

Wombwell Park Street Primary School

Positive Playtimes

Playtimes and lunchtimes should be an enjoyable release time for children. However, it can be a time when energy and frustration sometimes spills over into negative behaviour. Playtimes should be used to engage children in mental and physical activity to improve communication, negotiation, listening and sharing skills whilst encouraging them to develop healthy, creative imaginations.

In the Summer term of 2007, the school council led a discussion in class about which aspects of our new school needed further improvement. Most children wanted an improvement to playtime provision. In the Autumn Term 2007, school council brought to the table a wish list for playtime equipment. Each pair of classes was then given a budget of £150 to spend on equipment for new playground boxes. The equipment was ordered and introduced in January 2008.

Playground Leaders from Year 5 work under the direction of our Play Leader, Mrs Clayton. The children (through the school council) have requested that we 'zone' the playground into 3 different areas:

1. **QUIET ZONE – Shelter and benches**, where pupils are able to take part in activities which involve mental challenge, which can be completed individually; whilst in the company of others, with

others or against others, for example when playing board games, reading, quizzes, drawing on blackboards, connect 4 / snakes and ladders giant games etc.

2. **TEAM ZONE – the enclosed games courts**, where two-sided team games usually take place such as basketball, football, netball etc.
3. **ACTIVITY ZONE**, this should be the largest area of the playground, allowing for several organised activities to take place – including school field during dry months.

The play equipment is sorted and stored on special trolleys. Playground markings are used whenever possible as they can help to structure the playground and activities.

One fundamental rule which must be enforced at all times is: **NO PHYSICAL CONTACT**. Children must keep their hands and feet to themselves. We discourage any play fighting, pushing, pulling, grabbing or shoving as these invariably result in accidents or damage to clothing.

Our play leader, teaching assistants, playtime assistants and lunchtime supervisors will all play an important role in the success of a productive, creative and co-operative positive play environment.

In addition to the positive playtimes leaflet, please may I draw your attention to a new idea we would like to implement in order to establish some consistency over how to deal with children who persist in breaking the 'no physical contact' rule.

When on duty, all teaching assistants should have their lunchtime whistle to hand and this should be blown only when you cannot get to the child who is breaking the rule quickly. We should avoid playtimes becoming a constant whistle-blowing exercise and wherever possible go directly to the child who is playing inappropriately and talk to them about their behaviour.

The area to the left of the shelter will be the time-out area.

Procedures for dealing with children who are playing inappropriately:

- Go directly to the child and explain why their behaviour is inappropriate.
- If you cannot get to them quickly, blow the whistle to make them stop and then go to them straight away to explain why the whistle was blown.
- Tell the child that if you see them behaving inappropriately again they will go to the time out area.
- Watch the child carefully for the next few minutes until you are happy that they are playing appropriately.
- If the bad behaviour continues, take them to the time out area and explain to them why they must spend 5 minutes there.
- After 5 minutes, go back to the child and let them know that they may re-join the group but will return to time out if the bad behaviour continues.

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