents. - Structural condition. - Position within the play environment. - Height where incorporated into construction. - Stability. - Whether a child could become enclosed. - Number of children moving an object. - Interaction with other active play. The unusual use of a suitcase is not in itself a reason to intervene; professional judgement should focus on the consequences of the particular use.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. The play value of suitcases comes from children deciding what they become and how they are used. Adults should avoid imposing a predetermined purpose and instead intervene where condition, weight, entrapment or unstable positioning creates a foreseeable significant risk of harm.	This assessment will be reviewed: - Annually. - Following significant equipment deterioration. - Following a serious or recurring incident. - Following introduction of substantially different suitcase types. - Following changes to storage or commonly used play areas.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
			elsewhere. - Adults support collaborative moving where size or weight makes this a more appropriate way to preserve the play opportunity. - Suitcases that become wet, structurally weakened or significantly deteriorated are reassessed before continued use. Holes are made into the suitcase to prevent any suffocation risk.				

Small World Play

Play Value

Small world play enables children to create and control imaginary environments using figures, vehicles, natural materials and other miniature resources. It provides a powerful context for storytelling, language development, social interaction and exploration of children's experiences and ideas. When available as part of OPAL provision, small world resources can be combined freely with the wider play environment, allowing children to create increasingly complex and sustained imaginative play.

Assessment Type: *Standing Risk-Benefit Assessment – to be used alongside dynamic risk-benefit assessment and professional judgement during every play session.*

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
Develops imagination and storytelling.	- Minor scratches from ordinary play resources. - Small	Choking or ingestion of small components where individual	Small world resources are selected with consideration of the age and	Daily: Dynamic visual monitoring of resources and the areas in which	Adults should consider: Size and condition of resources.	Adults should seek to preserve children's opportunities to	This assessment will be reviewed: Annually.

Developmental Benefits	Acceptable Foreseeable Risks	Foreseeable Significant Risks	Risk Management Measures	Inspection & Maintenance	Dynamic Considerations	Professional Judgement	Review
Supports expressive and receptive language. • Encourages children to explore experiences, relationships and ideas through play. • Develops fine motor control. • Supports cooperative play, negotiation and shared narratives. • Encourages creativity and problem-solving. • Provides opportunities for sustained, absorbing play. • Can provide accessible and quieter play opportunities for a broad range of children.	resources becoming scattered within the immediate play area. • Minor disagreements over resources or developing narratives. • Dirt or mud on resources used outdoors. These are ordinary and manageable aspects of child-led small world play.	children are developmentally vulnerable to this risk. • Broken resources creating sharp edges or small hazardous fragments. • Contaminated outdoor resources. • Small components creating a significant hazard when introduced into incompatible active-play areas. • Resources containing unsuitable materials, accessible batteries or other hazardous components.	developmental needs of the children who can access them. • Individual needs are taken into account where mouthing, ingestion or choking presents a reasonably foreseeable risk. • Broken resources presenting significant sharp edges or hazardous fragments are withdrawn. • Battery-operated resources, where provided, are maintained so that battery compartments remain appropriately secured. • Outdoor resources are monitored for significant contamination and cleaned or withdrawn as appropriate. • Dynamic supervision responds where small components migrate into areas in which they create a significant additional hazard, while preserving children's ability to combine resources across different forms of play wherever practicable. • Storage arrangements support inspection and removal of damaged resources.	they are being used. Weekly: Regularly available resources and storage arrangements checked for significant damage, contamination or unsuitable components. As Required: Damaged or contaminated resources are cleaned, repaired or withdrawn. New Resources: Suitability considered when significantly different materials or toys are introduced. Annual: Review through the school's Risk-Benefit Assessment process.	Developmental needs of children accessing them. • Whether resources have become damaged. • Where small components are being transported. • Outdoor contamination. • Interaction with faster or more physical forms of play. • Unusual materials incorporated into children's creations. Dynamic assessment should support children's freedom to combine resources while responding to significant hazards arising from the particular context.	experience appropriate challenge wherever reasonably practicable. Small world play depends upon children being able to create, combine and reinterpret resources freely. Adults should facilitate rather than direct these narratives and should intervene primarily where the condition, size, location or composition of resources creates a foreseeable significant risk, rather than because play is unconventional or untidy.	Following a serious or recurring incident. • Following introduction of significantly different resources. • Following identification of a choking, battery or material hazard. • Following significant changes to provision. • Following relevant changes to guidance.

Our Commitment

At Eastling Primary School, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to climb, build, create, imagine, explore, fall, try again, solve problems, make friends, take responsibility and experience the joy that comes from meaningful play.

We recognise that children learn resilience not by avoiding challenge but by experiencing it within a carefully considered environment supported by knowledgeable adults.

Our responsibility is not to remove every risk, but to remove unnecessary risks whilst protecting children's right to experience adventure, uncertainty, creativity and freedom through play.

This Risk-Benefit Assessment represents our commitment to balancing children's safety with their right to play, ensuring that every decision we make is guided by what is in the best interests of the child.

"Play is the highest form of research." – **Albert Einstein**