

## Policy for Loose Parts play – Millbank Primary

### Rationale

The importance of play to the healthy development of children has become increasingly recognised in recent years. A growing body of evidence supports the view that playing, throughout childhood, is not only an innate behaviour but also contributes to quality of life and sense of wellbeing. In addition, it is a key element in effective learning thereby developing physical, cognitive, emotional and social skills.

The type of environment for play is also important, having an impact on children's experiences, choices and relationships; both with other people and with the environment itself. In particular, outdoor play, especially in natural spaces, is beneficial and provides experiences which cannot be replicated indoors.

Exposure to challenges, with support from staff who will balance their understanding of keeping children safe from harm while allowing them to learn and develop through sometimes risky activities, will help build resilience into adult life. We value the long-term benefits of play and exposure to risk – both in terms of physical health and in developing resilience and mental wellbeing.

(Scottish Government's Play strategy)

### What is Loose Parts play?

Millbank's Parent Council and school staff have worked together to develop Outdoor Learning opportunities for pupils. Part of this initiative was to introduce Loose Parts play and we worked with a company called 'Smart Play network' who support, deliver and promote the value and benefits of play projects to offer high quality, sustainable provision for children in Scotland.

From November 2017 pupils at Millbank will have access to a large selection of Loose Parts every day during lunch break and class teachers will also access the Loose Parts to plan activities during class time. Some examples of Loose Parts are – tyres, tubes, pots & pans, fabric, rope, buckets. Pupils are supervised while playing with these objects and encouraged to use their imagination in finding games and activities using these items.

### Health and Safety

Some of the Loose Parts items have the potential to cause injury. However; we want pupils to encounter risk, within a supervised and well-managed environment, so that they can learn how to manage risk, develop problem-solving skills and protect themselves.

Timetabled provision of playground staff ensures that all areas of the playground are supervised and the welfare of pupils is catered for.

All support staff attended training from Smart Play representatives in September 2017.

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Millbank Primary - November 2017

A Risk assessment for Loose Parts play has been drawn up and agreed by all staff and will be continuously reviewed, for example through discussions at fortnightly Support staff meetings.

Playing with Loose Parts in the playground may cause pupils to become wet and/or dirty and we regularly remind parents, via newsletters and social media, about ensuring that pupils have appropriate outdoor footwear and a warm & waterproof jacket for outdoor play.

The School accepts responsibility throughout the school and at all places where staff/pupils may visit to provide and maintain the standards required by the Health and Safety at Work Act and other relevant acts and statutory provisions.

### Health and safety checks

Head Teacher and FMA carry out routine health and safety checks and any remedial action or amendments to current practice is noted and implemented. Staff report concerns to the senior management team at staff meetings or at any other time.

### Delegation of Responsibilities

In carrying out the functions and duties above the Head Teacher will seek advice where appropriate from the Area Education Manager.

### First Aid Arrangements

All Support staff members are First aid trained. One member of the Support staff holds the 3 day 'First Aid at work' qualification.

### General Condition of School and Playground

The school has defined boundaries marked by walls and railings. We have a large tarred area for play, a grassed playing field and large fixed playground equipment. Loose parts are made available during the lunch break in the infant tarred playground area. Any faults in the school building or within the school grounds will be reported to the Property and Architectural Services by the FMA.

### Accident Reporting Procedures

All accidents are recorded on appropriate Highland Council Accident Forms. Copies of all forms and guidance for same are kept in the main office.