



# Opal Newsletter

Term 6



## Welcome to the place for all things Opal



Welcome to the first Harrietsham Opal newsletter. I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you all. My name is Mrs Mannering and I will be leading Opal at Harrietsham. I have been leading Opal for over 3 years now and I helped lead my previous school in becoming the first Opal Platinum school in Ashford and the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Kent, so I have very big ambitions and plans for Harrietsham! I'm super excited!

Opal is a fantastic programme which advocates for children's right to play, as this provides a positive impact on their social and emotional wellbeing. Opal gives the children a multitude of skills; such as choice making, dynamic risk assessing, self regulation, resilience building and problem solving just to name a few. We try to capture the children's physical and emotional needs by giving access to all 16 play types (you can read about these at 'encourage play.') All of these transferable skills are then used in everyday life as well as in the classroom, especially when it comes to igniting their creativity.

## So what's next?

This term we will continue to grow our play spaces and our play offer. We will be introducing some more large loose parts and guiding the children in our play assembly as to how we can use these items safely and monitor our risks by using dynamic risk assessments during our play. We will be encouraging the children to take some every day items and look at them in new ways to create new play opportunities. We will also show them how putting multiple items together can allow us to create yet more play.

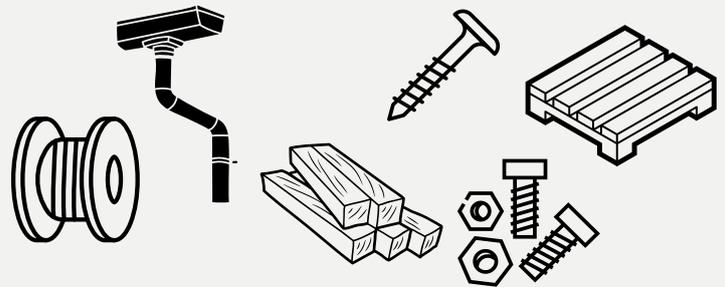
Opal's recommendation is that every single child should have access to 4 loose parts each - this is where we have a long way to go still. Opal is a self funded programme, meaning we rely heavily on donations, grants and fundraising to increase the play offer we can provide the children. We teach the children how we can recycle and reuse items in new ways. This makes the programme very sustainable as lots of builds are made from old, broken or disused parts.

### Can you help?

Do you work for a company that can help source barriers, cones or road signs so we can open up a wheeled play area?



Are you in the building industry and can you supply large loose parts? Or can you spare some time to build something for our playground?



If there is anything you might be able to do to help, please do get in touch.

Are you linked to a sports club that has old sports equipment they can donate?





# Opal Newsletter

Term 4



## Social Media



Harrietsham will be joining the socials! Please don't worry, for the safeguarding of our children we will not share any faces of the children on these platforms. This will be your go-to place for updates and information on what we are up to, and there will possibly be a few funny videos from the staff too! We will provide further details when these are up and running.

Please also keep a look out on our website for updates. This is where you will find photos of your children at play. Please make sure your photo permissions are up to date on Arbor.

## Look at the amazing play that's already happening!



With the introduction of more large loose parts we hope to see our den building grow even more. We will look to allocate space so that children can leave builds they've work hard on out, so they can continue to develop and enjoy them over the week.

Examples of den building taken from my previous school



## Next Opal lunchtimes: 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July

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