



St. Paul's School

MANIBUS POTENTIA STUDIUM ANIMIS

PRE-PREPARATORY PLAYGROUND POLICY

Reviewed October 2015

AIMS

- To maintain a stimulating and secure environment in which pupils can play safely.
- To help pupils develop a caring, polite, considerate and respectful attitude towards others.
- To help develop, in pupils, a sense of self-discipline and an acceptance of responsibility for their own actions.
- To ensure that playground rules, routines and practices are followed consistently.
- To empower staff to expect appropriate behaviour from all concerned.
- To ensure that the policy is understood and consistently implemented in the department.
- To ensure that the expectations are communicated effectively to pupils.

THE PRE-PREP PLAYGROUND

Current research shows that play empowers children to solve problems, make decisions, explore, negotiate and express themselves in situations that are relevant and meaningful to them. Play for learning and more teacher-directed approaches are both equally important (Evangelou et al., 2009).

The playground promotes key characteristics essential for childhood development such as playing, exploring, creating and critical thinking.

Both teachers and assistants are expected to observe and/or interact with children in the playground as valuable information about their emotional and social well-being can be gained from these learning/play moments. At the same time, adults are expected to supervise and ensure the children's health and safety.

The playground surrounds three sides of the Pre-Prep building (see Figure 1 below). For simplification and to help organize supervision, the playground is separated into three areas which we call the Front playground (at the front of the school), the Side playground (the area adjacent to PP2 classrooms) and the Back playground (above the field). As part of the

playground, there is an internal Pre-Prep corridor leading from the Back playground into the building called the role-play area.

There are twelve zones, offering a range of play equipment and opportunities for different types of activities. Most of the activities in the playground activity zones change every week. The other zones have permanent materials all year long and no individual supervision.

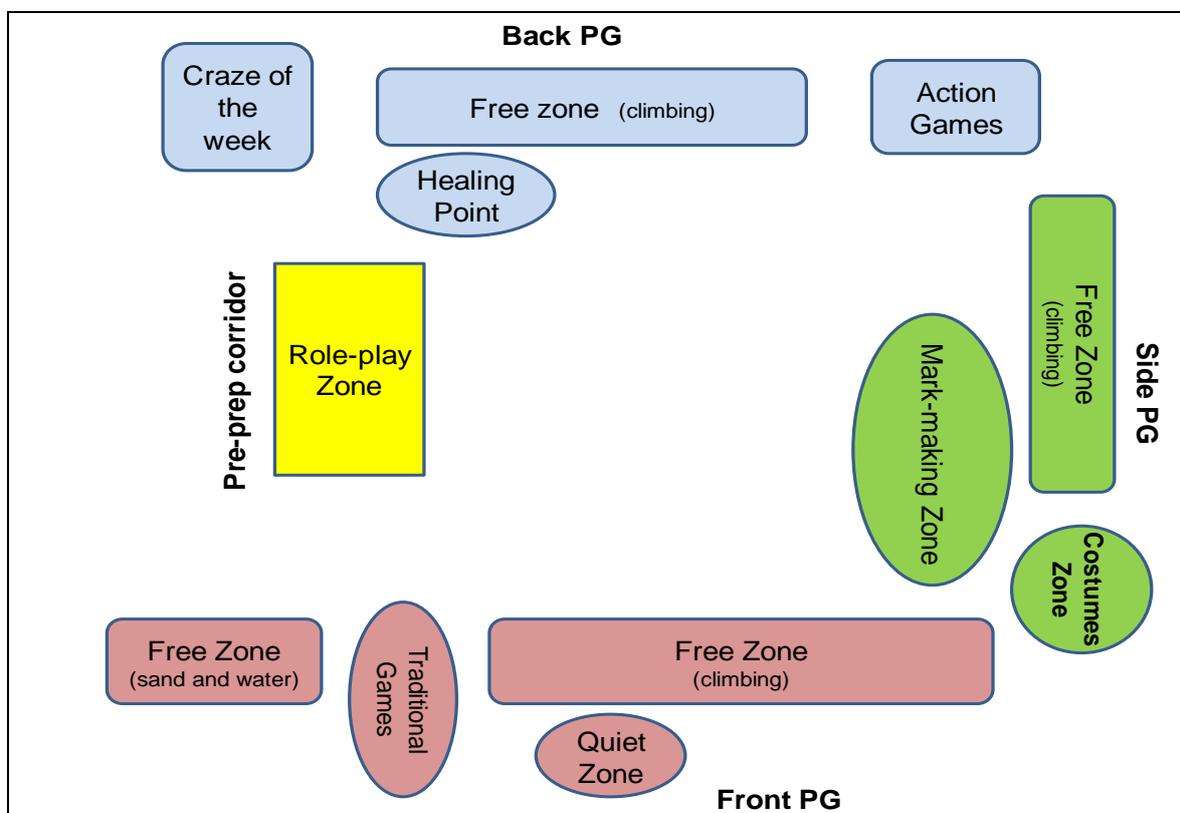


Figure 1 – Plan of the playground

Playground Activity Zones

1. Traditional Games zone (Front playground – an area to play worldwide traditional games. It contains a booklet with different types of games and activities and a box with toys)
2. Quiet Zone (Front playground where there are books and board games available – an area for children to calm down if they want to)
3. Mark-making Zone (Side playground – an area with tables for working on different art projects)
4. Action Games Zone (Back playground – an area for different action games)
5. Craze of the Week Zone (Back playground – an area with different toys for children to explore)
6. Role Play Zone (Pre-Prep corridor – a topic-related is set up with help from the children where they can play at Let's Pretend)

7. Costume Zone (Side Playground - an area with a stage and costumes for performances)
8. Relaxation Zone (Back playground – an area to sit and relax in case the child is not feeling well)
9. Four Free-zones (Sand & water & houses (front playground), Climbing (front playground), Side playground, Climbing & Sliding (back playground))

Each year group is allowed to use the three playgrounds during playground time. The children can choose where they want to go and move freely between all areas and zones. However, only PP3 children are allowed to play on all the toys. PP1 and PP2 children can only play on the toys with a smiley face sign. At the end of playground time, a hand bell is rung in each playground announcing that it is time to return to class. Just before the bell rings, children should be reminded to tidy up.

No child is allowed to go to the nurse alone. If a child is hurt, the teacher who is supervising the playground needs to judge the extent of the injury, and usually he/she will ask another child to accompany the injured child. The child who is hurt will always be given a yellow post-it note with the following information: name, year group, a small sentence in Portuguese explaining what happened to hand in to the nurse and the teacher/assistant's initials.

Assistants are each responsible for one of the six playground activity zones during their year group playground time and they change zones every week. In PP3 there are only four assistants so specialist assistants have to monitor the two extra zones. The PP1 class teachers swap with assistants once a week to have the opportunity of monitoring a zone as well. Teachers from all year groups are more than welcome to swap their duties with the assistants, at any time, as long as no area is left unattended. Staff supervising the free zones help solve emotional and/or social issues and also make sure that the playground rules are being followed by the children. Active games should not be played by the supervising staff (only by staff monitoring the Action games zone).

All teachers (class and specialist teachers) are time-tabled in the playground at least three times a week, except for the heads of year that are time-tabled once a week. There are between 9-10 adults on duty in total during any given time in the playground (one in each zone plus at least one teacher supervising each of the three playgrounds).

Playground Structure and Procedure

There is, in each playground, a plastic folder that contains a pen, yellow post-it notes, a bell, Golden Tickets, one radio and the playground time-table for each year group.

In the Front playground there is a blue container where the materials from the Quiet zone and Traditional zone as well as the plastic folder are stored at the end of the day. There is also a small trunk that contains toys for children to play in the sand and water trough. The Traditional zone has a chalkboard for children to draw on. The Quiet Zone, also located in the Front Playground, has a bookcase full of books, story sacks and board games.

In the Side playground there is a shelf that is used to store the mark-making zone materials and also the plastic folder. There is also a small hanger for costume storage.

In the Back playground there is a tiled wall for children to draw or paint on.

The Pre-Prep corridor has a shelf to store the materials from the Action Games zone, Healing Point zone and Craze-of-the-week zone. The materials from the Role-play zone are stored in the role-play area. The Role-play zone is the only place where children can play with paper airplanes.

The time-table does not change over the year. The only people who change places are those who work in the zones, and they change every week. The six zones' activities change every week and the materials are ready to use early Monday morning. In the Craze of the Week Zone there are two types of materials: a "crazy" toy in the morning and the imagination playground (blue pieces) in the afternoon. However, on Friday afternoon, since there is no PP3 playground due to Golden Time, there is no imagination playground. An e-mail is sent to the staff every Friday, explaining the activities of each zone for the following week. It is also possible to find the weekly activities plan and action plans in the school system for the whole year. Changes in the time-table or issues related to the playground are always sent by e-mail to the staff in advance.

As mentioned before, each year group has its own playground time:

- PP1 (08.50-09.20 / 13.20-13.50)
 - In the morning: bell rings 5 minutes earlier.
 - In the afternoon: bell rings 2 minutes earlier.
- PP2 (10.20-10.50/12.50-13.20)
 - In the morning: bell rings 5 minutes earlier.
 - In the afternoon: bell rings 2 minutes earlier.
- PP3 (09.55-10.20/13.50-14.20)
 - In the morning: bell rings 2 minutes earlier.
 - In the afternoon: bell rings 2 minutes earlier.

Staff on supervision

- Make sure to read the PG policy and talk with Miss Oliveira if a question or issue comes up.
- Try your best to be on time.
- Walk around the playground during your duty. Do NOT play active games!
- Make sure everything and everyone is fine in your supervised area.
- Make sure there are no children inside the classrooms.
- Help the staff in the zones always when needed.
- Ring the bell on time.
- Before leaving, check if there are any children left in your supervised area.
- Check the Back playground bathroom during the duty and before leaving the area.

- Help children to solve emotional and/or social issues.
- Communicate with the staff members through the radio.
- Make sure the children do not play with the sand and water troughs from PP1 and PP2.
- Make sure that both gates in the Back playground are closed.
- Make sure the supervised zones and free zones are organised before leaving the place. Staff supervising the Sand and Water should remind the children to put the toys and aprons away. Staff supervising the Side playground should remind the children to tidy up the costumes.
- Make sure to use the yellow post-it before sending a child to the infirmary.
- Make sure that injured children holding ice or hot bags sit in the healing point.
- Cell phones are not allowed in the playground.
- Be consistent about rule keeping.
- Staff in the playground activity zones should try to arrive before the staff that supervises the free zones.
- Staff in the playground activity zones should encourage children to play. They should avoid sitting as this prevents them from interacting with the children and teaching them how to play.
- Staff in the playground activity zones should remind the children to tidy up the place before leaving.
- Assistants should leave the classrooms one minute before playground time starts. If they are alone with the children, they should take the children and keep them close to their zone until the supervising staff member arrives.
- Children should only be allowed to go to the playground when the teacher is sure the supervising staff has arrived.
- Be conscientious about the noise level. Children should be taught how to play without screaming.
- Staff in the playground activity zone should put the toys away: PP1 and PP2 in the morning, PP3 in the afternoon and PP1 on Friday afternoon.

Playground Rules

- Do be gentle, don't hurt others.
- Do be kind and helpful, don't hurt anybody's feelings.
- Do be honest, don't cover up the truth.
- Do look after property, don't waste or damage things.
- Do play cooperatively, don't spoil people's fun.
- Do listen to people, don't interrupt.
- These rules are displayed in the playgrounds.

Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards

- If a child shows good understanding and application of the Golden Rules throughout the playground time he/she is given a **Golden Ticket** (gold sticker). We discussed that this should happen if the child spontaneously and intrinsically goes beyond what is expected – e.g. if all children are tidying up and a child helps other children tidy up equipment that he/she did not use (and you notice he/she is not doing it to get Golden Ticket but just out of kindness).
- If the child makes the right choices again, then he/she is given another Golden Ticket. This should be extremely rare.
- When child goes back to class he/she can show Golden Ticket to teacher and his/her peg is moved up once (even if he/she got two Golden Tickets, the peg is moved up one rung ONLY, i.e. if on sun goes to rainbow; if on sad cloud goes to cloudy sun, etc).

Sanctions

- If a child is breaking a rule, the adult gently whispers to him/her or gives a ‘knowing’ look.
- If the child fails to respond to the warning, the teacher asks ‘*Do you know what Golden Rule you broke?*’ and asks the child to sit on a **large white cloud** for 1 min.
- When one min it up child should be invited back in for the rest of the playground enthusiastically.
- If the child chooses to break the same or another rule he/she will be asked to sit on **large sad cloud** for 1 min.
- When one minute is up child should be invited back in for the rest of the playground enthusiastically.
- THIS SHOULD NOT BE MENTIONED PUBLICALLY TO CLASS TEACHER OR ASSISTANT (E.G. WHEN TEACHER OR ASSISTANT GOES TO PICK UP CHILDREN IN LESSON DO NOT REFER TO CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN ON CLOUDS – THEIR SANCTION IS OVER!) However, the child who had to sit on sad cloud MUST BE LOGGED IN DAY BOOK.

Safety Rules

There are some safety rules for children in each playground:

General rules:

- Do not bring toys or any materials from the classrooms or from home to the playground. Use the toys offered by the school in the zones.
- The toys from each zone have to stay in their respective place. Do not leave a zone with a toy.
- Children should help teachers and assistants to tidy up the zone after playing. Make sure it is ready to be used by the next year group.
- Children must always be wearing shoes or sandals in the playground.

- Do not play with the PP1 and PP2 class sand and water troughs. Use the sand and the water troughs in the Front playground.
- During playground, children should not be in the building.
- PP1 pupils are allowed to go to the classroom to drink water, go to the bathroom and/or put their sweaters away.
- PP2 pupils are only allowed to drink water and go to the bathroom in the playground. The classroom doors will be closed and the water cups will be outside in front of the classes.
- PP3 pupils should bring cups to drink water and use the bathroom in the playground.

Back playground:

- Children are not allowed to climb up the big slides. They should only slide down on their backs or sitting.
- Children are allowed to climb up the small slides.
- Children are allowed to jump from the small slides or slide head-first as long as they use their hands in front for protection.
- Only one child at a time is allowed on the red ladder.
- Discourage Prep and Senior children from distracting the Pre-Prep children.

Side playground:

- Children should not be allowed to play with the sand on the ground.
- Discourage children from running on the brick floor; remind them to walk or skip.
- Children should not be allowed to stand or jump on the red stools only the small ones with no cover on top.
- Children (and adults) should not sit on the tables.
- Children are allowed to go up and down the small red slide. The small red slide should not be, at any time, on top of the stage or by the stools.

Front playground:

- Only children in PP3 who are independently able should be allowed on the monkey bars. Only one person at a time.
- Children of all year groups are allowed on the triangle rope toy and only 1 child on each side. Children are allowed to swing on the rope.
- Only PP2 and PP3 children are allowed on the climbing toy closest to PP1D and only 2 children at a time.
- All year groups are allowed on the climbing toy close to the bridge and only 2 children at a time.
- Children are allowed to take their shoes off in the Traditional zone and Quiet zone.
- PP1s are allowed to use the red ladder only in the 2nd term.

- Children may climb up and go down the rope net but only climb up the red ladder.
- Children may slide down the blue slide and should not climb up it.
- Children are not allowed to jump from the slide.
- Children are allowed to stay under the slide, inside the net.
- Children are allowed to stay under the bridge, inside the net. Children are allowed to climb up the wooden frame in this area.
- Children (and adults) should not sit on the tables.
- Children are not allowed to go on top of the houses.
- Only 4 children are allowed to play in the house at the same time.

Role-Play area

- Only 12 children are allowed at a time in the role-play area.
- Only 03 children are allowed inside the ball pit at the same time.
- Children are not allowed in the corridors.

Rainy Days and very hot days

On a rainy day, the playground will be closed. However, teachers and assistants are still on duties according to their time-tables. Assistants have to stay inside their classroom offering an activity for the children. Teachers have to supervise the children by moving from one class to another. On a rainy day, all the classrooms, according to their year group and playground time, will be open for children to play. Children may walk from class to class choosing different activities with different friends. Children are not allowed to walk around the school or to go to a different year-group class. When possible, the multi-purpose and the art room will be used.

PP1s:

- The class door facing the playground should be closed.
- Children should walk quietly in the corridor.
- Two staff should be supervising the corridor.

PP2s:

- The class door facing the playground should be closed if the multi-purpose is not being used.
- If the multi-purpose is being used, the doors facing it should be closed and children have to use the outside area to go from class to class.
- Children can use the multi-purpose when it is free.

PP3s:

- The class door facing the corridor should be open.
- Children have to use the corridors to go from class to class.
- At least, two staff on supervision should be in A or B and C or D.

GUIDELINES TO HELP ENCOURAGE AND MONITOR PLAY (JENNY MOSLEY)

1. Treat all children fairly and equally

It's all too easy to jump to wrong conclusions about a situation. The children must be given an opportunity to explain their behaviour. Don't act on hearsay, only act on what you are sure you saw.

2. Be friendly and approachable

Children need to see you as someone who is open and ready to listen to them. A cold or distant manner will stop them from approaching you.

3. Give gentle reminders

Children often simply forget some rules; for example, not running in the dining hall. A gentle reminder may be all that is needed.

4. Stay calm

Try to stay calm at all times. This will help you to remain in authority and be effective. If you shout or boss the children about they may think you're losing control.

5. Smile

Try to remember to smile at the children. They will then see you as someone warm and friendly.

6. Try to chat.

Be willing to chat to the children about their news, interests and activities.

7. Give praise

Praise is more effective than criticism, so try to praise frequently.

8. Give incentives

Use any special stickers or incentives that the school has – golden tickets.

9. Be polite

Set a good example to the children by speaking politely to them.

10. Avoid getting into a confrontation

Don't argue with a child; that undermines your authority. Repeat your request calmly, then use your sanctions system. Don't become involved in slanging matches with a child. If you have to deal with bad behaviour, take the child / children to one side, away from others who might encourage them.

11. Help a child 'back out' of an awkward situation

If a child is deliberately rude, ask them politely to repeat what they said. This allows the child to retract the statement or apologise. Accept any apology graciously and don't reprimand them further. Don't leave the child with no way out. If the child feels cornered there is a danger of confrontation.

12. Don't shout

Avoid shouting at all times. Shouting at children can have a negative effect on their behaviour and make some children very defensive. It will make your job much more difficult. If the noise level is high ask the head teacher if there are other ways in which you can gain silence.

13. Learn from the class teacher

Speak to, observe and learn from the class teacher and other support staff who use ways other than shouting to achieve quiet.

14. Don't use sarcasm

Don't belittle children by using sarcasm – this leads to resentment.

15. Don't use labels

Don't give children negative labels such as 'naughty', 'rude' or 'stupid'. Tell the child their behaviour is unacceptable.

16. Watch out for loners

Watch out for lonely or isolated children. Talk to them and try to involve them in games with other children.

17. Personal remarks

Don't make a negative personal remark to a child. You will never make a relationship with that child if you do.

References:

Evangelou, M., Sylvia, K. and Kyriacou, M. (2009). *Early Years Learning and Development*. Literature Review. London: DCSF.

Mosley, J. and Thorp, G. (2006). *Positive Playtimes: Exciting ideas for a calmer school*. Cambridge: LDA.