



28 January 2026

Year 1 to Year 6 Opal Play



Dear Parents/Carers

We are delighted to share that OPAL play will now be taking place every lunchtime. The feedback from pupils and staff has been overwhelmingly positive, and OPAL has already become a much-loved part of our school day. We are excited to see it continue to grow and develop over the coming months.

This week, we enjoyed a grounds visit from our OPAL mentor, during which we mapped out the different areas of the school that will soon transform into new, creative play zones.

These include:

- A huge sandpit
- Music and performance space
- Small world area
- Water play zone
- Den-building
- Construction
- Calm activities
- And of course... our brand-new digging area!

With the help of our wonderful caretaker, Mr Atkinson, and several other helpers, we completed the digging area in just two days. We repurposed old tyres and turned over the grass to create a fantastic muddy space where children can use trowels to dig, build and let their imaginations run wild.

During our OPAL assembly this week, the whole school took part in a risk–benefit assessment. Together, we identified possible risks, agreed on risk-management approaches, and discussed the many benefits this new area brings.

To enjoy the digging area and other messy zones fully, children **MUST** wear wellies. We also strongly recommend waterproof clothing or a change of clothes for the afternoon, especially as the wetter weather continues.

Appeal for Loose Parts

A huge thank you to the children and families who have already donated items, we are very grateful. We do, however, still need a lot more. Please take a moment to check your homes, garages, sheds and workplaces. Before you throw something out, ask yourself, 'how might the Penshurst children play with this?'

We are looking for:

- Suitcases (any size or type)
- Anything on wheels/castors
- Plastic milk crates, supermarket delivery crates, plastic bread trays
- Hard-cased briefcases
- Road signs and cones
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, tables, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Small spades, shovels, trowels, brooms
- Tubes (any size/material)
- Buckets
- Nets and thick ropes
- Old keyboards, torches, laptops, calculators, mobile or desk phones, webcams, cameras (not working is fine!)
- Large sheets or brightly coloured fabric
- Foam sheets, bodyboards, camping mats, yoga mats
- Wooden pallets
- Metal frames
- Cable drums
- Guttering
- Pool noodles
- Buckets, plastic boxes, crates
- Dressing-up items such as hats, scarves, bright shirts, skirts, waistcoats, wedding dresses, character costumes

Items can be brought to classrooms or delivered to the school office.

Appeal to Local Businesses

If you work for - or know someone who works for - a company that may be disposing of larger loose parts, we would love to hear from you. Useful items might include:

- Cable reels
- Large crates or storage boxes
- Industrial tubes or piping
- Pallets
- Display frames or stands
- Packaging materials suitable for play
- Out of date first aid supplies such as bandages and silver blankets

These contributions can make a huge difference to the variety and quality of play available to our pupils.

Amazon Wish List

For those who prefer to donate in a simpler way, we also have an Amazon Wish List with items starting from £2, delivered straight to school:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/2IR4Z8F9A3H36?ref_=wl_share

Thank you once again for your continued support. OPAL has already brought so much joy to our pupils, and with your help, it will only get bigger and better.

Watch this space! We'll be updating you with the parent survey feedback shortly.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Hornby".

Mrs S Hornby
Assistant Headteacher