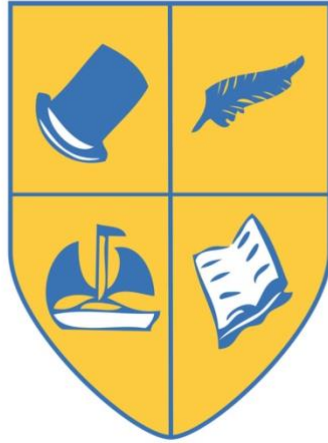


Neyland Community School



Nurture Group Policy

September 2021

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 foundation of learning begins at birth and developed 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 rooms offer 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 Haven at Neyland Community Primary School:

Our nurture group is called The Haven. Children will attend either the Foundation Stage group (Little Haven) or the Junior group (Sandy Haven). Each group will have a maximum of 6 children and its composition is carefully structure to create a balanced and functional group.

The Role of the Nurture Group Strategic Leader:

Our Nurture Group Strategic Leader and Manager: Mr C Griffiths (ALNco)

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 within the Haven.
- 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.
- 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.
- Lead and contribute to regular supervision of staff.
- Co-ordinate and supervise the review and maintenance of Nurture learning environments
- Report developments to SLT and Governors as appropriate.
- Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

The Role of the Nurture Group Assistants:

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.
- Keep and maintain Learning Journey books to track individual children's progress and attainment.
- 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 Trauma Informed practice.
- 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.
- Participate in regular supervision sessions.

The Nurture Environment:

The Haven has several areas which provide a secure, safe base for learning both indoors and outdoors. The environment reflects Nurturing 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
- Sensory Area

Teaching and Learning:

The Nurture children have their own personalised learning pathway which is linked to the whole school thematic curriculum and class based activities, 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 'Balance' planning tool.

Questioning and conversations will link to personal experiences, feelings and reflection.

Identification and Referral:

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

1. Raising concerns – staff complete The Nurture Referral form to raise awareness of current pupils experiencing difficulties.
2. Motional Health and Wellbeing survey.
3. 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. Direct links with their mainstream calss are kept at all times.

Involving Parents/Carers:

Parental/Carer 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 and are welcome to meet with nurture group staff any time after the school day.

Involving Mainstream Class 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.

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 Learning Journey 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. This is undertaken by the Nurture Group Strategic Leader. Attendance is also monitored and informs the Pupil Profile.

Re-Integration:

A placement in Nurture provision is usually on a short-term basis, depending on each child's needs. 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.

Staff Absence:

In order to maintain consistency and security The Haven is never covered by supply teachers. In the event of staff absence, the members of the class will be supported by a familiar and well-known adult. This may include Miss Donna Atkinson or the class teacher/class LSA. However, if this is not possible the children who access this intervention will remain with their mainstream class. Pupil Profiles will be easily accessible to ensure all staff have a full understanding of each child and their identified needs and/or triggers.

Visitors to Nurture:

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 Haven 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 Haven and to carry the principles back to their classroom to provide consistency. Teachers and members of the SLT will be invited into The Haven 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).

This policy will be reviewed annually or before, if required.

Policy by: Mr Chris Griffiths

Date: September 2021

Article 23: Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.

Article 28: All children have a right to an education.

Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full.

Article 36: Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

Article 39: Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self respect.