



Dear Parents and Carers,

Exciting Changes to Playtimes at Christchurch Infant School

We are delighted to share that Christchurch Infant School has adopted the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) approach to play.

OPAL is an award-winning programme that helps schools transform playtimes, ensuring that every child has access to high-quality, engaging and meaningful play opportunities. The programme is based on the understanding that play is one of the most important ways that children learn about themselves, others and the world around them.

Children spend approximately 20% of their school day at playtimes and lunchtimes. As a school, we carefully plan for subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science and Geography because we recognise how important these areas are to children's development. We believe that play deserves the same level of thought and planning because it provides learning opportunities that cannot be replicated in the classroom.

Through rich outdoor play experiences, children develop skills such as:

- Resilience
- Problem solving
- Creativity
- Communication and language
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Risk assessment
- Independence
- Confidence and self-esteem

Many of these skills are difficult to teach through direct instruction alone. Children learn them through experience, exploration, trial and error, negotiation and challenge. Play provides opportunities for children to make decisions, manage uncertainty, overcome setbacks and develop perseverance in authentic and meaningful ways.

At Christchurch Infant School, we want children to enjoy a wide variety of play opportunities that support their physical, emotional and social development. Our aim is to create a stimulating outdoor environment where children can explore, imagine, build, create, collaborate and challenge themselves safely.

Addiscombe Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2AE

Tel: 01202 485851 Email: office@cisdorset.org Web: www.christchurchinf.dorset.sch.uk

Christchurch Infant School is a member of Twynham Learning,
a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 7565088.

Registered office: Sopers Lane, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 1JF.



Christchurch Infant School

Interim Chief Executive: Nick Watkiss
Headteacher: Miss Laura Tobin



Playing Outside in All Weathers

As part of our commitment to the OPAL approach, we intend for children to access outdoor play opportunities throughout the year whenever it is safe to do so. We firmly believe that outdoor play should not be limited by rain or cold weather.

Being outdoors in different weather conditions helps children to develop adaptability, resilience and an appreciation of the natural world. For this reason, children will continue to go outside for playtimes and lunchtimes in most weather conditions.

To enable this, we ask that all children have suitable wet weather clothing in school, including:

- A waterproof coat
- Wellington boots (clearly named)
- Waterproof trousers or all-in-one waterproof suit (if possible)
- Appropriate spare socks and trousers, where required

Please ensure that all items are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming months, you may notice new resources and play opportunities being introduced across our outdoor areas. We are excited about the positive impact that this approach will have on children's wellbeing, engagement, friendships and learning.

We look forward to working in partnership with you as we continue to develop our play provision and provide children with the rich, enjoyable and valuable play experiences they deserve.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Tobin

Headteacher

Mrs Goldsack and Mrs Lucas

Outdoor Learning Leads

Christchurch Infant School

On behalf of the OPAL Working Party

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