

# Nurture Group Policy



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## 1. Rationale

At William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery, we believe that to enable our pupils to learn effectively, they need to feel safe in their environment and be both socially and emotionally ready to learn. We understand the importance of holistic development where possible, offer nurturing and enriching experiences to enable the development of the whole child.

We recognise that some of our pupils are not always emotionally ready to learn when they are in school and may require an increased level of support for them to access the wider curriculum and mainstream classroom. For this reason, we offer a Nurture Group (Sparklers) for key pupils to support their social and emotional development.

## 2. Aims

Sparklers provides a modified curriculum in an environment based on the six principles of nurture, which are as follows:

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 handbook.
2. **The nurture room offers a safe base** - there is a structured format to the day which is predictable, and adults who are reliable and firm and can set boundaries without being punitive. Children see two 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, 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.

At William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery, we aim to:

- Encourage the development of positive social relationships with both peers and adults.
- Provide opportunities to understand emotions and develop pupil's self-worth, confidence, motivation, trust, self-esteem and adaptability.
- Provide a safe, calm and nurturing environment, alongside a programme of activities structured to the emotional, social and intellectual needs of each pupils, while keeping them in close contact with their base class.
- Support pupils to understand their behaviour and that behaviours generally have a consequence and to develop strategies to self-regulate emotions and anxieties.
- Support the development of a whole-school nurturing ethos focused on inclusion to reduce fixed term and permanent exclusion.

### 3. Referral and entry criteria

Initial concerns from a Class Teacher would be discussed informally with the SENDCo. Pupils are then discussed meetings with Senior Leaders. At these meetings, any concerns will be raised and appropriate actions identified and put into place to address these concerns. It would generally be the case that a pupil who is identified for the nurture group would be discussed at this meeting.

The following pupils would be considered for a place in the nurture group:

- Pupils who appear emotionally insecure – this may present as a lack of self-acceptance, low self-worth or a lack of trust.
- Pupils who are withdrawn and unresponsive.
- Pupils with poor social skills, who cannot share, are demanding or uncooperative.
- Pupils with a poor attention span.
- Pupils who demonstrate immature behaviour in comparison to their peers.
- Pupils who behave aggressively, impulsively or inappropriately in other ways.
- Pupils who find change upsetting.
- Pupils who appear unable to integrate into a mainstream classroom.

If Nurture Group is appropriate a Boxall Profile will be completed by Nurture Leaders in conjunction with the class teacher. This will advise whether Nurture Group is an appropriate provision and will give a starting point for assessment. Parents will be notified.

#### 4. Assessment, planning and preparation

Prior to joining the group, all pupils are assessed using the Boxall Profile. From this, targets are developed by the Nurture Leaders, drawing on the information in the Boxall Profile as well as experience of the child's behaviour.

Boxall Profile assessment will be completed prior to joining the provision and termly to monitor progress, identify areas for development and indicate reintegration. For this reason, targets will be reviewed regularly and adapted as required, dependent on the changing needs of the pupil. The Nurture Leaders will plan targets to focus on and evaluate each week with the child. This target will be familiar to the child and progress towards this target will be discussed at the end of each session.

To support assessment, observations will be completed by the Nurture Leaders, and these will be used alongside Boxall profiles to facilitate comparisons.

A range of nurture-based strategies will be used to support the pupils in developing their social and emotional learning.

These may be as follows:

- Through a puppet or soft toy, the pupils will be introduced to the rules to follow to show good listening. They will be encouraged to demonstrate these rules for themselves and look for good listening in others.
- During talking and listening times, particularly during snack, the pupils will be encouraged to speak relevantly and to wait for their turn, replying to and complimenting others.
- Games and role play will be used to demonstrate behaviours such as fidgeting, distracting and being distracted.
- Puppets, masks, posters and other prompts will be used to encourage the pupils to reflect on how they feel, and on how they can affect the feelings of others.
- The pupils will be encouraged to quickly respond to instructions from all adults but also to operate independently when appropriate and to use their own initiative.
- Positive praise will be used constantly and at every opportunity to encourage the pupils and rewards will be awarded to enable them to feel a sense of success.
- Reflection on the week's achievements regarding their targets will enable the pupils to monitor their own progress.

#### Boxall Profile

As part of the Nurture Group Network, the use of Boxall Assessments is essential. On completion, the scores of each individual student are compared to the standardised emotional literacy scores of "competently functioning" children of a similar age group. Individualised, achievable targets for social and emotional aptitudes are then set for the student which are reviewed and re-assessed periodically. Both profiles have two sections, each consisting of a list of 34 descriptive items.

A - E = most basic skills - need to be focused on first

F - J = next area to develop

Q & R = until these improve there will be limited progress

S - U = interfere with how the child learns to socialise appropriately.

V - Z = Child displays negative behaviour towards self.

Section I: Development strands, consists of items which describe different aspects of the development process of the earliest years: satisfactory completion of the first stage of learning is essential if children are to make good use of their educational opportunities.

Section II: The diagnostic profile consists of items describing behaviours that inhibit or interfere with the child's satisfactory involvement in school- self-limiting features, undeveloped behaviour and unsupported development. They are directly or indirectly the outcome of impaired learning in the earliest years.

## **5. The Nurture Environment**

At present the Nurture Provision operates daily, catering for 8 to 12 pupils. Pupils are collected and returned by the Nurture Leaders from their classes. To ensure that social behaviours are effectively modelled, the Nurture Group is staffed by two to three members of staff, who are qualified by the Nurture Group Network in 'The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups.' Sparklers is run from 1.00-3.15pm, 5 afternoons a week. It is also used in the mornings for a few children, with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) who find mainstream classrooms unsuitable.

The Sparklers room has five areas which provide a secure, safe base for learning. These are:

- Kitchen area
- Dining area
- Play area
- Comfy area
- Work area

## **6. The role of the Nurture Group Leaders**

To run the nurture group with the support and guidance of the SENDCo and to:

- Be involved in formal reviews as required; to support curriculum development;
- Be involved with the selection 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 classroom, bearing in mind the needs of the children.
- Keep records of individual children's progress
- Co-ordinate the work of the Nurture Group assistant.
- Liaise with other professionals when appropriate including visits from local Community Support Officers.
- Activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil craft sessions.
- Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities.
- Manage the Nurture Group budget.
- Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

## 7. Teaching and Learning

Activities are planned to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. The afternoon is split into 6 parts:

**Welcome and circle time** - a calming time where children are given the opportunity to share news and develop listening and speaking skills. It includes a structured circle time focusing on key themes. Pupils will also discuss their targets.

**Teacher Led Curriculum Activity** - this session is a curriculum-based activity (with clear learning objectives and planned activities) where children work independently in their curriculum activity books without interruption from peers.

**Child Initiated Time** - 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.

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

**Celebration/ Story/ Relax Kids** - this is time for reflection, praise and celebration. Children have an opportunity to identify and praise other children in the group. Throughout the afternoon children's achievements are acknowledged and celebrated and, where necessary, adult intervention takes place to develop and support skills, confidence and self-esteem. This time is also used for a story or relaxation before the children return to their classes for home time.

An example of the timetable:

| Weekly Timetable for Sparklers Nurture Group. |                       |   |  |                                    |                   |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Day & Time                                    | 1.30-1.45             | 1.45-2.15   | 2.15 - 2.45  | 2.35-3.00                          | 3.00-3.15         |
| Monday  | Welcome & Circle Time | Teacher Led Curriculum Activity<br>PSHE - Year 5 Lesson 1   | Child Initiated<br>Bingo                               | Tidy Up and Snack Time Preparation | Story/ Relax Kids |
| Tuesday                                       | Welcome & Circle Time | Teacher Led Curriculum Activity<br>French - Year 3 Lesson 1 | Child Initiated<br>Colouring/ Drawing                  |                                    |                   |
| Wednesday                                     | Welcome & Circle Time | Teacher Led Curriculum Activity<br>PE - Year 5 (Outside)    | Child Initiated<br>Playmobil/ Small World/ Board Games |                                    |                   |
| Thursday                                      | Welcome & Circle Time | Teacher Led Curriculum Activity<br>PSHE - Nurture-based     | Child Initiated<br>Art & Craft                         |                                    |                   |
| Friday  | Welcome & Circle Time | Teacher Led Curriculum Activity<br>DT - Year 5 Lesson 1     | Child Initiated<br>Golden Time                         |                                    |                   |

## **8. Reintegration**

At William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery, we place an emphasis on ensuring that the pupils within our nurture group are ready to be successfully reintegrated back into their mainstream class. This is usually after 12 weeks or one term. If a pupil is not ready to be reintegrated, their time within the nurture group will not be limited but this reintegration process will be defined by the child's development.

When the Nurture Practitioners feel that a child is ready to reintegrate back into the setting, using evidence from their Boxall Profile and consultation with the SENDCo, the child's teacher and parents will be informed. Nurture staff will closely monitor children when placed back into their classes to ensure the appropriate choices have been made.

## **9. 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 any of our nurture groups - if possible a nurture trained member of staff or the SENDCo may provide short term cover. However, if this is not possible the children who access this intervention will remain with their mainstream class.

## **10. Monitoring and review**

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