



Nurture Group Policy

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Why Nurture Groups?

Most children start school with assumptions based on early experiences at home, about their capacity to enjoy learning; they are willing to try something new and can learn from their mistakes. They have developed expectations about how adults will behave: whether they will be helpful and interested or disapproving and easily angry. Most children therefore enjoy the challenge of school and will be supported at home if difficulties arise.

However, in some classes there are children who arrive in school without having the necessary positive early experiences. This could be for very many different reasons depending on their personal situation. For them, the complex activities and bustle of a large class can be overwhelming: they could be unable to listen or take in what the teacher says; they could be easily distracted and quickly feel defeated. Some withdraw; others express their frustration by aggressive or impulsive behaviour more typical of a toddler.

THE PRINCIPLES OF NURTURE

Six important principles underpin the organisation and ethos of a nurture group.

1. **Children's learning is understood developmentally** – the foundations of learning begins at birth and develop via a close relationship with an adult. Independence develops through dependence. Social empathy as well as learning develops from being thought about, valued and encouraged. Staff in the nurture group respond to each child at whatever emotional or social age s/he appears to be with the appropriate degree of control and nurture. The quality of this response enables the child to move on. Children's developmental progress is assessed through the Boxall Profile handbook.
2. **The nurture room offers a safe base** – there is a structure to the day which is predictable, adults who are reliable and firm and can set boundaries without being punitive. Children see adults working together and supporting each other. This provides security and reassurance. The nurture group room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of children's relationship with each other and with the staff.
3. **The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing** - nurture is listening, being responsive, remembering and engaging in reciprocal, shared activities such as play, having meals, reading, learning, talking about events and feelings. Children respond to being valued and being thought of as individuals.

This involves calling the children by their name, noticing and praising every small achievement; nothing is hurried in nurture groups.

4. **Language is understood as a vital means of communication** – Language is more than a skill to be learnt, it is the way of putting feelings into words. Nurture group children often ‘act out’ their feelings as they lack the vocabulary to ‘name’ how they feel. In nurture groups the informal opportunities for talking and sharing, e.g welcoming the children into the group or having breakfast together are as important as the more formal lessons teaching language skills. Words are used instead of actions to express feelings and opportunities are created for extended conversations or encouraging imaginative play to understand the feelings of others.
5. **All behaviour is communication** –Understanding what a child is communicating through behaviour helps staff to respond in a firm but not-punitive way by not being provoked or discouraged. If the child can sense their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. The adult makes the link between the external/internal worlds of the child. This principle underlines the adult response to the children’s often challenging or difficult behaviour. ‘Given what I know about this child and their development what is this child trying to tell me?’.
6. **Transitions are significant in the lives of children** – the nurture group helps the child make the difficult transition from home to school. However, on a daily basis there are numerous transitions the child makes, e.g between sessions and classes and between different adults. Changes in routine are invariably difficult for vulnerable children and need to be carefully managed with preparation and support.



THE DEN

Our nurture group is called ‘The Den’. Children attend our nurture group for 5 afternoons per week. The group has a maximum of 10 children and its composition is carefully structure to create a balanced and functional group.

THE ROLE OF THE NURTURE GROUP STRATEGIC LEADER

Nurture Group Strategic Leader: Mrs L. Reeve

To oversee the nurture group with the support and guidance of the SLT and to;

-  Be involved in formal reviews to support curriculum development.
-  Lead the selection, assessment and re-integration of pupils.

- 🌱 Ensure the maintenance of Nurture Group principles- this is to provide a carefully structured session where this is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- 🌱 Oversee the organisation and weekly planning of activities and the curriculum of the group with The Den staff, bearing in mind the needs of the children in relation to Boxall Profile targets. *(Appendix 1)*
- 🌱 Keep and maintain Pupil Profiles that record and track individual children's progress and attainment. *(Appendix 2)*
- 🌱 Co-ordinate and support the work of the Nurture Group Manager and Assistants.
- 🌱 Liaise with other professionals when appropriate including visits.
- 🌱 Oversee activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil sessions and coffee mornings.
- 🌱 Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities.
- 🌱 Ensure regular communication between nurture group staff, teachers, teaching assistants and parents.
- 🌱 Manage the Nurture Group budget.
- 🌱 Co-ordinate and supervise the review and maintenance of Nurture learning environments to ensure they meet Nurture principles and Communication Friendly Spaces programme.
- 🌱 Report developments to SLT and Governors as appropriate.
- 🌱 Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

THE ROLE OF THE NURTURE GROUP MANAGER

Nurture Group Manager: Mrs T. Hope

To run the nurture group with the support and guidance of the Strategic Leader and to;

- 🌱 Be involved in formal reviews as required; to support curriculum development.
- 🌱 Be involved with the selection, assessment and re-integration of pupils.
- 🌱 Maintain the Nurture Group principles- this is to provide a carefully structured session where this is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- 🌱 Organise and plan weekly activities with The Den staff, bearing in mind the needs of the children relating to Boxall Profile targets. Medium term plans (based on Boxall targets) and Short term plans will be in use *(Appendix 1)*

- 🌱 Contribute to the maintenance of Discovery Books that record and track individual children's progress and attainment based on Boxall Profile targets and additional targets provided by Outside Agencies. *(Appendix 2)*
- 🌱 Support the work of the Nurture Group Assistant.
- 🌱 Plan and conduct activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil sessions and coffee mornings.
- 🌱 Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities where appropriate.
- 🌱 Engage in regular communication between nurture group staff, teachers, teaching assistants and parents.
- 🌱 Participate and engage in the review and maintenance of Nurture learning environments to ensure they meet Nurture principles and Communication Friendly Spaces programme.
- 🌱 Contribute to report development to SLT and Governors as appropriate.
- 🌱 Carry out all Nurture work in line with school policies and procedures.

THE ROLE OF THE NURTURE GROUP ASSISTANT

Nurture Group Assistant: Mrs D. Morgan








To run the nurture group under the guidance of the Nurture Group Strategic Leader and Nurture Group Manager to;

- 🌱 Be involved in formal reviews as required; to support curriculum development.
- 🌱 Maintain the Nurture Group principles- this is to provide a carefully structured session where this is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- 🌱 Participate in the organisation and planning of activities and curriculum, bearing in mind the needs of the children relating to Boxall Profile targets and additional targets provided by Outside Agencies. *(Appendix 2)*
- 🌱 Keep and maintain Discovery Books to track individual children's progress and attainment. *(Appendix 3)*
- 🌱 Liaise with other professionals when appropriate including visits where appropriate.
- 🌱 Engage in regular communication between nurture group staff, teachers, teaching assistants and parents.
- 🌱 Participate and engage in the review and maintenance of Nurture learning environments to ensure they meet Nurture principles and Communication Friendly Spaces programme.
- 🌱 Conduct activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil sessions and coffee mornings.
- 🌱 Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities where appropriate.


THE NURTURE ENVIRONMENT

The Den has 6 areas which provide a secure, safe base for learning both indoors and outdoors. The environment reflects Nurture principles and those of the Communication Friendly Spaces programme.

These are the :-

-  Kitchen area
-  Dining area
-  Play area
-  Comfy area
-  Quiet area
-  Discovery area
-  Garden area

TEACHING AND LEARNING

-  The Den children have their own personalised learning pathway which is linked to the whole school thematic curriculum with a large emphasis on PSHE, Social and Emotional learning. Activities are planned to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. Medium term planning plots our pupil areas for development based on Boxall Profile Data. Short term (weekly) planning demonstrates key activities to support these areas for development. This is undertaken by the Nurture Group Manager and Assistant, with planning easily accessed on the School Intranet system for relevant staff.

Each afternoon follows a similar pattern divided into 6 parts.

Welcome and circle time – a calming time where children are given the opportunity to record their current emotions on entry to the room, share news and develop listening and speaking skills.

Story time – this is time to share a story, for example a Social Story, to support the development and explicit teaching of key social skills. Questioning and conversations will link to personal experiences, feelings and reflection.

Task 1 – Adult 1 leads a group (based on Boxall Medium Term Planning Tool) supporting children in developing skills to meet their targets. Adult 2 supports and observes remaining children and makes observation notes as needed.

Task 2 – Adult 2 leads a group (based on Boxall Medium Term Planning Tool) supporting children in developing skills to meet their targets. Adult 1 supports and observes remaining children and makes observation notes as needed.

Snack time – this part of the morning aims to provide opportunities to socialise with peers in an adult setting. Children take responsibility for tasks relating to serving drinks and snacks.

Celebration time – this is time for reflection, praise and celebration. Children have an opportunity to identify and praise other children in the group. Where necessary, adults to intervene to develop and support skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Children will return to class with a member of staff in preparation for Home time.

Wednesday sessions focuses around Forest School application of skills learnt so far. Adults record observation notes relating to pupil development.

Planning, Preparation and Assessment – The Den staff will meet to review pupil progress, plan and resource activities for the next week on a Friday at 9am. Children will participate in Praise Assembly with their class during this time.

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

The nurture group currently supports a range of children across Lower School. The identification and review process takes place on an ongoing basis.

Raising concerns – staff complete The Den Referral form to raise awareness of current pupils with issues.






Boxall Profiles – All children are screened using the Boxall Profile. This is a series of questions covering various aspects of a child's social and emotional development. It provides a clear and personalised picture of a child's areas of need. The Class teacher, Nurture Group Strategic Leader, Manager and Nurture Group staff discuss the results.

From the Boxall profiles, a report will be created where children are selected for the group according to need. This grouping can be flexible to include other children in some of the sessions. Children will leave and join the group as progress is made.





INVOLVING PARENTS



Parental support is vital to the child's progress

-  Parents are fully involved and consulted about selection processes.
-  Communication between nurture group staff and parents is critical
-  Parents should be made to feel a part of the nurture group experience
-  Parents are invited to nurture group events regularly
-  Parents are welcome to meet with nurture group staff any time after the school day.

INVOLVING NETHERBROOK STAFF

-  Class staff will be responsible for the registration of pupils in the nurture group both in the morning and afternoon.
-  Staff will be asked to contribute to discussions, review meetings, liaise with nurture staff to share information and complete assessment questionnaires in relation to pupils in their class.
-  Continue with strategies and use of resources as agreed in his/her Individual Nurture Plan (INP)
-  Staff will be invited to attend nurture sessions/parent workshops as appropriate. Cover for sessions will be planned and delivered by the Nurture Group Strategic Leader.

ASSESSMENT

The Boxall Profile (which allows for an individual picture of the child's social and emotional needs) is used as the assessment tool. This is carried out in line with the school assessment system in order for staff to be aware of any progress or change in the areas of need to be developed.

Alongside the formal assessment process is the informal, daily evidence recorded in Discovery Books by nurture group staff. Pupil's progression over the course of the week is discussed during the Planning, Preparation and Assessment time to decide upon key focus areas for the next week.

Children are assessed in line with the school assessment system, including S Scales, in order to establish the impact the Nurture group is having on their academic progress. This is undertaken by the Nurture Group Strategic Leader. Attendance is also monitored and informs the Pupil Profile.

RE-INTEGRATION

The most effective length of time to be a member of a nurture group is 2-4 terms. At any time throughout this, depending on the progress of the child, a re-integration programme may begin.

This programme is developed on an individual basis for each child to slowly build them back into their mainstream class on a full time basis. The re-integration process is fully supported by nurture group staff, the pupil, class teacher and parents.

STAFFING

Our Nurture group has 2 members of highly skilled staff who have all participated in the Nurture Group training. These are Mrs T. Hope and Mrs D. Morgan. It is overseen by Mrs L. Reeve who is our Assistant Head teacher and Inclusion Leader. She has also completed the appropriate training and the 4 Day Nurture Programme.

STAFF ABSENCE

In order to maintain consistency and security the nurture group is never covered by supply teachers. In the event of staff absence the members of The Den will be supported by a 'Visiting Auntie.' This may include Mrs S. Daly (Learning Mentor) or Mrs J. Barfoot (HLTA). However, if this is not possible the children whom access this intervention will remain with their mainstream class.

VISITORS TO THE DEN

Visitors can cause disruption and change to an otherwise ordered and structured day. Any change from routine can be difficult for some children therefore visitors to The Den should always be pre-arranged in order to prepare the children for what will happen. It is best to involve the children in the preparation for the visit – making invitations, planning the menu, setting the table etc.

It is important for the children's class teachers to feel a part of what is happening in the nurture group and to carry the principles back to their classroom to provide consistency. Teachers and members of the SLT will be invited into The Den throughout the academic year.

ARRANGEMENTS TO MONITOR AND REVIEW

This policy was written in consultation with staff and Governors. It should be read alongside other policies in school (Behaviour, Inclusion, Equal Opportunities)



Nurture Group Policy
Appendices