

St Joseph's Primary School Slate Street



Nurture Group Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 What are Nurture Groups?

Nurture Groups are a small group of children within a mainstream primary school supported by the whole staff and parents. The groups have their own nurture group practitioners who collect them from their class base and return them at the end of the session. The rationale is that these children have missed out on early experiences that promote good development. They generally have not learned to make trusting relationships with adults or to relate appropriately to other children, resulting in difficulties with settling at school.

1.2 The six principles of Nurture Groups

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transition in children's lives

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Provide a carefully structured routine, where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.

- To increase inclusive practice for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and to develop ways in which the school supports such children.
- To facilitate a positive whole school ethos in line with the school pastoral policy.
- To develop awareness about the cause of behaviour and the effective management of behaviour problems in line with the school behaviour policy.
- To have a predictable, calm and purposeful environment and timetable, free from curriculum pressures
- To develop self-esteem and social skills
- To develop relationships between adults and children, building trust, confidence and reliability
- To increase joint working practices between school staff and outside agencies.
- To increase parental involvement in supporting their children and developing a positive attitude toward school.

3. Staffing

3.1 The Nurture Room is always staffed by 2 adults (1 teacher and 1 assistant) who have been trained in the theory and practice of Nurture Groups.

- The Nurture staff are supported by the Principal, Vice Principal, SENCO, Child Protection Office, back up Nurture Teacher and a steering group committee.
- The Nurture Steering Group committee is made up of: Nurture Staff, Principal, VP(SENCO and CPO), parent support officer, Educational psychologist, representative of the Board of Governors and the Education Welfare Officer.
- The steering group committee aim to meet twice a term to support the staff in selecting pupils, reviewing progress and discussing reintegration.
- The staff work closely with and liaise with the Parent Support Officer throughout the school year.
- The Nurture Staff regularly liaise with mainstream school staff and outside agencies.
- Visits to the Nurture Room by other staff and outside agencies are carefully planned.
- Every effort is made to ensure that Nurture Staff are not required to cover absent colleagues.
- The Nurture Staff require non-contact time to see parents, plan, attend training, keep records, carry out observations, meet with other professionals, liaise with other school staff and attend steering group meetings.
- In the absence of the Nurture Group teacher children will remain in their mainstream class and be supported by the Nurture Group assistant. The back-up trained teacher will cover long term absences.

4. Parental contact

4.1 Parents are a key element of nurture work. Nurture Staff work alongside the Parent Support Officer when contacting parents to arrange visits and meetings.

- All parents are invited to view the Nurture Room during open evenings.
- Parents are consulted by letter prior to children attending the nurture room
- Parents then meet the Nurture Staff and Parent Support Officer to discuss placement in the Nurture Room. Parental consent must be obtained before placement.
- Parents are regularly invited to meet nurture staff to discuss IEPs, targets, behaviour and progress. Nurture staff provide advice and interaction strategies that can be used at home.
- Parents are regularly invited to Parent and Child sessions in the Nurture Room.

5. Placement criteria

5.1. Each child will be selected for intervention in the Nurture Group for individual reasons. The process includes:

- Mainstream class teacher expresses concern to nurture Staff
- Nurture Staff meet with class teacher and Parent Support Officer to assess needs and gather background information
- Nurture Staff support the class teacher in completing a pen portrait, Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire, Admission Criteria checklist and a Boxall Profile.
- Nurture Staff observe child in 2 contrasting situations – in class/in playground
- Nurture Staff analyse the data and meet with Nurture Steering Group to discuss placement in Nurture Room.
- Parents are contacted and invited to meet with Nurture Staff and Parent Support officer. Parental consent is obtained.

6. Structure of the Nurture Group

6.1 The Nurture group is well structured with a strong sense of routine and familiarity.

The day is broken up into small group sessions catering for selected children from the Foundation stage, KS1 and KS2. Children are always collected from their base class and returned by the Nurture Staff. There will be a maximum of 8 children at any one time. St Joseph's Nurture Room is named the 'Sunshine Room'. Children attend the 'Sunshine Room' for between 2-4 terms. Nurture Staff plan activities and set targets for the children based on the information gathered by the Boxall Profile. Each day is focused on a different area of learning, ensuring each child benefits from a range of exciting, and imaginative activities. These include:

- Cooking
- Art
- Story time including role play
- Sharing/circle time/PDMU
- Relaxation and reflection
- Sharing a snack together
- Board games

These activities help to develop self-esteem, confidence, encourage turn taking, sharing, co-operation and self-control. They also link with many areas of the curriculum.

7. Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring of children's progress and the effectiveness of the nurture group is of paramount importance to maintain high standards of nurture provision.

- Children's progress is continually monitored with a daily review of the session and weekly observations of the children.
- Half termly meetings with staff are arranged to review class progress
- Nurture Staff complete Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires and Boxall Profiles each term.
- IEPs are created and evaluated with the SENCO once a term.

- Nurture Staff regularly monitor and record the academic progress of the main group who attend the Nurture group.
- Nurture Staff monitor the academic progress of those who have re-integrated back into the class using the school standardised tests.
- DE and ETI continue to review nurture provision

8. Reintegration

8.1. Careful plans are required to resettle children back into their mainstream class.

- SDQ, Boxall Profile and readiness forms are used as a guide to assess whether children are ready to spend more time in class.
- In discussion with the Steering Group Committee and the mainstream teacher, the pace of return, dates and contact time will be agreed.
- Parents are informed of the plans for reintegration and offered support if required.
- Children are given clear explanations of the plan using timetables and verbal reminders.
- The process of reintegration is closely monitored and pace of return is arranged to suit the needs of the child.
- It is important for Nurture Staff to maintain close links with pupils when they are fully integrated back into their mainstream class.

9. Role of the Head Teacher

The head teacher has overall responsibility for the functioning of the Nurture Group within the school. The head teacher is responsible for:

- The operational management of the Nurture Group
- Management of Nurture Group staff as members of the school community
- Oversight of curriculum planning and monitoring of work
- Ensuring the Nurture Group Staff attend appropriate training and work with outside agencies in order to offer the child the most effective package of support
- Ensure Health and Safety procedures are followed in accordance with the school's policy
- Ensure Child Protection procedures are followed in accordance with the school's policy
- Ensure the Nurture Group operates within the guidelines recommended by the DE
- Monitoring the cost and funding allocated to the Nurture room
- Ensure Nurture Principles are embedded within the whole school

10. Role of the Nurture Teacher

The Nurture Group Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the group. The teacher has the following duties:

- The maintain the Nurture Group principles

- To provide a carefully routine day where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- To carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures
- Be involved in selecting children using the selection criteria and reintegrating the children
- Liaise with the class teacher and SENCO to develop, implement and evaluate IEPs
- To organise and plan the activities and curriculum of the classroom, bearing in mind the needs of the children.
- To keep records of individual children's progress
- To co-ordinate the work of the Nurture Group assistant
- To liaise with other professionals when appropriate
- To actively work in partnership with parents in the development of their children

11. Role of the Nurture Group Assistant

- To work in partnership with the teacher and to ensure the well-being and development of the pupils
- To attend courses and training as required
- To be involved in the screening and selection of pupils for the Nurture Group
- To be involved in observations and assessments of the children in the group
- To be involved in planning and discussion about pupil progress

12. Role of the base teacher

The base teacher should ensure that:

- Pupils are greeted warmly and should feel welcome in their base class
- Parents are welcomed and listened to if they have concerns about their child. Nurture Staff are made aware of any parental concerns brought to the base teacher
- There is a good link with Nurture Staff, they share news of certificates, stickers and celebrate achievements.
- Pupils are included in PE lessons, swimming lessons, Assembly, school shows, school masses, outdoor activities and other extra special activities which may occur during the school day
- There is a good sharing of information-Nurture Staff and base teacher share plans, IEPs and assessment data.
- All staff are aware of children's targets and are using strategies and resources recommended by the Nurture Staff
- Children's progress and academic learning is monitored and recorded in their base class
- They are involved in the reintegration process and follow guidance from Nurture Staff

13. Role of the school SENCO

The school SENCO will be kept informed and up to date with all information, issues and informal discussions that arise. The SENCO is a member of the Nurture Group steering committee

Adopted March 2019

Review due 2021