



@Hope Lutheran Campus

Active Play Philosophy & Parent Acknowledgement

Our Philosophy

At NextGen Academics, we believe children learn best through meaningful play. Play is not simply a break from learning—it is learning.

Research consistently shows that active, child-directed play helps children develop academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. Our campus and daily schedule are intentionally designed to provide students with opportunities to explore, create, collaborate, solve problems, and challenge themselves in a safe and supportive environment.

- Through active play, students develop: Confidence and independence, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, social and communication skills, physical coordination and strength, emotional resilience and self-regulation, healthy decision-making and risk assessment.

We believe children become more capable adults by learning how to recognize, evaluate, and manage age-appropriate risks under the guidance of caring adults.

Understanding Risk

While student safety is our highest priority, no playground or physical activity can ever be completely risk-free.

- Children benefit from opportunities to: Run, climb, balance, jump, build, explore, and engage in imaginative and cooperative play.

These activities naturally involve the possibility of minor injuries, including:

- Scrapes
- Minor collisions
- Bruises
- Twisted ankles
- Falls
- Loss of balance

These incidents may occur even when equipment is properly maintained and staff members are actively supervising students.

Our Commitment to Student Safety

Providing a safe environment is a shared responsibility between the school, families, and students.

To promote student safety, Next Gen will:

- Maintain all playgrounds and equipment in accordance with required inspections and safety standards.
- Conduct routine inspections of play equipment and outdoor spaces.
- Provide active supervision during all outdoor play and physical activities.
- Teach playground expectations and safe decision-making.
- Intervene when student behavior presents an unreasonable risk.
- Encourage children to challenge themselves while remaining mindful of their own abilities.

Our goal is not to eliminate every possible risk, but to provide an environment where children can safely learn, grow, and build confidence through play.

What Active Supervision Means

During recess, outdoor learning, Physical Education, and other active play opportunities, staff members actively supervise students by:

- Positioning themselves throughout the play area.
- Maintaining visual supervision.
- Monitoring student interactions.
- Redirecting unsafe behavior.
- Enforcing playground expectations.
- Assisting students when necessary.

Active supervision does not mean that an adult stands beside every child or physically prevents every stumble, slip, or fall. Even under careful supervision, accidents may occur during normal childhood play.

Responding to Injuries

Although most playground incidents involve minor injuries, every injury is taken seriously.

Minor Injuries

For minor injuries, school staff will: Provide basic first aid, comfort and monitor the student, determine whether the student may safely return to activities, document the incident according to school procedures when appropriate, notify parents when warranted based on the nature of the injury.

Serious Injuries

If a student experiences a more serious injury, staff will: Stop the activity immediately, assess the student and provide care within the scope of staff training, contact parents or guardians as soon as reasonably possible, contact emergency medical services (911) if necessary, complete an incident report documenting the circumstances.

The health and safety of every student will always remain our first priority.

Medical Restrictions

If a student has an illness or injury that prevents safe participation in physical activity, the school must receive written documentation from a licensed healthcare provider.

- Documentation should include:
- The medical reason for the restriction.
- The expected duration.
- When the student may safely resume normal activities.

Full Participation or Alternative Participation

To ensure student safety and provide effective supervision, Next Gen does not accommodate partial participation restrictions during active play. Children naturally become engaged in play and may unintentionally forget temporary limitations. Because staff members supervise all students simultaneously, individualized movement restrictions cannot be monitored consistently or safely.

Examples include requests such as:

- Walk instead of run.
- No climbing.
- No jumping.
- Stay off the monkey bars.
- Don't play tag.
- Participate only in certain activities.

Students who are medically unable to participate safely in active play will instead participate in a supervised alternative activity until they have been medically cleared to return.

Medical Clearance

The school may require written medical clearance before a student returns to active play following:

- Broken bones
- Sprains or ligament injuries
- Concussions or head injuries
- Surgery
- Extended illness
- Any injury that may affect safe participation

Additionally, school staff reserve the right to temporarily restrict participation if a student appears unable to safely participate, even if the student wishes to continue.

Participation in Physical Activities

Because movement is an essential part of our educational program, students are expected to fully participate in Recess, Outdoor learning, and Physical Education unless participation is medically restricted.

Parent Partnership

Parents play an important role in maintaining a safe learning environment.

Parents agree to:

- Inform the school of medical conditions that affect physical activity.
- Provide current medical documentation when restrictions are necessary.
- Notify the school when restrictions have ended.
- Ensure students arrive in appropriate footwear and clothing for active play.
- Reinforce safe playground expectations at home.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

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| • Follow directions from all staff members. | • Practice safe decision-making. |
| • Use playground equipment appropriately. | • Report unsafe conditions or injuries immediately. |
| • Demonstrate kindness and respect toward others. | • Respect playground boundaries and rules. |

Learning to make responsible choices is an important part of our play-based philosophy.

Acknowledgment of Next Gen's Active Play Philosophy

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- I have read and understand Next Gen's Active Play Philosophy.
- I understand that active play is an essential part of my child's educational experience.
- I understand that active play involves inherent risks that cannot be completely eliminated.
- I understand how students are supervised during play.
- I understand the school's procedures for responding to injuries.
- I understand that partial participation restrictions are not accommodated during active play.
- I understand that students who cannot safely participate will be assigned a supervised alternative activity.
- I agree to communicate any medical conditions or injuries that may affect my child's participation.
- I understand that the school will make safety decisions based on the best interests of the student and the school community.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____