

# DG Play

## Play Ranger Service



## Handbook 2011/12

Encouraging the development of quality play & free play provision for children and young people in Dumfries & Galloway

DG Play is managed by The Bridge Dumfries & Galloway, a voluntary sector support organisation and registered charity. (SC041058) and a company limited by guarantee (SC368236)

# What is a Play Ranger?

Play Rangers are “Detached workers” working in public spaces within communities, enabling and encouraging all children to play freely outdoors.

The play ranger teams operate play sessions in the parks and green spaces throughout Dumfries and Galloway with the aim of encouraging children to get up and go out to play, to meet new people and make new friends.

The play on offer is called free play, it is unstructured enabling children to use their own imagination, outdoor play has many facets and can include using playgrounds, games and activities, interacting with outdoor environments and using natural elements such as trees, sticks, puddles, light, water, earth and fire for play.

The play rangers facilitate children and young people’s play through open access provision in the local parks and other open spaces

The workers will combine their knowledge of play values with community development outreach work, and will be advocates for children’s rights and play.

# What is Free Play?

*Free Play is “ Freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development. Play can cover anything from children exploring outdoor spaces to making up new games or finding ways to express themselves”*

## **Why is Free Play Important?**

Play is how children learn about the world, themselves and each other. What adults often dismiss as “Just Play” – tree climbing, den building, hide and seek and make believe – is an important part of children’s development.

# How do we operate?

DG Play operate an “open access” policy which means that children are free to come and go as they please, there is no charge and no registration required. Sessions will initially be for primary school aged children, but our aim is to attract all ages of children, along with family members and members of the local communities.

**Parent’s/Carer’s remain responsible for their children at all times.**

We aim to keep children safe at the same time providing challenges and risks with lots of fun outdoors come rain or shine.

Play Ranger services have been very successful throughout the United Kingdom for bringing together children, parents, carers, and other organisations to develop opportunities in local communities, this is the vision for our new play ranger service.

Play Rangers have found that many children are more likely to come out to play if there are play rangers around because they feel safer and there is someone to talk to. Their presence steadily erodes the children’s and parent’s fears of bullying and unsupervised play.

**Play Rangers provide a community service with children’s play at the heart of it.**

The Play Rangers will initially visit local primary schools, to let them know about the service and where it will take place, they will spend time in the schools at playtimes and lunch breaks, to allow the children to ask any questions and build up positive relationship with them. Bag drops will be given out at schools, which will detail where the play rangers will be and when.

We feel that it is essential to work in partnership with the local schools, and together promote play as a healthy activity for children to participate in.

We will also work in partnership with local groups and communities to highlight the play ranger service and make play opportunities available for everyone within the local community, we believe that it is vital to have strong community links and all work together to benefit the communities as a whole and value the importance of play.

The play rangers will be in the parks/open spaces as timetabled in the programmes, and will:

- ✓ Promote play opportunities, inclusive for all children whatever their abilities
- ✓ Consult with the children and young people on play opportunities that can be developed
- ✓ Encourage use of local recreational spaces
- ✓ Advocate children's rights to play, to be listened to, and to be safe
- ✓ Promote the participation of young people with decision-making bodies
- ✓ Provide open play sessions within the parks and open spaces
- ✓ Promote environmental awareness
- ✓ Work in close partnership with local schools, clubs, community organisations, and partners.
- ✓ Create positive opportunities for children and young people to associate with their local areas and bring children of all ages together
- ✓ Build positive relationships with the children and young people in each community
- ✓ Develop trust in communities

The aim of the project is to support children, young people and communities to develop their play in parks and open spaces so that they feel safe and most importantly have fun. Providing a consistent service will develop trust in communities which in turn helps parents to feel more confident in letting their children come out to play.

All play rangers will be suitable qualified and will have undertaken extensive Induction training, the play rangers will all have undertaken suitable CRBS disclosure checks and have signed up and agreed to all the policies and procedures of the project.

# Our Aims & Outcomes

**Aim 1:** Children are resilient and are confident in making positive choices

**Outcomes:**

- ✓ Children have improved social skills
- ✓ Children have more effective communication skills
- ✓ Children have improved physical abilities
- ✓ Children have increased confidence and self-esteem

**Aim 2:** Children are nurtured and positive about their lives

**Outcomes:**

- ✓ Children are confident in expressing their emotions
- ✓ Children have improved language skills and vocabulary
- ✓ Children have improved general health including better nutrition and reduced obesity

**Aim 3:** Children grow and thrive in an environment of positive role models and healthy relationships

**Outcomes:**

- ✓ Children feel safe in the family and community
- ✓ Children's relationships are positive
- ✓ Children are respectful of themselves and others
- ✓ Children are valued within their families and community

**Aim 4:** Communities, parents, providers and partners will have improved understanding of the benefits and barriers to free play

**Outcomes:**

- ✓ Parents understand the benefits of play for their children
- ✓ Our communities will have confidence in our children and young people
- ✓ Parents and carers will feel guided, supported and confident to bring up their families

# Policies and Procedures

- ❖ Safe-Guarding Children
- ❖ Managing Behaviour
- ❖ Risk Assessments
- ❖ Health & Safety
- ❖ Anti-Discriminatory
- ❖ Volunteer Policy
- ❖ Positive Physical Management
- ❖ Accident & Emergency Procedures
- ❖ Fire Guidelines and rules
- ❖ Photographic Consent
- ❖ Complaints Policy
- ❖ Monitoring & Evaluation
- ❖ Contact Details

# Safe Guarding Children Policy

DG Play are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people. We aim to create a culture where children are valued, their right to be safe is respected and where we strive to minimize the risk of harm. (For the purpose of this policy, PVG Scheme Records, PVG Scheme Updates, Standard & Enhanced Disclosures will be referred to as Disclosure Records)

We will do this by:

- ✓ Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse
- ✓ Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected & recruited and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care. Successful staff will be asked to complete a self declaration form prior to the Disclosure Record being accessed.
- ✓ Successful applicants will have to complete a Disclosure Record and become members of the PVG Scheme prior to taking up a post.
- ✓ All staff will be given induction training which will cover Health & Safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality.
- ✓ Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns
- ✓ Appointing an officer who will take responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies
- ✓ Reviewing the effectiveness of our safe guarding children policy and activities annually
- ✓ Implementing a robust recruitment procedure for staff and volunteers
- ✓ All staff will have regular supervision and appraisals

## Appointing an officer:

The officer will undertake awareness training in child protection issues and will be able to inform the appropriate authorities if a complaint about possible abuse is made by a child or an adult. The Officers name will be displayed and

given to new members. All Play rangers will undertake relevant child protection training.

The designated officer for DG Play is: Sharon Cameron

### Emergency Procedures

If a child is in need of immediate medical attention the senior play ranger will take responsibility and may need to:

- ❖ Telephone for an ambulance
- ❖ Ring the child's doctor
- ❖ Ask the carer to take the child to the doctor or hospital at once
- ❖ Offer to take the carer and child to the hospital/doctors
- ❖ Take the child her/himself to the doctors/hospital

**The child is the legal responsibility of the parent or carer and that person must be involved at once**

### Suspected abuse

If a situation arises that leads to a suspicion of child abuse:

- ❖ Listen to and observe the child
- ❖ At the first opportunity and with discretion, share your concerns with the other members of staff
- ❖ Check with parents to see if they have noticed any changes in behaviour and seek explanations for unusual marks or bruises.

# Managing Behaviour

Play Rangers are operating in public spaces, right in the heart of children's territories so may experience challenging behaviour and language on a regular basis

DG Play operates an anti-discriminatory practice and will be sensitive to situations that occur, we will work with the children and young people to support them through situations, and allow them to make decisions and what action should be taken (where appropriate)

Managing numbers of young people and equipment can also be problematic, situations in an open access environment can develop very quickly, therefore clear and quick communication between colleagues is essential.

If things get out of hand within a session the play rangers have the authority to stop the session early, this will usually have a positive impact on children as it allows them to reflect and think about their actions and be aware that there are clear boundaries set and why.

The Following page outlines how we will deal with various behaviours and situations.

# Accident & Emergency Procedures

## Accident Procedure:

- ❖ Check individual concerned
- ❖ Ask what has happened, and make an assessment. Refer to emergency procedure if necessary
- ❖ Administer first aid if necessary
- ❖ Phone parents using work mobile to inform them if necessary
- ❖ If parents are not phoned, children or young people are asked to inform parents of the accident that has occurred
- ❖ Report accident in accident book and revise risk assessment if relevant

## Emergency Procedure:

- ❖ Check individual concerned
- ❖ Both adults establish what has happened and make an accurate assessment
- ❖ One adult calls emergency services and parents using work mobile, whilst other attends to casualty
- ❖ Session is stopped
- ❖ Development Officer or Chief Executive is called and informed
- ❖ Review with parents and doctors what has happened
- ❖ Accident is written up in accident and emergency book
- ❖ Accident is discussed with Development Officer in supervision and activity and risk assessment is changed accordingly to minimise risk in future

## Risk Benefit Assessments:

Risk benefit assessments are carried out before and during each session

STAGE 1-Preventative Approach and Strategies	STAGE 2- Unacceptable Behaviours	STAGE 3 –Crisis Management	STAGE 4- Session Stops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Always focus on positive behaviours</li> <li>✓ Have an Anti-racist approach</li> <li>✓ Have a Multi-Cultural approach</li> <li>✓ Be pro-active in determining behaviour swings</li> <li>✓ Try to stop/disencourage any immediate violence or dangers ( Go to stage 2)</li> <li>✓ Offer ways of resolving issues</li> <li>✓ Determining and rewarding positive behaviours &amp; outlining unacceptable ones when necessary</li> <li>✓ Be calm, this will set the tone for the whole session</li> <li>✓ Explain the consequences of any given action, if it look like it may get out of hand</li> <li>✓ Treat each child as an individual</li> <li>✓ Give children responsibilities to avoid negative behaviour</li> <li>✓ Listen carefully to children</li> <li>✓ Offer children alternatives rather than saying “Don’t” or “No”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Emotional: Unfriendly, excluding tormenting</li> <li>✓ Physical: Pushing, Kicking, other uses of violence</li> <li>✓ Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures</li> <li>✓ Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments</li> <li>✓ Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality</li> <li>✓ Verbal: Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing</li> <li>✓ Give warnings to children that session will stop if negative behaviour continues</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION</b>  <b>Talk to individual children involved after the incident has occurred or at the next session (if individuals have left).</b>  <b>Discuss incident &amp; feelings both parties may have.</b>  <b>Possible warning scheme to be introduced.</b>  <b>Write a full report in Incident book</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Problem is communicated between adults very quickly</li> <li>✓ Approach is decided and crisis responsibility is delegated amongst adults or responsible young person(s)</li> <li>✓ One or both of the adults (or responsible young person) try to diffuse the situation</li> <li>✓ One or both adults change facial expressions (verbal or non-verbal) to address severity of situation – pack away any remaining equipment if necessary</li> <li>✓ Situation calms – Go back to stage 2</li> <li>✓ Give warning to children that the session will stop if behaviour continues</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION</b>  <b>Parents may be contacted during or after the session. Individuals to be told if this is going to happen</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ It is reiterated to the children why the session has stopped and our concerns with the incident</li> <li>✓ Contacting Family or individual(s)</li> <li>✓ Contacting police (on reflection of severity of incident)</li> <li>✓ Consider making a referral at a later date to a suitable supportive organisation (If appropriate)</li> <li>✓ Consider contacting schools to address any problems that may be affecting child(s) behaviour</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION</b>  <b>Phone emergency services (If necessary) ie, injury has occurred or people are at risk by an individual or groups actions</b></p> <p><b>Administer light first aid if necessary</b></p>

# Risk Benefit Assessments

The play ranger service uses risk benefit assessments to assess the areas where they will engage with children and young people

Risk benefit assessment (RBA) is the comparison of the *risk* of a situation to its related benefit. It prompts and supports a more mature, reasoned and reasonable attitude to risk in play, which means that risk is inevitable and necessary as part of play

The risk benefit assessment process is recommended in the HSE- endorsed “Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide”

We firmly believe that children need to experience risk, by completing a RBA we are taking into account and thinking about our activities, to take account of potential hazards and risks, we also feel that it is important to involve children in this process as they are acquiring new skills and need to have an awareness of potential hazards involved in these activities.

In order to involve children and young people in this process we will:

- ✓ Give brief discussions of activity at start of session to remind children of important factors – ie “**wet wood is slippery**”
- ✓ Observe on an on-going basis, some risks may not be seen at the start of a session, so we will give appropriate reminders if a child is about to enter a risky situation (*dynamic risk assessment*)
- ✓ Answer questions, show pictures or written instructions for the activity
- ✓ Allow as much independence as the children can safely manage

**“Hazards have some value in that they can be an opportunity for learning”**

Quoted from “Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide”

# Health & Safety

It is the aim of DG Play/The Bridge Dumfries & Galloway to provide employees with safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems through training and supervision as needed.

- ✓ We also accept responsibility for the health and safety of non-employees taking part in The Bridge Dumfries & Galloway activities. We shall work with outside organisations working within our premises to ensure general safety throughout the offices.
- ✓ We shall keep our policies up to date and comply with all current legislation in particular:
  - The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
  - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (amended 2002)
  - Subsequent legislation relating to Health and Safety issues.
- ✓ A copy of this policy will be provided for each member of staff. They are required to read and understand it, and be aware of the procedures laid out below. They will also be provided with updates when policies are amended.
- ✓ Specific arrangements and duties are set out in the policy below

## Aims of the Policy

- ✓ To provide a safe and healthy environment for employees to work in.
- ✓ To comply with all current legislation on Health and Safety.
- ✓ To provide procedure for when incidents happen that cannot be prevented.
- ✓ To learn from incidents to prevent them from happening again.

## Application of the Policy

All employees shall be provided with a copy of this policy and updates as they become available. Many of the provisions will only apply if The Bridge Dumfries & Galloway rents premises in future. For the current arrangement, the Chair and Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring that a risk assessment is carried out and that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the health and safety of The Bridge DG's employee.

**The full Health & Safety Policy is available from the DG Play/Bridge DG on request**

# Volunteer Policy

DG Play aims to recruit volunteers to assist with roles within the Community Play Ranger projects.

Volunteers are people who offer their experience, knowledge and skills to an organisation free of charge. A volunteer's aim is to help an organisation achieve its outcomes by supporting the organisation and its objectives

Volunteers will be given support in their role which will be very valuable to the organisation and the developments of its current projects. Volunteer opportunities are regularly updated.

Volunteers will be given the following information about volunteering:

- ❖ A role description, outlining specific tasks, responsibilities and supervision of the volunteers
- ❖ Details of the time commitment to the role and information about claiming expenses
- ❖ A breakdown of the relevant experiences, skills, knowledge, abilities and equal opportunity awareness necessary to carry out the role effectively.
- ❖ The prospective volunteer will be invited to have a chat with the Development Officer to talk about the organisation and the suitability of the volunteer to the role they are interested in.
- ❖ Before the volunteer placement begins the Development Officer will make contact with the referee given by the prospective volunteer
- ❖ Successful volunteers shall be supervised by the Development Officer or Senior play ranger, who will support them to fulfil their role within the project

The Development officer will be responsible for ensuring that the volunteer receives the following:

- ❖ All relevant policies and procedures for DG Play
- ❖ Regular supervision and support
- ❖ Positive feedback on their contributions
- ❖ A copy of the statement of confidentiality, which the volunteer should sign
- ❖ A copy of the Play ranger handbook

Volunteers can claim expenses that they incur through their volunteering role, receipts will need to be provided for any expenses that they need to claim and an expense form completed.

Volunteers may be asked to leave their role if their behaviour is unacceptable. In all cases the volunteer will be given an explanation of the Development Officers decision and action to be taken. The Development Officer will report any such terminations to the Chief Executive of the Bridge DG

All volunteers placements will be subject to satisfactory references and Disclosure checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children before commencing with their volunteering role.

All volunteers will be covered by The Bridge Dumfries and Galloway insurance, volunteers will be required to comply with all policies & procedures adopted by the organisation.

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# Positive Physical Management Policy

Appropriate touching and physical contacts will include:

- ✓ Comforting
- ✓ Reassuring
- ✓ Playing Games
- ✓ Greetings and Farewells
- ✓ Administering First Aid

Appropriate touching will be conducted in an open way. Play Rangers comply with the following rules:

- ✓ Play Rangers will not get involved in any intimate behaviour with children such as soiled underwear removal etc.
- ✓ Play Rangers acknowledge that there are going to be times when children will not be fully clothes. Play Rangers will do their utmost to protect and ensure that children are safe within the setting and not open to exploitation
- ✓ Play Rangers will ensure that children engage with each other in a positive manner and enjoy safe play
- ✓ Play Rangers will acknowledge age appropriateness within their positive physical management

# Fire Guidelines & Rules

- ✓ Up to the senior Play Ranger to decide if fire play is appropriate dependant on each individual session
- ✓ Activity is risk assessed beforehand and cleared with the Development officer
- ✓ Senior Play Ranger has to consider wind speed initially to determine if fires are safe to do so
- ✓ No more than 1 fire per adult in the group (adult has to supervise the activity continuously until the end)
- ✓ Safety parameters and boundaries are set from the outset. If children are mis-behaving there is a warning that the fires will be extinguished
- ✓ Once a stick goes onto the fire, it is not to be taken off
- ✓ At least 5 litres of water around each fire
- ✓ Once activity is finished adult clears fires up safely modelling good fire management
- ✓ If under 8's are involved a disclaimer will be signed for each child taking part in the activity
- ✓ No more than 5 children per fire
- ✓ Fires to be done on rough grounds and not too near fences or cars
- ✓ Burns First Aid Kit to be at activity in case of emergency

# Photographic Consent

For children and young people appearing in photographs and videos to promote the work of DG Play

Each child or young person's photograph may be taken to promote and hi-light the work of DG Play and The Bridge DG, which may be included in:

- ❖ Displays
- ❖ Leaflets
- ❖ Reports, including newspaper articles
- ❖ Newsletters
- ❖ Website
- ❖ Videos ( these will not be sold and will be for marketing & promotional purposes only)

**Children's Names will not be published on any materials**

To Parents

Please read this form, sign and return to Play Rangers at the next play ranger session or to the above address. Photographs and videos may be taken of your child from marketing and promotional materials to further the work of DG Play/The Bridge DG, these may be included in displays, leaflets, reports, newspaper articles, newsletters and on our website.

Children's names will not be published on any materials and videos will not be sold.

Please complete section below

Name of Child/ren .....

Name of Parent/Carer .....

Address .....

Contact Phone number .....

**I give consent for my child/ren to appear in photographs or videos to publicise and promote the work of DG Play/The Bridge DG**

Signed:

Date:

SAMPLE

# Complaints Policy

We hope that everyone who comes into contact with the organisation will feel that they can tell us about any suggestion, criticisms or complaints that they have. We want to give the best possible service to all our users – children, young people, parents, staff and the wider community – and we will always try to improve when problems are identified.

If you are happy to pass on your complaint to the Senior Play Ranger in person, we promise to:

- ✓ To listen properly to what you have to say
- ✓ To give you an answer straight away if possible, but otherwise follow up your complaint promptly
- ✓ To discuss your complaint at our next management meeting

If you prefer to complain in writing, or you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a verbal complaint please write to our chairperson at the address below. We promise to:

- ✓ To give your complaint serious attention
- ✓ To respond to you in writing as soon as possible. This will be no longer than 6 weeks

## Address Details:

The Chairperson

The Bridge Dumfries & Galloway

Mount St Michael

Craigs Road

Dumfries

DG1 4UT

# Monitoring & Evaluation

The work of DG Play and the Play Ranger service will bring a wealth of information that contributes to key National outcomes and targets

The Children Act 2004 requires all those who working with children and young people to review their work, to appraise their links with other agencies and to integrate and develop collaboratively.

Evaluation will be gathered after every session which will include:

- ✓ Regular, new children and parents that were supported at the play ranger sessions
- ✓ Breakdown of ages and ethnicity of children and young people
- ✓ What resources were made available (if any)
- ✓ Work with other agencies
- ✓ What activities did play rangers do with the children and young people
- ✓ What effect has this work had on the children, young people, families and communities
- ✓ Achievements
- ✓ Challenges

## Monitoring & Reporting

Monitoring and reporting systems have been developed to demonstrate how this work achieves our outcomes, and significant improvements in children's lives as set out in The Early Years Framework, Equally Well and Girfec.

This monitoring model not only encourages discussions at sessions with other colleagues, but also enables staff to develop a continuing awareness of the importance of play within their roles, this also gives the play rangers the opportunities to review the progress and impact of the work in each community which helps inform and shape future practice.

# Contact Details

DG Play is managed by The Bridge Dumfries and Galloway – a Voluntary Sector Support organisation and registered Scottish Charity ( SC041058), also a company limited by guarantee (SC368236)

In the first instance all correspondence or queries should be directed to the Development Officer:

Sharon Cameron

Whithorn Children's Centre

Castlehill

Whithorn

Newton Stewart

DG8 8PN

Tel: 01988 501 145

Email: [sharon.cameron@dgplay.org.uk](mailto:sharon.cameron@dgplay.org.uk)

**If the Development Officer is not available and an urgent response is required please contact:**

Joyce Harkness

Chief Executive Officer

The Bridge Dumfries & Galloway

Mount St Michael

Craigs Road

DG1 4UT

Tel: 01387 270 205

Email: [joyce.harkness@thebridge-dg.org.uk](mailto:joyce.harkness@thebridge-dg.org.uk)



**Please note that the Chief Executive should only be contacted in emergencies**

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