



HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We are about to launch an exciting new project to make our play times even better! In conjunction with OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) we have been looking at our current provision and ways in which we can change this in order to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, co-operation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.

OPAL is based on the idea that as well as learning through good teaching, your children also learn when they play, and as 20% of their time in school is playtime, we want to make sure that this time is as beneficial as possible.

One reason we are carrying out this programme is that childhood has changed and when we think back to our childhoods, when we played out on the streets, a lot of those opportunities are no longer available and very few children now play outdoors unless they are in school.

We would be grateful if, ahead of this project beginning you could complete the following survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3XF8GXW>

There are many benefits for pupils whose schools carry out the OPAL Programme. They usually include more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and improved behaviour. Play enables children to learn things that cannot be taught, while also feeling like it is fun. 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. This type of play supports their physical and mental well-being and health and is in line with current good practice advice on health and safety, well-being and development.

If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website: <http://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/> or at the attached Parents Guide. We also hope to run events in the coming 18 months where you can come and see for yourselves what is happening and join in too – we hope this project will change the way we think and how we play together.

To facilitate all of this, we will be making changes to the way our playgrounds are organised and will be looking to find loose parts. These are materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play. Below this letter is a list of items we would like to collect and we would be grateful for your help in sourcing them.

We will be holding collection weeks after half term. Please do not bring donations in before the dates shown as we will have nowhere to store them. If objects are large, such as wooden pallets, please let us know so that we can ensure we have space for them and if you are able to source items not on the list that you think may be suitable, please contact us to check if we are able to use them.

Thank you for your help, we are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all children. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to speak to either myself or Mrs Stoneham.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Mahony
Head of School

If you are able to help by donating any of the items below we would be very grateful!

Week commencing Monday 20th February

- Cars, dinosaurs, trains, farmyard animals etc
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Shells, pine cones, sticks, pebbles
- Pavement chalks

Week commencing Monday 27th February

- Suitcases of any size and type
- Plastic crates
- Briefcases, especially hard cased ones
- Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
- Tarpaulins
- Large pegs (to help to set up dens)
- Nets and ropes (we would love army camouflage nets!)

Week commencing Monday 6th March

- Road signs, cones and barriers
- Wooden planks or blocks
- Tools like spades, trowels and brooms (not forks)
- Tubes of various sizes and various materials
- Buckets
- Tyres of different sizes – e.g from cars or go karts
- Wooden pallets
- Cable drums
- Guttering



not to have more but to be more
saint oscar romero