



Dear Reception Parents and Carers,

Over a year ago, Burlington Infant and Nursery school started out on our journey to improve opportunities during our lunchtime play for physical activity, socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.



### Experience Opal in School with your child

We would like to invite you into school to learn more and experience OPAL yourself with your child/children. We will be running this session on 4th April 2025 from 11:50 -1:15. As this is the last day of term, the children will be finishing early at 1:45, however, if you attend our event you may take your child home straight after registration.

We introduced a programme called OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) in September 2023. OPAL is based on the idea that, as well as learning through good teaching, your children also learn when they play. As 20% of their time in school is playtime, we want to ensure that this amount of time (equivalent to 1.4 years of primary school) is as good as possible.

One reason the school is carrying out this programme is that childhood has changed, and many children no longer get their play needs met out of school.

- Average screen time per day is six hours.
- Average outdoor play time per week is five hours.
- Percentage of UK children who only play outdoors with other children at school is 56%.

There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include: more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and greatly improved behaviour.



Play is not messing about. It is the process evolution has come up with to enable children to learn all the things that cannot be taught, while also having so much fun. There are certain things children **must** have in order to be able to play.

These include:

- Having clothes that they can play in.
- Having things to play with.
- Having a certain amount of freedom.

Over the last few weeks, your child has been participating in OPAL assemblies and sessions on the main playground outside with their teachers. We have introduced all the different areas of the playground, gone over how to make everything 'safe enough' and then given them the opportunity to play with everything before they join the main playground at lunch times.

We are dedicated to providing your children with new opportunities for play in the school, and they will play with new equipment and resources which will expose them to more challenges. During the wet weather, we do find some of our children get a little muddy when accessing our Orchard, but we do provide them with wellies. IF your child enjoys playing in puddles and mud, please ensure your child has a suitable waterproof coat and a spare pair of jogging bottoms and socks.

If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please look at the OPAL website ([www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk](http://www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk)), where you will find lots of useful information and several videos about the programme.

We are really excited about this project and hope you will support us in improving playtime for all children.

Best wishes

Mrs Leech (Outdoor Curriculum Leader)