**Activity: Is our play in the school grounds safe play and fair play?**

**Learning intentions**

This activity can be completed as a social action inquiry.

It enables students to:

* Investigate the concepts of ‘safe play’ and ‘fair play’.
* Develop observation criteria so they can observe and record instances of fair play and unfair play, and safe play and unsafe play during playground games and morning break and lunchtime.
* Observe play during morning break and lunchtime then analyse the information obtained.
* Reflect on their own play attitudes and behaviour and those of their friends and peer group and possibly make changes in their attitude or behaviour.
* Possibly consider actions that can address issues their findings demonstrated and make presentations to the school Principal, teachers and/or Board of Trustees.

The activity can be used in Health and Physical Education or Social Science learning areas.

The activity encourages students to use their observation skills and use critical thinking processes to make sense of information, experiences and ideas. It encourages students to review and manage their own behaviour, to develop their caring thinking skills and to take action to promote student and school wellbeing or Hauora.

One class of students discovered that, in their school, play behaviour changed as lunchtime progressed with most of the unfair and unsafe behaviour in free play occurring in the last ten minutes of lunchtime. After a presentation from the class the school reduced lunchtime by ten minutes and the Principal reports less playground injuries, a more positive play attitude amongst students and more settled students in afternoon classes.

**Activity:**

**Part 1: What makes the game(s) we play amongst ourselves unsafe or unfair?**

Students can:

* Discuss the concepts of ‘fair play’ and ‘safe play’ as they relate to the game(s) they play in the school grounds at morning break and lunchtime.
* Review the written and unwritten rules about the game(s) they play at morning break and lunchtime and determine how the rules encourage fair play and safe play.
* Consider the roles different players have in the games, e.g. leaders, a player or players who takes responsibility for the rules, players who go along with whatever is happening.
* Identify what individuals can do accidently or intentionally that make the game(s) unfair or unsafe.

**Part 2: Observing the games students play**

Students can:

* Identify the range of games played in the school grounds at morning break and lunch time and which groups of students play the games.
* Identify some or all games they want to observe and make a plan to observe them through one morning break and lunchtime.
* Decide on a way they can identify and record safe and unsafe behaviour and behaviour in the spirit of fair play and behaviour that is not fair play. This may involve some initial observations, and some game playing with reflections on how the game went.
* Make observations about games they observe at morning break and lunchtime and record them.

The students may choose to use their first observations and recording as a trial and repeat the observations using a revised methodology.

**Part 3: Analysing results and possibly making changes to playground play**

Students can:

* Analyse the information they have and present their findings in appropriate presentation formats.
* Decide what their findings mean for the safety and well being of the students who play the games and others nearby.
* Reflect on their own participation in the games and the participation of their friends and peer group and make personal and group decisions about how they want to participate in playground play now and in the future.
* Decide what they want to do with their research findings and if they want to engage with the Principal, teachers and Board of Trustees to make any policy changes around playground play.
* Decide if they want engage other students in a process to change the way students interact during playground games.

**Part 4: Reflection**

Students can make personal and group reflections on:

* The roles they take in games.
* How easily they remember safety issues when they are deeply involved in a game.
* How strong an advocate for fair play they are.
* What causes them to forget the concepts of fair play and safe play when they are playing a game.
* What would encourage them to remember play safe and play fair when they are really involved in the game.
* What encourages them and what discourages them from standing up for fair play or safer play.
* What they can do to make sure playground play is safe, fair and fun.

**Safety Considerations**

* Students need to observe games from a safe place.

**Equipment**

* Material to record information e.g. pen, paper, clipboard.

**Location**

School grounds

**Time**

Variable - 3 hours plus.