



March 26th, 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Outdoor play and tick bites

We have been working closely with OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) for a number of years now to develop our school site and playtime offer. We strongly believe that: "Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child". Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community.

We carried out a number of developments to our grounds such as, opening up the mound, creating social spaces using log circles, making dips and mounds and allowing areas of the field to grow more wild to provide area of interest to be used in play. Since making these changes we have seen very positive changes to the children's play. Our hopes are that we will continue to change the way we think about the link between play and learning.

We have carried out extensive risk/benefit assessments in conjunction with OPAL to ensure that we are taking the necessary steps to minimise risks and keep the children safe when they are using our site for play. However with the increased time the children spend on the field and leaving areas of our field to grow 'wild' there is a risk of mini beasts living in the grass, for example 'ticks'.

Ticks are small, spider-like mini beasts that live in long grass, bushes and shrubs. It is important to look out for them and remove it if you find one on you as some ticks can carry diseases, like Lyme disease, so it's important to know what ticks are and what to do if you get bitten by one.

Please read the attached guidance from the National Institute of Health Research about how to minimise the risk of tick bites and what to do if you or your child is bitten by a tick.

As a school, we are taking precautionary measures to minimise the risk of tick bites by cutting back some of the longer grass on the mound and training staff to recognise ticks and remove them.

At home, please be mindful of ticks and take time to check your children regularly if they have been playing outside paying particular attention to the area under waistbands, behind the ears, knees, groin area, hairline and armpits. If you find a tick attached, please follow the advice at www.lymediseaseuk.com on how to remove it safely or seek medical attention.

If your child has been bitten by a tick, please monitor your child for symptoms including:

- A migrating rash which appears 48+ hours after the bite, normally at the bite site but can be elsewhere on the body (you may want to draw a line around the bite to monitor if there are any changes).
- Headaches
- Stiff neck
- Sensitivity to light
- Malaise
- Unexplained behavioural or mood changes.

If a rash or any other symptoms appear please seek medical attention from your GP.

Yours sincerely



Mr Vitarana
Headteacher