

The Windmill Primary Federation

Executive Headteacher: **Mrs P Peres**

Tel: 01945 583620



Walpole Highway

Head of School: **Mrs K Farthing**

Terrington St John

Head of School: **Mrs K Davies**

West Walton Primary

Head of School: **Mrs C Lock**

Tilney St Lawrence

Head of School: **Mrs P Marlow**

Tuesday 4 February 2025

LUNCHTIME PLAY

Dear Parents and Carers

We are about to start a programme to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.

Thinking about your own childhood, what did you like playing at school? And at home? Do you let your child play in the same way?

Children today don't have the same freedoms we once did, so we want to give children back time to really enjoy and learn from play. After all, it's a child's basic human right.



The Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in over 800 schools.

OPAL is based on the idea that, as well as learning through good teaching, your children also learn when they play.

As 20% of their time in school is playtime, we want to make sure that this amount of time (equivalent to 1.4 years of primary school) is as good as possible.

One reason the school is carrying out this programme is that childhood has changed, and many children no longer get their play needs met out of school.

- Average screen time per day is six hours.
- Average outdoor play time per week is five hours.

Proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme:

- * **more enjoyment of school**
- * **less teaching time lost to disputes between children**

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- * **fewer accidents**
- * **and greatly improved behaviour.**

Play is not messing about. It is the process evolution has come up with to enable children to learn all the things that cannot be taught, while also having so much fun.

There are certain things children **must** have in order to be able to play. These include

- Having clothes that they can play in.
- Having things to play with.
- Having a certain amount of freedom.

As our school improves play opportunities for your children, you may find the school is asking you for resources and is making changes about how the children use the school grounds. They may use more of the grounds, for more of the year. Your children may get a bit messier, be exposed to more challenges and have greater freedoms to play where, with whom and how they like. The experiences the school is fostering are essential for children's physical and mental wellbeing and are in line with all current good practice advice on health and safety, wellbeing and development.

The school will be supported by OPAL for 18 months by a specialist Advisory team and there will be an opportunity to come and talk to the OPAL mentor at your child's school. If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website (www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk), where you will find lots of useful information and several videos about the programme.

There will be regular updates coming to you about this project so look out for them!

In the coming 18 months you will be invited to events where you can come and see for yourselves what is happening and have the opportunity to join in too.

We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all children.

Our Play Team Working Party is Mrs Emily Lee (Parent) Mrs Lucinda Lord (Parent Governor), Mrs Bunting (Lunchtime Leader), Mrs S Lawrence (OPAL Leader & PE Coach) and myself, so if you have any questions please get in touch with one of us.

Kind Regards

Mrs Peres and Mrs S Lawrence
Executive Headteacher and OPAL Lead.