

Willow Lane CP School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Introduction to OPAL

We are excited to tell you that our school is now starting to participate in the Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme, which is endorsed and supported by Sport England and runs in hundreds of schools across the UK. We believe that enriched outdoor play for children greatly affects children's wellbeing and is deeply connected to their learning and achievement in the classroom. Through this kind of play, not only are children more active at lunchtime, they are also having the opportunity to further develop life skills such as cooperation, team work and problem solving. They are becoming motivated and enthusiastic builders, engineers, explorers and designers.

You can watch a video of what we want play to look like at our school here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrQb0PSXwzE

We have now completed our first half term of OPAL play and we are pleased to report that it has been a great success! More children are loving being outside, no matter what the weather, as there is now so much more to do. Whether it is playing with tyres and planks, enjoying imaginative play in the small world area, performing on our new outdoor stage or getting creative in the crafting area. OPAL is offering a creative and exciting alternative to the regular activities in the school grounds.

While all children are well-supervised and risks are carefully considered, please be aware this new approach may occasionally result in minor bumps or scrapes but we believe these small risks are an important and positive part of growing, learning and becoming more independent. You can also help support the OPAL ethos by sending your child in with their active school uniform and understanding that they may get dirty!

In addition to the areas already being used, over the next half term we will be looking to open up the Wildlife area and turn the MUGA into a wheeled area for balance bikes and scooters.

To check out the OPAL philosophy go to www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk

There will be more information to follow at a parent 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 playtime for all children.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hillyer, Mr Webster and the Play Team

