**Play to Learn**

Learner engagement is at the heart of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Its purpose is to ensure that students can learn effectively and cope with new and changing situations. It has to involve regular opportunities to acquire and rehearse the skills that only come from learning actively.

Our Play to Learn Sessions in P.1 and P.2 have a significant role in supporting the children to develop relevant Experiences and Outcomes and a confident approach to learning by offering a contextualised active learning experience, reaching all of our children in many different ways. Allowing our pupils increased choice and freedom of movement in their learning eases transition from nursery/ pre-school sector and supports Curriculum for Excellence.

***Learning Experiences and Outcomes***

Responding to Curriculum For Excellence, we have reviewed our Play Policy to reflect the Learning Experiences and Outcomes for Primaries 1 and 2 within targeted areas of the Infant Curriculum. Building the Curriculum 3 states, ***‘Children are fully engaged in their learning, which is interactive, purposeful and defined within the outcomes and experiences.’*** Primary 1 will be working within Early and Primary 2 will be working at First for certain areas and/or building on the P.1 experiences within the Early level.

We aim for excellence in our Play at Glendale and through continuous monitoring and evaluation we hope that the children’s Play opportunities will complement the development of the 4 capacities within the classroom environment.

***(Taken from Building the Curriculum 2 – Active Learning in the early years)***

***Successful Learners*** through using their imagination and creativity, tackling new experiences and learning from them, and developing important skills including literacy and numeracy through exploring and investigating while following their own interests.

***Confident Individuals*** through succeeding in their activities, having the satisfaction of a task accomplished, learning about bouncing back from setbacks, and dealing safely with risk.

***Responsible Citizens*** through encountering different ways of seeing the world, learning to share and give and take. Learning to respect ourselves and others, and taking part in making decisions.

***Effective Contributors*** through playing together in leading or supporting roles, tackling problems, extending communication skills, taking part in sustained talking and thinking, and respecting the opinions of others.

***Ethos***

Our school ethos, which aims to allow each child the opportunity to “...develop and flourish and be their best academically, personally and socially...”, underpins all that is at the core of a Play Session. The combination of challenge and development in all areas above is defined in our aims.

***Aims***

* To extend and develop the Learning experiences and outcomes inspired by the Class Topic through a stimulating and varied range of play opportunities.
* To develop Literacy, Numeracy and Expressive Arts skills within a contextualised, multi-sensory environment.
* To foster the children’s Health and Wellbeing within a supportive, nurturing environment where alternative groupings and learning styles are promoted.
* To provide opportunities for personalisation and choice, supported by skilled intervention and teaching.

Our Play system offers learning opportunities which encourage choice and a pathway to independence, whilst at the same time being embedded in the experiences and outcomes which are stage appropriate. Health and Wellbeing Early Level states that, ***‘In everyday activity and play, I explore and make choices to develop my learning and interests.’ (0 -19a)***  Play sessions which are well planned, organised and supported by well informed adults, sensitively intervening, provides an excellent context to develop independence in our young people.

***Planning***

The teaching staff will have identified the different Play Opportunities linking to the Class topic incorporating Literacy, Numeracy, Expressive Arts and Health and Wellbeing. Other curricular areas may also be explored at play sessions, if they are appropriate. She will have an overview of all the Play areas explored throughout the year to ensure progression and development. The teacher (s) would meet with any support staff who may be part of the team at the Play Session at the start of a new cycle of Play and share the learning intentions, discussing appropriate support and intervention and looking at resources/setting up implications. Decisions will be made about where each member of the team will be working. These plans will be recorded onto the yearly Play Programme then individual Play Charts will be made for each Play cycle. These will be shared and used by the Pupil Support Assistants when setting up the Open Area/Classroom for a Play Session.

To be included in the Play to Learn Planner –

* Evaluation of previous term and next steps for forthcoming term.
* Included in the evaluation would be any child who is recording red during assessment or is concerning the teacher for a particular reason. Any pupil who has had an individual tracking assessment would also be noted in the evaluation record.
* Assessment grids to be completed using the Traffic Lights System.
* Experiences and Outcomes overview including resources for the term plan.
* Play Cycle overview with highlighted areas of focus. (A3Play Chart).

Discussion about individual children, particularly those who are being noted for specific reasons, can take place as part of our tracking policy and ‘meeting the needs of all’, at the termly feedback meeting with the Head Teacher and Depute Head.

PRIMARY 1

Primary 1 pupils will be involved in Play Sessions from very early days on entering school. The children will be introduced to the different Play areas gradually, being trained in the safe use of the resources, the careful handling of materials and the importance of clearing and tidying at the end of the session leaving our classroom and open area attractive and ready for others who will follow after us. This will also foster an understanding of belonging to the class group and the wider school family and the early implications of showing respect and responsibility towards others.

PRIMARY 2

Although some of the resources are shared with the P.1 pupils eg the Play Corner, many of the resources and activities are different and offer progression and development. The Learning Experiences and Outcomes for Early and First Stages are clearly mapped out (see Play Programme) and these will be shared with the children. The role of the teaching and support staff is vital to support and enrich the Play and ensure relevance and excellence.

***The Play Session***

* At the start of the Play session the teacher will direct the children to the large Play Chart. She will outline the play areas which are open, sometimes indicating some particular expectation/gentle reminder etc!
* The pocket will already be filled with the correct number of little fish informing the children of how many children can choose that area.
* The teacher will have in place a system which ensures that the children all have the opportunity to have their first choice of play.
* The children will then begin the session, taking their individual fish to the pocket for ‘logging in’.
* The teacher will ensure that all the children are settled having made their first choice.
* The staff will be in place to support progression, observing and intervening appropriately. Observations and assessments will be recorded, sometimes immediately or perhaps at a later point.
* When the child decides to move on to something new he/she will ‘log out’ and return the fish to the main area of choice.
* The staff will closely monitor patterns of behaviour, encouraging children to increase the depth of their focus to match the challenge presented.
* The Play Session will usually last about 1 hour from introduction/development/tidy up and plenary.

***The Plenary***

* In the early days of Primary 1 this will be a simple reporting back to the group about the choices that were made and an indication of who was working together/alone etc.
* This will develop to a longer feedback session where the children will answer questions about their Play, their work, their models etc.
* The role of the teacher will begin as a role model for the constructing/framing of questions, becoming a facilitator, as much as possible, as the pupils take control of the feedback for themselves.
* Photographs taken during Play sessions can sometimes be used to focus on particular areas of play and encourage all children to participate. These can be displayed on the Smartboard at the end of the Play session or perhaps the next day as suitable.
* The photographs are sometimes used for a big book that we may be making as evidence of our Play or perhaps to post on our school website.

***Additional Support for Learning***

All children will be supported to take part in our Play Sessions. Eg A child with an ASP, or perhaps a pupil who may be about to start a process of assessment/ or who may be under assessment with Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy etc. Sometimes a child may just need a little extra support/encouragement to become involved at Play. The teacher may have to direct any staff/adults she may have at that time to that particular child. Teaching staff have a responsibility to share information and expectations both for the child and the adults working during a Play Session.

***Achievement for All***

The question of what is driving our Play must be found in the aims of our commitment to providing Play Sessions in primaries 1 and 2. These aims are clearly linked to the teaching and learning within classrooms. Sometimes Play allows pupils early exposure and experiences prior to meeting particular learning experiences and outcomes in a class setting eg a child could have a maths fun option where they have free play with a two pan balance and a variety of objects of differing weights. Through exploration and adult intervention the child should learn about what happens when items of different weights are placed in the balance, generating the appropriate language eg is heavier than / is lighter than / weighs the same as etc. The discussion, either with other pupils or the teacher, allows the learning to take place in a natural, exploratory and active way. When this topic of measuring weight is visited at a later date at Maths time, the child is in a stronger position to move forward with their learning and can talk about outcomes from personal experience. Confidence is increased and a child’s willingness for risk taking in their learning is more of an option.

 Alternatively, the teacher can set up opportunities during Play which may revise/consolidate learning experiences and outcomes which have previously been met in class. Presenting learning within an alternative context can allow application of previously taught skills, a deepening of understanding and the chance for consolidation. Building the Curriculum 3 tells us, ***‘Revisiting a concept or skill from different perspectives deepens understanding and can also make the curriculum more coherent and meaningful from the learners point of view.***’

We recognise that children’s optimum learning can be fostered through styles which vary eg auditory, visual etc. Whilst teachers will account for this in their curricular planning, Play complements these differing needs very naturally. Finding the learning path for individuals will, hopefully, result in the raising of attainment for our pupils.

***Evidence***

For a number of years we have kept photographic evidence of Play sessions and Play areas. These have been made into ‘big books’ which the children can access and enjoy. Our aim is to continue gathering evidence in this way.

***Partnership With Parents***

During the early weeks of Primary 1, parents are offered workshops to support communication between home and school. Parents are informed of the content of the ***Early*** stage curriculum as well as being provided with information on how families can continue to support their children. Play to Learn sessions are included in these workshops. Our message is that children have been learning through Play in their pre-school years, at home and hopefully at some pre-school establishment and that in Primary 1 the context of Play will be used to support new learning for our young people. Families will have the opportunity to see how Play and appropriate learning and teaching provides an active, child-centred curriculum.

In Primary 2, at similar workshops in the early days of Term 1, parents can see how Play is developed in this second year and find out more about how Play provides an excellent context for Topic activities.

Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about what takes place during Play and are invited to come into school and speak to the teaching staff if they have any questions about the Play Sessions during the course of the year. Our Topic Open Afternoons, which take place at the end of each Topic, include work completed during the play sessions.

Glendale Primary

Play to Learn

Policy 2010