



# Joy Lane Primary School

*A Love of Learning, for Life, for All*

Oyster Bay Nursery & Oysters SRP (ASD)

Executive Headteacher: Ms DJ Hines

Head of School: Mr M Ashley-Jones

5<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are about to launch our exciting new project to make our playtimes even better, in conjunction with Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) CIC. In 2018, OPAL won the best active schools' programme in Europe award and has been cited in two parliamentary reports as delivering outstanding practice. OPAL is working closely with Sport England to promote more active childhoods, which is one of the many reasons we are embarking on a journey to improve our playtimes, as well as improving opportunities for socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination, and enjoyment for children.

We strongly believe that: **“Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child. Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals, and as members of the community.”** (Children’s Play Council 2001).

The project has already started in that staff have had initial training and the children have been introduced to the concept of OPAL play. At this point we are in the process of collecting resources to launch OPAL PLAY here at Joy Lane. The intention is that it will change the way we think and how we play together and will enable us to maximise the space we have here at Joy Lane. To facilitate this project, we will need to buy some new resources, move some things around on the playground as well as requiring some loose parts. Loose parts are any materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play. The items we are looking for will enable us to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime (see below for some examples):

- Suitcases of any size and type
- Anything on wheels/castors
- Plastic milk crates/supermarket delivery crates/plastic bread trays
- Briefcases, especially hard cased ones
- Road signs and cones
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, work tables, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Tools like small spades/shovels, trowels and brooms
- Tubes of various sizes and various materials
- Buckets
- Nets and thick ropes
- Keyboards/torches/laptops/calculators/mobile phones/desk phones/webcams/cameras that are no longer working



Centre of Excellence



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- Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
- Foam sheets/bodyboards/camping roll mats/yoga mats
- Wooden pallets
- Metal frames
- Cable drums
- Guttering
- Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)
- Hats/scarves/jazzy shirts/elasticated skirts/waistcoats/wedding dresses/character costumes
- Pegs (to help to set up dens)

We will be holding a collection week beginning **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February**. The sooner we do this, the sooner the children will be able to play with the items! Please do not bring your donations in before this date as we will have nowhere to store them. If objects are really large, such as wooden pallets, we will ensure that there is someone available to help you carry them into school.

We have also set up an 'OPAL Play Wishlist' on Amazon, with lots of small but essential items to help us get this scheme implemented into our school. If you wish to support our endeavour into getting OPAL Play up and running as soon as possible any donations would be greatly appreciated by all our staff, and of course the pupils!

[OPAL Play Wishlist](#)

There will be more information to follow at a parent's session later in the year when you will be invited to hear more about how we would like to change playtimes. As you can imagine this is a big undertaking; however, with the help of the Joy Lane community we are confident and really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtimes for all children.

**The results of our recent OPAL play survey strongly suggest that our parents and carer community are very keen to support this new initiative and are excited about the possibility of changes during our playtimes. Please see the link below for the full survey results.**

[Parent survey about playtime at school - Feedback](#)

Please click on the following links to find out everything you need to know about OPAL, videos, testimonials, and the rationale behind OPAL play.

<http://www.outdoorpeople.org.uk/>

<http://www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely

*Mark Ashley Jones*

Head of School  
Joy Lane Primary School