

St James's CE Primary School

Nurture Group Policy



**Our Christian Values are at the heart of all that we do;
nurturing a sense of belonging and shared identity.**

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 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 had 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 begin 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.
2. **Nurture Group offers a safe base** – There is a structure to the session 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. Nurture Group offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of children's relationships 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 Group.

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 a snack 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 non-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.

NURTURE GROUP

Our Nurture room is called ‘The Den’. This name was chosen to reflect our link with Forest School provision. Children attend The Den for a whole afternoon each week. The group has a maximum of 8 children and its composition is carefully structured to create a balanced and functional group.

THE ROLE OF THE NURTURE GROUP LEADER

Nurture Group Leader: Miss H. Scott

Role: To run the Nurture Group with the support and guidance of the SLT 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 the activities and curriculum of the group with Nurture Group staff, bearing in mind the needs of the children.
- 🌱 Keep and maintain Pupil Profiles that record and track individual children's progress and attainment.
- 🌱 Co-ordinate and support the work of the Nurture Group assistants.
- 🌱 Liaise with other professionals when appropriate, including visits.
- 🌱 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.
- 🌱 Report developments to SLT and Governors as appropriate.
- 🌱 Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

THE ROLE OF THE NURTURE GROUP ASSISTANTS

Nurture Group Assistants: Miss E. Brettle and Mrs E. Kay

Role: To run the Nurture Group with the support and guidance of the Nurture Group Leader and 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.
- 🌱 Keep and maintain daily records to track individual children's progress and attainment.
- 🌱 Liaise with other professionals when appropriate, including visits.

- 🌱 Ensure regular communication between nurture group staff, teachers, teaching assistants and parents.
- 🌱 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.

THE NURTURE ENVIRONMENT

Nurture Group has 7 areas which provide a secure, safe base for learning both indoors and outdoors.

These are:-

- 🌱 Kitchen area
- 🌱 Dining area
- 🌱 Play area
- 🌱 Comfy area
- 🌱 Quiet area
- 🌱 Work area
- 🌱 Forest School

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 🌱 Nurture Group children have their own themed curriculum which has a large emphasis on PSHE and social and emotional learning. There are clear links to core and foundation subjects. Activities are planned around a termly theme to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. Planning incorporates developmental and age appropriate skills undertaken by the Nurture Group leader and assistants, with planning then forwarded to the class teachers.
- 🌱 Half termly, the Nurture Group leader and assistant(s) will meet for **Planning, Preparation and Assessment** – Nurture Group staff will meet to review pupil progress, plan and resource activities for the next week.

Each session, on a Wednesday 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. It includes a structured circle time focusing on a key theme.

- 🌿 **Task One** – This session is a curriculum based activity (with clear learning focus and planned activities) where children work on a 1:1 or small group basis.
- 🌿 **Snack time** – This part of the session aims to provide opportunities to socialise with peers in an adult setting. Children take responsibility for tasks relating to serving drinks and snacks.
- 🌿 **Break time** - Children will join their classes for a break. Nurture Group staff will support pupils during this time and encourage participation as necessary.
- 🌿 **Task Two** – This session is about collaboration and successful interaction between the peer group. It gives the child an opportunity to develop social skills and build relationships through play based activities.
- 🌿 **Celebration time** – This is time for reflection, praise and celebration. Children have an opportunity to identify and praise other children in the group. Children will also have an opportunity to review. Throughout the session, children’s achievements are acknowledged and celebrated and, where necessary, adult intervention takes place to develop and support skills, confidence and self-esteem. Children will return to class with a member of staff in preparation for home time.

On the final session of each half term, pupils will take part in:

- 🌿 **Forest School Fun Day** - This session is about collaboration and successful interaction between the peer group. It gives the child an opportunity to develop social skills and build relationships through play based activities in the Forest School environment. The session will be led by Mrs Kay who is a qualified Forest School Leader.

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

The Nurture Group supports a range of children in Key Stage 2. The identification and review process takes place on an ongoing basis.

Screening process – All children are screened using the Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). This is a short tick sheet carried out by the class teacher. This will identify any areas of social or emotional need that a child may have.

The results of the SDQ are discussed by the class teacher and Nurture Group staff. When necessary, the SENCo will participate in this process. Between ten and twelve children are then identified to go forward to the next stage of selection.

Boxall Profiles – The profile 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.

From the Boxall Profiles, a report will be created and 8 children are identified to form the group. 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.

Parents are informed and invited to an informal session with the group leaders.

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 asked to sign the Nurture Group contract to ensure all parties (Nurture staff, class teachers and parents) understand the expectations of support.
- 🌱 Parents are invited to Nurture Group events regularly.
- 🌱 Parents are welcome to meet with Nurture Group staff at any time by arrangement.

INVOLVING STAFF

- 🌱 Teachers are asked to sign the Nurture Group contract to ensure all parties (Nurture staff, class teachers and parents) understand the expectations of support.
- 🌱 Class teachers will be responsible for the registration of pupils in the Nurture Group prior to the afternoon session.
- 🌱 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.
- 🌱 Staff will be invited to attend Nurture sessions/parent workshops as appropriate. Cover for sessions will be planned and delivered by the Nurture Group 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, weekly assessment through the daily record sheets kept up to date by Nurture Group staff. Copies are forwarded to the appropriate class teachers at the end of each week. Pupil's progression over the half term is discussed during the Planning, Preparation and Assessment time to decide upon key focus areas for the next half term.

Children are assessed in line with the school assessment system in order to establish the impact the Nurture Group is having on their academic progress. This is undertaken by the Nurture Group Leader.

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 staff, the pupil, class teacher and parents.

STAFFING

Our Nurture Group has two members of highly skilled staff who have participated in the Nurture Group training. These are Miss Scott and Miss Brettle. Miss Scott oversees the planning and assessment and reports to Mrs Mason (Head teacher). Staff are also supported by an Educational Psychologist to ensure that group sessions are run appropriately.

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 Nurture Group will be supported by a 'Visiting Auntie.' This is Mrs Kay. However, if this is not possible the children whom access this intervention will remain with their mainstream class.

VISITORS TO NURTURE GROUP

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 Nurture Group 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 Nurture Group 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, SEN, Equal Opportunities etc.) This policy is subject to review on a yearly basis.

Signed: Hannah Scott (Nurture Group Leader)

Signed: Emma Brettle (Nurture Group Assistant)

Signed: Lindsay Mason (Head Teacher)

Signed: Alan Millichip (Chair of Governors)

Date: July 2019

19th July 2020