

Coten End Risk Benefit Assessment

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

Dame Judith Hackitt HSE Chair 2015

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

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

OPAL's approach follows best practice advice from the Health and Safety Executive, The Play Safety Forum, Zurich Municipal Insurance, and local authority health and safety advisory teams.

OPAL has developed the five-part **R.A.P.I.D. response** (see box above) to managing risk and it is what we refer to in our approach to play.

- 1. Risk-Benefit Assessment – we will consider the risk in our usual environment and practices at least annually, and also when significant changes take place. Where there are high-risk play activities we will keep a written record of the areas in the table below using a risk-benefit approach. Your assessments should cover hazards deemed to have the potential for unacceptable risk of death or serious injury.**
- 2. Assemblies - OPAL Play Assemblies as described in guidance Doc 3.10. These should be held regularly with children to discuss, inform and negotiate risks that arise during play. A brief written log must be kept noting risks discussed and how they will be managed.**
- 3. Policy - a play policy approved by the governing body and leadership is essential and should form the basis for all staff understanding and decision making about managing risk in play. This should include formal adoption of the Health and Safety Executive's guidance (Doc 4.1) and your policy should include a statement on supervision styles (Doc 4.3).**

4. Inspection - technical reports of engineered fixed play equipment. Fixed equipment should have an annual inspection by a certified inspector. Ongoing visual inspections should be carried out by a member of staff and a record kept.

5. Dynamic Risk Management - means that staff should be aware of the changing nature of the play taking place. They

should support children to assess and manage risk as much as possible for themselves, but they should also be vigilant and take action if they think that risk of serious harm is becoming unacceptably likely. Actions taken by staff when required should balance the reduction of likelihood or severity of harm whilst preserving as much of the benefit of the play as possible and empowering the children to manage future risk as much as possible.

Dynamic risk management in playwork requires that staff maintain 'relaxed vigilance'. This means that the quality of play will suffer if the adult's attitude is one of hovering, anxious over-attention. There should be an assumption that most play is not dangerous.