

TOTTENHALL INFANT SCHOOL



NURTURE GROUP POLICY

JANUARY 2018

This policy was co-produced by the School's SENCO/Nurture teacher in liaison with the Senior Leadership Team, Governors, staff, parents and pupils with SEND and it reflects the Local Authority Guidelines for the implementation of Nurture Groups in Schools.

The person responsible for managing the schools provision for pupils in the Nurture group is the schools SENCO, Deniz Oguz, who teaches in the Nurture group every morning.

WHY WE USE 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.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- To provide a secure and reliable setting where children can develop and learn through missed early learning opportunities (nurture) with trained adults who actively work to support children to develop the skills and confidence they need to become good learners and to reintegrate successfully into mainstream.
- To help children to develop the skills to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve self-esteem and develop confidence through close and trusting relationships with adults.
- To provide ongoing assessment (through the Boxall Profiles and Teacher Assessments) and support for children showing signs of emotional stress and behavioural difficulties with the aim of teaching them to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life.
- To work in partnership with class teachers and parent/carers to enable consistency between home and school

THE PRINCIPLES OF NURTURE

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

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally – the foundation of learning begins at birth and develops 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 RAINBOW ROOM

Our nurture group is called 'Rainbow' and is situated within the EYFS corridor. Children attend nurture group for 5 mornings and afternoons per week. The group has a maximum of 10 children both in the mornings and afternoons. The Rainbow children have their own themed curriculum with has a large emphasis on PSHE, 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. Weekly planning incorporates developmental and age appropriate skills undertaken by the Nurture Group Leader and Assistants, as well as some content from the school's curriculum and classroom teachers planning.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULTS IN NURTURE GROUPS

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 Rainbow 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.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRALS

The nurture group currently supports a range of children from Reception to Year 2. The identification and review process takes place on an ongoing basis.

- Raising concerns – staff discuss concerns about individual pupils during Pupil Progress Meetings (Termly) where SLT, the school SENCO and Nurture teachers are present. If a concern arises between these intervals staff will discuss this directly with the SENCO who will decide the next course of action with SLT.
- The SENCO/Nurture teacher will observe pupils where concerns have been raised following pupil progress meetings/staff concerns.
- 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 and nurture group staff discuss the results. When necessary, the SENCO will participate in this process.
- 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.
- Parents are informed and invited to an informal session with the group leaders.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP

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 any time before or after the school day
- Nurture staff attend Parent consultation meetings for children who attend the Nurture group in order to comment on progress made in the Nurture class as well as the child's home class.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF IN SUPPORTING THE NURTURE GROUP ETHOS

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 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. They will also be expected to continue with strategies and use of resources as agreed using the Boxall Profile targets and to support a healthy transition when pupils are ready to reintegrate with their class. At times children will attend 'fun' activities or lessons in which they show great interest with their class. They will also attend assemblies and school outings with their class supported by nurture group staff. On occasion staff will be invited to attend nurture sessions/parent workshops as appropriate.

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 is recorded on Learning Journeys, class books, class folders etc. 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 Target Tracker, in order to establish the impact the Nurture group is having on their academic progress.

REINTEGRATION

The maximum length of time to be a member of a nurture group is 5 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. To support this process the Reintegration Questionnaire will be completed by the Class teacher and Nurture. When a pupil is fully reintegrated in their class Boxall Targets that may still require some additional input will be shared with the class teacher to support the child in class.

VISITORS

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 Rainbow 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 Rainbow throughout the academic year.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Nurture group will be moderated on an annual basis by members of the Local Authority to ensure good practice and progression for pupils. SLT, Class teachers and Nurture Group staff will support and be part of this moderation process. Reports will be distributed to staff so that relevant actions can be implemented and the practice of the Nurture Group can move forward.