



## Play Policy - Fortuna

### Updating Policy Procedure

When a policy is due for review it will be emailed to the reviewer who will revise and highlight those updates and return the policy in full with the highlighted updates back to the Policy Co-Ordinator.

When a policy reviewer becomes aware of ***any updates*** they will ask the Policy Co-Ordinator to email the policy to them and follow the above procedures.

A policy is a statement of intent and the guidelines we follow, that is adopted by the Fortuna and Athena Federation's Governing Body.

Policy Reviewed by:

Charles Moore

Updated on:

May 2025

Date to be reviewed:

April 2027

Date ratified at FGM:

07/07/2025



## Play Policy

### Introduction

At Fortuna School we understand that many of the children have missed out on early years experiences or have had limited play opportunities. We see play as an integral part of the school day to develop the social, behavioural, emotional and academic abilities of the children. Play is valued at Fortuna as an opportunity to develop close connections and positive relationships with the children that can enrich their whole school experience.

### What is play?

Play is a common term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying and creative for the child. Play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious.

The importance of nurture and emotional development for children from a young age cannot be overstated. In its various forms, play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to a child's development. Play is essential for physical and emotional growth, for intellectual and educational progress and acquiring social and behavioural skills. Through play, children learn about themselves; allowing them to explore their emotions and their understanding of the broader world.

Some of the benefits of positive, structured and free play include:

- Improved social skills and how to make friends.
- Learning to share equipment, ideas and friends.
- Problem solving.
- Improved sense of exploration and curiosity.
- Improved gross and fine motor skills.
- Recognising emotions through facial expressions, intonation of voice and body language.
- Understanding emotions.
- Sense of fun.
- Organisational skills.
- Improved self-esteem and sense of belonging.
- A sense of pride.
- Improved regulation of emotions and behaviour.
- Making learning fun.
- Conflict resolution.
- Ability to attend for longer periods.
- Providing a safe haven/escape for children.
- Improved imagination.
- Addressing sensitive issues around health and personal hygiene.



At Fortuna School we understand that a child's chronological age doesn't necessarily reflect their ability to participate in expected levels of play, with some children seeking out or needing baby and toddler levels of play before later progressing to the next developmental steps. We understand that some children will need support to access play, and staff will provide the necessary support to enable all children to experience the benefits and joy of play

The majority of pupils who attend Fortuna School have 'grown up in circumstances of stress and adversity sufficiently severe to limit or disturb the nurturing process of the earliest years' (Boxall 2010). Therefore, it is of real importance that as a nurture school we 'create the world of the earliest childhood in school, and through this build in the basic and essential learning experiences normally gained in the first 3 years' (Boxall 2010). Play is one element through which we create and facilitate opportunities for our pupils to gain the experiences they have so crucially missed in their early lives. At Fortuna School we provide pupils with multi-sensory play experiences on a daily basis to ensure that early years play can be accessed without prejudice of chronological age.

Many of our pupils had limited experiences of play with attachment figures in their early lives. The absence of normal play experiences impacts on a child's emotional and behavioural development. Therefore, many of the pupils who attend Fortuna School are stuck in an earlier stage of play. Pupils may struggle with how to play, and their play may not look like the play of other children their age.

At Fortuna School we aim to:

- Provide children with safe, clean and stimulating play equipment.
- Ensure inclusive play for all children.
- Give children a safe and suitable environment in which to play.
- Provide access to and facilitate imaginative, stimulating, creative, fun and purposeful play sessions.
- Achieve play sessions that develop the child holistically.
- Through play, link choosing times to the curriculum, in particular, paying attention to the immersive element of topic.
- Model positive play through adult participation.
- Show curiosity and interest in children's play.
- Challenge children in their play.
- Provide play that isn't stereotypical or prejudiced in regard to the gender of the children.
- Give opportunities for children to investigate and explore through play.
- Give opportunities for a variety of play mediums
- Ensure that play is monitored, recorded and assessed with progression in mind.
- Give achievable and realistic play targets to the children.
- Give children the opportunity to, on a regular and child friendly basis, evaluate their choosing experience and implement change where appropriate.



At Fortuna School we understand the importance of the children being given opportunities to initiate play to explore their own self and have an ownership and identity of likes and dislikes.

### **The Boxall Profile**

Boxall Profile Assessments are carried out for every child in the autumn term to identify vulnerable areas of development that require intervention and support. Following the completion of an assessment, class teachers generate individual learning plans to support children's developmental or behavioural needs with a significant proportion of support occurring through play.

It is advised that 2 targets (Maximum of 3) are focussed on at any one time as part of the learning plan. An ongoing record of progress is kept in each child's Boxall Profile Record using written, photographic or video evidence recorded during planned and dynamic observations. New targets are set when appropriate progress has been made on the initial targets.

Children are to be made aware of their 'play' targets which should be displayed in the classroom and presented in child friendly language. Parents are informed of a child's targets alongside their academic targets each term.

A second assessment is carried out in the summer term to assess the progress children have made during the academic year.

Data is analysed at the end of the year by the Behaviour and Attitudes Senior Leader.

### **Choosing Plans / Play Curriculum**

There are daily timetabled opportunities for children to play beyond outdoor playtimes. Informally referred to as 'Choosing' there is a 15-minute time in the morning which is more structured and focused on attending to a play activity and a 30-minute period in the afternoon which is typically more socially focused.

The school have worked in partnership with a Play Therapist to develop planning to support child development through play. The play curriculum is a resource to guide staff through play activities that support a child's development with specific consideration of complicating factors such as attachment difficulties, trauma or delayed development. There is a plan for each developmental strand of the Boxall Profile, with each providing suggested activities across 9 different forms of play as well as outlining how an adult can support/facilitate the play.

In addition to referring to the play curriculum for support, staff can seek advice from the school's two play leads, nurture lead or play therapist.



### **Equipment / Health and safety**

Every staff member has the responsibility of ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of the children during play.

All play resources/equipment are to be fit for purpose, accessible and in suitable receptacles that are clearly labelled with the name and a picture of the equipment or activity. The use of play equipment shall be closely monitored with staff being aware of any health and safety risks. Staff shall be aware of any potential dangers by checking children's risk assessments and put in place any measures that will counteract that risk, especially for sand and water activities, equipment that has sharp edges and for equipment that can be easily swallowed. Allergies to ingredients/resources should also be considered when undertaking baking activities or messy play. This information can be found on children's healthcare plans. Play resources and equipment are to be regularly disinfected by staff using a safe disinfectant provided by Fortuna School.

Weather conditions must also be taken into account when outdoor play is being undertaken. Children are to be suitably attired, wearing coats in the colder months and hats and sun-cream, where permitted. Parents/Carers are to be consulted before sun protection cream is applied.

Despite reasonable precautions, we understand that accidents and incidents may occur during play. If an accident does occur then the accident book is to be completed and parents / carers informed via the home / school diary or telephone call.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is at the forefront of everything we do at Fortuna, including play. Children are to be closely monitored and should not be permitted to be out of sight during play. Special attention should be paid when children are playing together in enclosed areas such as immersive areas of the classroom. Risk assessments are to be checked and measures put in place, particularly but not exclusively, for children with a history of sexualised behaviour.

Children, during play, might make a disclosure or display behaviour that is of a concern. If this should happen then either a yellow or pink concern should be recorded via CPOMS, in accordance with safeguarding procedures.