

## Schoolchildren 'banned from running in playground'

Mother of 11-year-old Diesel Sparks says children at his school have been told they can no longer run in the playground



Bradley McBryde 11, Luca Serrone 9, Mia Burn 11 and Diesel Sparks 11, from Riverview Juniors in Gravesend, Kent Photo: Simon Hildrew/Newsquest

By Agency

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Children at a primary school have been 'banned from running in the playground'.

The head teacher at Riverview Juniors in Cimba Wood, Gravesend, Kent, said pupils risked injury from a chasing game

But angry mother Rachael Sparks said it was "a step too far".

— ADVERTISEMENT —



She said her son, 11-year-old Diesel, returned home on March 27 upset because he and other children had been told they could no longer run in the playground.

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Chinese school children banned from 'intimacy'

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Ms Sparks, 41, said: "My son came home on Friday and said 'they've banned running in the playground mummy'.

"I thought I am not going to react too much, too quickly, because kids do get it wrong sometimes.

"I thought I'd check with the receptionist when I took him to school on Monday.

"I went in to school to speak to them as I thought he must have misunderstood, I mean, what else is a playground for in a primary school if not for running around and letting off a bit of steam?

"I was lucky enough to get to speak to the head, Ms Wenban. I said 'I just want to clarify if this is true?'

"She started off by saying we've asked them to slow down a bit, but then it transpired that they had banned running."

The school has since said the "ban" relates to a particular chasing game, which has caused injuries to some of the pupils.

Ms Sparks added: "She went on to say that due to some children not looking where they were going, there had been incidents of bumped heads.

"She claimed due to this it was her duty of care towards the children that had prompted her to ban running.

"They are not allowed to play British Bulldog, they are not allowed to play football.

"I know children do get the occasional bump to the head or grazed knee while running around on the playground but having spoken to a number of parents as well as children, 100 per cent of both expressed that running and getting the occasional minor injury was most definitely preferable to not running at all.

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'Ban advertising aimed at primary school children'

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"I don't want to run the school down but I think it is a step too far.

"Kids have been bumping their heads and grazing their knees for hundreds of years."

Interim co-head of the school Pam Wenban said: "We have asked children to refrain from playing a particular chasing game in the playground as we have found the increasing numbers taking part has caused some injuries, including a fractured collarbone.

"We are concerned for the safety of the children and need to stop this particular game until we can establish a safer way for them to play.

"When the weather is dry and sunny children can run and play more safely on the school playing field."

## At a glance | School playground bans

### 'Tag' or 'It'

The simple chase and catch game was banned in 2016 at a school in Leeds, West Yorkshire because the head teacher claimed children had become upset at the rough and tumble.

### Running

In April 2015, children at a primary school in Gravesend, Kent were 'banned from running in the playground'. The head teacher said pupils risked injury from the chasing game British Bulldog.



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**Conkers** Two schools in Clackmannanshire and Cumbria banned conkers in 2004 on the grounds that they could provoke pupils' nut allergies. In 2011 almost one-in-six teachers said their schools outlawed conkers in case children are hit in the face by a stray horse chestnut

### Yo-yos

An HSE report in 2012 revealed that a school banned yo-yos because children might injure themselves.

### Marbles

In 2012, a survey revealed that five per cent of teachers said their school had outlawed marbles. The same survey revealed that nine per cent of teachers said pupils were not allowed to play leapfrog.

### Army games

Staff at an infant school in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, reprimanded two boys after they were seen making pistol shapes with their fingers. Teachers broke up the imaginary shoot-out and warned the youngsters' parents that such behaviour would not be tolerated.

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