



Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant School

Lunchtime and Playtime Policy

Reviewed: April 2026

Next Review Due: April 2028

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear code of conduct for playtime and lunchtime. It will consider our aims for these periods, the role of adults, children, organisation and the development of play.

Aims

We believe that playtime and lunchtime are important for both children and staff. It provides opportunities for children to learn and practice skills which are vital to social and emotional development. We strive for 'happy, secure and safe' pupils, who through a variety of play opportunities interact positively with one another. We want lunchtime to be a positive experience for everyone.

Purpose of the Playtime and Lunchtime Break.

- Time for children to eat their lunch together and learn associated social skills, e.g., good manners, using cutlery appropriately, chatting together, independence.
- Time for the children to take exercise and play together, learning and practicing a wide variety of social skills, e. g., sharing, turn taking, participating in activities, interacting with peers and adults.
- Time for staff to take a break, prepare for the next session and socialise with other members of staff.

The value of play at Lunchtime and Breaktime

Children are able to learn many skills through play and it is seen as vital to their social and emotional development.

Through play children learn:

- The skills of co-operation, turn taking, listening and negotiation
- How to play fairly and deal with cheating, disruption, aggression and other negative behaviour
- Friendship making skills, maintaining and breaking relationships, loneliness, being ~~any~~
- How to lead, follow and share
- Different types of play - single, pairs, groups, quiet, imaginative, organised, self-directed.

For many children more physical play is a natural source of enjoyment and integrated into role-play games, not motivated by the desire to inflict distress or pain. This can turn into aggressive play if not supported by adults, particularly in the case of children with poor social skills.

We aim to intervene if this becomes aggressive, talk to the children and teach more appropriate ways to play.

The Role of SMSA or Teacher and staff on duty at break

SMSAs have a very important part to play in ensuring that lunchtime is a happy time for all concerned. If children are encouraged to enjoy themselves in a kind, sociable way with other children, they will learn how to build good caring friendships.

SMSAs work as part of a team following the duties as outlined in their job description. They supervise both indoors and out.

Teachers and TA's work together in the same way to support behaviour and positive play.

All staff outside with children during breaks should follow the timetables activities, engaging with the children to encourage play and interaction.

Behaviour

Our school has a Behaviour Policy and we aim to provide a happy and secure environment for all. Our school rules and values rules are enforced positively with attention focused on the positive.

Resolving Conflict.

The behaviour that causes most concern is aggression (actual kicking and fighting) swearing, name calling, rudeness and bullying. There is no 'magic formula' for dealing with these types of behaviour and often no right answer. It is sometimes helpful to think why a child may have responded in such a way to a situation, is it typical of them or unusual?

When negative behaviour occurs, SMSA or member of staff will take the following steps:

1. Take the children concerned to one side and acknowledge their feelings, e. g., I know that you are feeling cross, upset etc. but.....
2. Ask the children, one at a time, to talk about what has happened and listen to each other's point of view.
3. SMSAs will then act as mediator and help find a solution that offers a positive outcome for everyone. The children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and for finding a solution.
4. A 'time in' period may be necessary - children to ~~stay~~ with the staff member - before resuming play

The majority of incidents will be resolved at this stage. However, if the incident requires further action, the children concerned are brought into school. Parents are informed by the class teacher in the event of a serious incident and procedures followed as outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy. Incidents will also be reported using CPOMS.

Speaking to Children.

A smiling face can help to calm a situation down and keep everything in proportion. Responding to children by listening and showing understanding supports their social and emotional development. We aim to follow certain ground rules when dealing with the children:

- to treat all children fairly and equally
- to adopt a friendly and approachable manner
- to be willing to take an interest in each child.

- To be positive, polite and stay calm.

Praise and Rewards.

Praise is one of the most powerful strategies available for anyone working with children. Staff praise children verbally throughout the break period and actively look for positive behaviour.

SMSAs may have stickers or awards for use during lunchtime. Through this teachers and other staff will be able to readily identify children who are behaving well.

Other positive rewards may also be awarded in recognition of lunchtime behaviour or achievements.

The Dining Hall.

Foundation stage lunchtime begins around 12 noon when these children start their lunchtime break and eat their lunch in the dining hall. Foundation stage practitioners support children during this 15-minute period prior to the start of the main school lunch break. They focus on developing manners and basic table skills-use of cutlery, co-operation, turn taking, polite conversation etc.

The bell is rung at 12.15pm to signal the start of the lunch period for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

All children will enter the hall and collect their chosen lunch option exchanging their lunchband for the menu of their choice.

Children, at the request of the staff, walk to the hall in an orderly manner, form a small queue (no more than 8 approx.) and wait to be served. SMSAs encourage children to choose carefully and show good manners.

Children walk to a table and are expected to sit and eat their lunch quietly. Chatting to each other quietly is acceptable and encouraged, as this is a social occasion. If noise levels rise to an unacceptable level, staff remind everyone of the expectations.

If children require help with the cutting up of food, with drinks or packed lunches, they put up their hand. Pupils are encouraged to be independent as early as possible and are praised for their efforts.

Children are encouraged to try and eat all their food and to try small amounts when faced with something new. No child is forced to eat anything they do not like and SMSAs use their discretion at all times.

Children take their trays when they have finished eating to the trolley for scraping and go out to play.

Packed Lunches

Children taking a packed lunch eat at the same time as dinner children, numbers permitting.

Children are encouraged to eat sandwiches before crisps, yoghurt or biscuits and be as independent as possible. Sweets and chocolate bars are not allowed as they do not encourage the development of healthy eating habits.

When a child has finished his/her lunch they may go out to play.

Dining Hall Rules.

The following rules have been drawn up by the children in assembly. They are displayed in the hall. Lunchtime behaviour, the rules and procedures feature as part of assembly and class discussion on a regular basis.

Dining Hall Rules are;

1. Say 'please' and 'thank you.'
2. Talk quietly.
3. Put your hand up if you need help.
4. Take care with your plate/ tray.
5. Walk along the corridor.

Outdoor Play.

Play is a process which involves doing, exploring, failing and succeeding. It takes many forms and meets a number of needs important to all round development.

Physical exercise is important in supporting and maintaining good health and well-being. It improves suppleness, stamina and strength.

Resources, equipment and games.

The container containing a wide variety of equipment are available for use **everyday**. weather permitting.

Pupils and specific staff assist with the organisation, maintenance and clearing away of equipment.

Resources are placed in the specified areas and staff will work with the children to play and share.

The assistant head leads on the timetable and rota for outdoor play resources

Games.

Staff are asked to involve the children in some of the following games **on a daily basis.**

1. Games led by lunchtime staff.

Staff may lead a variety of games teaching children the rules and helping them to play together co-operatively.

2. Ring Games.

Ring games are very popular and are a good way of involving a large number of children in one activity. We play:

- The Farmer's in his Den
- Duck, Duck, Goose
- Oranges and Lemons

3. Organised games.

The following games are Organised by Staff

- Peep behind the curtain.
- What time is it Mr Wolf
- Hopscotch
- Statues
- Skipping

End of lunchtime and playtime

At 11.15am the bell rings and children stand still. One child demonstrates how to move to their line (walking safely) Other children the move quietly to their line. Teachers should be outside to bring the children into class. Children are expected to be lined up sensibly and safely before moving inside.

At 1.15pm the bell is rung and children line up and are escorted into school. Staff are expected to go out on the yard immediately to take responsibility for their class. Afternoon school commences at 1.20 pm (1.05 pm for EYFS). Children should line up and come inside in the same manner as the end of play.

Wet Playtime.

If conditions prevent children from going out to play, children will remain in school supported by TA's/Class teacher (if their duty day) or SMSA's. Children can use rainy day books and other construction resources. There should be at least one adult in the classroom at all times.

First Aid / Health & Safety.

Children who have a minor accident have treatment in the playground if appropriate. A record is made of the injury and treatment following the school's accident procedures. An accident slip is handed to the class teacher to be sent home at the end of the day. In the event of a more significant injury, parents will be informed and a decision as to further action will be taken after relevant discussion. The accident record is checked regularly by the Head teacher.

In the case of a head injury, a note is provided which will inform the child's parent/carers. If the head injury is felt to be significant parents will be informed and a decision as to further action will be taken after relevant discussion-school may monitor or parents may immediately come to school to take their child for further medical advice or to monitor off site. In all cases class teachers try to inform parents personally. SMSAs must inform the child's class teacher if a head injury has occurred.

In the case of a serious accident **all procedures identified in the First Aid policy must be strictly adhered to**. Please see the school's First Aid policy for more information.