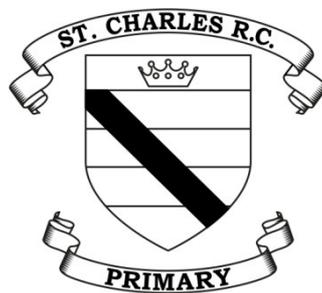


St Charles RC Primary School

Play in woodland areas Risk Benefit Assessment 2017-18



CHRIST IS AT THE CENTRE



Compassionate
Helpful
Respectful
Inclusive
Sharing
Truthful



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Our mission at St. Charles RC Primary School is to try and centre our life in Jesus Christ, the spiritual foundation of our community.

We aim to pass on the faith we share in partnership with you.

We want the children in our care to grow and develop to their full potential within a caring Catholic community which recognises fully their true worth and God given talents. We look forward to working with you in a spirit of mutual trust and support.

We take pride belonging to St. Charles RC Primary School.

MISSION STATEMENT

As a family of God, we love to learn and learn to love

Introduction

This Risk Benefit Assessment (RBA) MUST be read alongside the introductory guidance to the assessment format which follows the guidance of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Play England. This RBA takes a balanced approach, which considers the benefits and pays attention primarily to the risks that could cause serious harm, rather than to all risks which could only cause minor injury. This RBA considers activity which would take place within school hours only and under supervision.

Description and location of facility, feature, activity or equipment:

Any play activity involving children and adults in woodland and within our natural space, including amongst and under trees, tree canopies, shrubbery, plants, grasses and flowers.

Typical play activities could include:

Climbing, scrambling, running, jumping, playing with logs, tree branches, grass, sticks of varying shape and size, mud, flowers, petals, stones and other naturally occurring flora and fauna.

This assessment should be read in conjunction with our activity assessment for; muddy play, tree climbing and rope play and the comprehensive tree safety assessment report.

Benefits:

- Fresh air, physical activity and access to nature promoting relaxation, social and mental health and well-being.
- Seasonal change of trees provides awe and wonder in natural phenomena. Fruit trees provide health produce and enable learning about food production.
- Increased understanding about natural environment and plants and wildlife.
- Communication opportunities and interactions and space to be private
- Great fun and sense of freedom being in a large natural space away from close attention from adults
- Some protection from weather under tree canopies
- Opportunities for making and creativity such as digging, building and imaginative play

Risks:

- Slips, trips and falls resulting in injury, especially on uneven or irregular terrain around trees for adult or child
- Impacts and collisions between children and/or adults playing games or in free play
- Dangerous litter within long grass and soil areas being handled, stepped or fallen on, leading to injury or harm
- Highly inclement weather (eg: high wind, snow or ice) leading to increased possibility for injury or harm, or to unusual injury, such as flying objects or falling trees.
- Low likelihood but some risk of zoonosis – toxoplasmosis, Lyme disease and Weils disease if cuts or grazes come into contact with contaminated or stagnant soil or water.
- Natural materials causing harm, such as scratches, deep wounds, bruises or splinters. Fragments or branches damaging eyes or soft tissue or being swallowed.

Local factors:

The school site is close to an open public highway used for dog walking, local access and travel to football matches on Moorside Park. It is common to find dangerous litter (particularly glass) coming onto the site at the boundaries, and general building rubble to be found in the soil or close to the external perimeter.

Lightweight litter regularly blows into the site and there have been very few incidences of any kind of animal faeces found on site.

Four very established trees on site are in very good condition. Other trees that have previously had poor cuts or management have now had remedial work. Staff have tree inspection training and are familiar with the current conditions of the woodland and with their responsibility to identify and report any changes to branches wood or fungi. Trees plants, shrubs and bushes have been identified and there are no harmful or poisonous specimens on site.

Precedents and or comparisons:

- Woodland areas used freely by the public for recreation such as walks, play and cycling.
- Structured activities organised by forest schools, forestry commission and scouting organisations
- Numerous schools and nurseries have woodland areas which are used daily and in all weathers.

Guidance taken from:

- Grounds for Learning – The Playtime Revolution
- Growing Adventure – Forestry Commission and Tim Gill 2006
- Playgrounds – risks benefits and choices prepared by Middlesex university for the Health and Safety Executive, 2002

Decision

- Use of the woodland area offers an increase in likelihood of minor hazards and risks posed such as nettle stings, splinters, minor trips
- Control measures of grounds maintenance, playtime supervision and health and safety checks can manage the severity or risks and likelihood of serious harm occurring in this space.

Actions taken:

- Supervision controls
- Visual checks in areas of overhanging trees and branches are carried out daily and after any instances of high winds
- Thorough litter picks of the perimeter are carried out during weekly checks and re-checks are completed on a daily basis thereafter. The grounds maintenance team also litter pick when they are on site approximately twice a month
- Staff will provide ongoing communication at a level appropriate to age about hazards posed by branches (running into, cuts, implements etc particularly head and eyes) dead or growing on trees and branches and twigs on the ground

- Staff will provide on-going communication at a level appropriate to age highlighting dangers of litter, what to touch and what not to OR don't know don't touch.
- Staff have been given clear guidance on making appropriate decisions about activities and clothing appropriate to weather conditions and to make judgements as to the effect upon the location and activities on offer
- A decision sheet about weather has been provided to staff
- Hand washing is promoted after all play outside with soil, sand and in woodland areas

Further actions:

It is planned that hand-washing areas are to be provided outside of school during 2018-19

Ongoing management and monitoring:

- Daily checks and monitoring of the woodland area and activities identify changes to area and influence dynamic risk assessment processes
- Annual tree inspection to be carried out
- On-going education of staff through CPD and of children through conversation about hazards of natural environment and about routine hand washing after playtime

Equalities Statement:

St Charles RC Primary School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. The Governing Body recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at St Charles RC Primary school should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.