



Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)

19 January 2025

OPAL Families – launch letter

Key points from this letter:

- All children will **NEED A PAIR of WELLY BOOTS** in SCHOOL from Monday 2nd February.
- Please label these clearly with your child's name on each boot.
- The wellies will stay at school permanently
- Children will still need to follow our current Uniform Policy and come to school in shoes or trainers for use inside our school building.
- If purchasing wellies for your child will present you with a problem, please speak to someone in our office, Mrs Holl, Mrs Doran or Mr Barker – or of course your child's class teacher.

Dear families,

As you may be aware from reading our WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS, we are about to launch our exciting new project to make our PLAYTIMES even better, in conjunction with **Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)**. **OPAL has won the best active schools' programme in Europe award** and has been cited in two parliamentary reports as delivering outstanding practice. OPAL is working closely with Sport England to promote more active childhoods, which is one of the many reasons we are improving our playtime, as well as to improve opportunities for socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment for your child/ren.

The project will start on **MONDAY 2nd February 2026** and our hopes are that **it will change the way we think and how we play together**. For the last 2 weeks of this half term, we will gradually introduce EACH class and Year group to playing **on the field**. **To gain access to the field ALL CHILDREN WILL NEED TO HAVE A PAIR of WELLIES**. We aim to have the new play areas open ready for the first day of next half-term **MONDAY 23rd February**.

For the past month or so we have been **collecting various items** that we can use to play with – the classes who bring the MOST ITEMS in will be THE FIRST to get access to the field. We will need to buy some new resources, move some things around on the playground **and require some loose parts**. Loose parts are any materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play. The items we are looking for will enable us to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime (see below for some examples):

- Suitcases of any size and type





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- Anything on wheels/castors
- Plastic milk crates/supermarket delivery crates/plastic bread trays
- Briefcases, especially hard cased ones
- Road signs and cones
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, worktables, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Tools like small spades/shovels, trowels and brooms
- Tubes of various sizes and various materials
- Buckets
- Nets and thick ropes
- Keyboards/torches/laptops/calculators/mobile phones/desk phones/webcams/cameras that are no longer working
- Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
- Foam sheets/bodyboards/camping roll mats/yoga mats
- Wooden pallets
- Metal frames
- Cable drums
- Guttering
- Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)
- Hats/scarves/jazzy shirts/elasticated skirts/waistcoats/wedding dresses/character costumes
- Pegs (to help to set up dens)

There will be **more information to follow at a parent's session later in the year** when you will be invited to come and play with your children. We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtimes for all children.

Yours sincerely

Mr Barker (Curricular Lead for Play), Ms Sanchez (Play Coordinator), Mrs Natalie Best (Parent Play Champion), Miss Glastonbury (Play Governor), Miss Harris (Outdoor Learning Lead Teacher) and the rest of our new Play Team!

