



"We Care."

Nurture Policy

Persons Responsible: Andrea Esp

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Headteacher: *Lisa Clark*

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Hamstel Infant School and Nursery Nurture Policy

At Hamstel Infant School we believe Nurture is significant in our children's lives, therefore the whole school promotes the Nurture Principles:

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

We are very proud as a school to have achieved the 'National Whole School Nurture Award' and to be the first school in Essex and eighth school nationally to gain this prestigious award.

Understanding the Nurture Principles

- **Children's learning is understood developmentally**

In nurture groups staff respond to children not in terms of arbitrary expectations about 'attainment levels' but in terms of the children's developmental progress assessed through the Boxall Profile Handbook.

The response to the individual child is 'as they are', underpinned by a non-judgmental and accepting attitude.

- **The classroom offers a safe base**

The organisation of the environment and the way the classroom is managed contains anxiety. The nurture group room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of the children's relationship with each other and with the staff. The nurture group is organised around a structured day with predictable routines. Great attention is paid to detail; the adults are reliable and consistent in their approach to the children. Nurture groups are an educational provision making the important link between emotional containment and cognitive learning.

- **The importance of nurture for the development of well-being**

Nurture involves listening and responding. In a nurture group 'everything is verbalised' with an emphasis on the adults engaging with the children in shared activities e.g. play / meals / reading / talking about events and feelings. Children respond to being valued and thought about as individuals, so in practice this involves noticing and praising small achievements; 'nothing is hurried in nurture groups.

- **Language is 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.

- **All behaviour is communication**

This principle underlies 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?' 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 that their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. The adult makes the link between the external / internal worlds of the child using empathy.

- **The importance of transition in children's lives**

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.

There is a designated nurture class based in the Sunshine Room, with the aim being, to allow children an opportunity to rework their early unmet needs, and slowly change children's 'damaged' expectations and capacities. Within the context of resilient, consistent and caring relationships which do not collude with their dysfunctional expectations, and a nurturing, predictable secure base where secure boundaries are set with empathy, children can begin to experience their emotional states being contained and regulated by adults they are beginning to trust. Encouraging improved self-esteem and social skills.

The Nurture Group is part of the continuum of support provided within the school for children with Behaviour, Emotional and/or Social Difficulties.

The children who join the Nurture Group; will have experienced difficulties in accessing learning in a conventional classroom setting and are displaying social, emotional and behavioural issues that are inhibiting their progress.

In setting up this group consideration has been given to the Every Child Matters agenda and Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs. We aim to respond to each child's individual needs, taking into consideration their:

- Cultural background
- Life experiences
- Strengths
- Communication needs
- Emotional and social needs □ Developmental needs
- Physical needs.

The children have been assessed using The Boxall Profile and selected accordingly.

PURPOSE / AIM OF THE NURTURE GROUP

- To provide a flexible, preventative resource and intervention, which is responsive to the particular needs of the children attending the school and links into the school's SEND and Behaviour and Attendance Policies.
- To provide on-going assessment and support for Primary age children showing signs of emotional stress and behavioural difficulties with the aim of enabling the child to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life.
- To provide a secure and reliable small class setting where children can learn by experiencing nurturing care from caring adults who actively work towards enabling their successful reintegration into their mainstream class.
- To help the children learn to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve their self-esteem and develop confidence, through close and trusting relationships with adults.
- To work in partnership with class teachers and parents to enable consistency of approach both at home and at school.
- To prevent possible exclusion.

We have an Accredited Nurture Group Network trainer who provides guidance and training for all school staff and the Local Authority. The Accredited trainer and the school SENCo oversee the Nurture Group and the provision of nurture throughout the school.

DESCRIPTION

Nurture Groups are a unique preventative resource based on well documented psychological theory and research.

The Nurture Group is based in a room within the school with a home- like area and an area set aside for formal learning. The home area is furnished with a sofa, cushions and a carpet.

There is a kitchen facility with access to hot and cold water, a cooker and simple cooking equipment. Play materials at pre-school level as well as educational equipment for more formal work will be available.

There is access to washroom and toilet facilities.

Children will attend for a maximum period of up to four terms, more usually two; planning for reintegration or further assessment is essential. When a child reintegrates back into their mainstream class, a member of the Nurture Group staff will support the transition where possible.

There will usually be 9 -12 children in the Nurture Group at any one time. All year groups, Reception, Years 1 and 2, have access to the Nurture Group.

The children will be on the register of their mainstream class and they will join their class for appropriate activities and learning.

The children will spend lunchtime with other children in the school. Some children may need extra support at these times.

Children attending the Nurture Group will have been identified as having behavioural, social or emotional needs.

CURRICULUM

The Nurture Group will provide a modified curriculum that is suited to the children's needs. Sessions are divided into small chunks of time with each activity serving a clear purpose, offering the security of a consistent and familiar structure.

Activities are weighted towards the children's PSHE development. Aims:

- 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 develop responsibility for self and others
- To help children learn appropriate behaviour
- To help children to learn to make decisions and wise choices through understanding the consequences of certain ways of behaving
- To provide ongoing assessment using the Boxall Profile

Cooking enables instructions to be given to the children in a fun way to follow. They learn to share, they learn to communicate with each other, they learn to wait and be patient.

Relaxation

The children lie down on the carpet and lay still and follow the instructions. The children learn how to calm themselves down and how to breathe. Children develop confidence, imagination, concentration, creativity and self-awareness. Children are more able to cope with the stresses of life.

'Volcano in My Tummy' is an emotions management programme. This is over a period of 6 weeks with two sessions a week. This intervention covers: Dealing with feelings, My anger triggers, A volcano in my tummy, Explosion and consequences, Anger rules, Recognising triggers, All about fuses, Calming down, Relaxation, My shield, Saying 'NO' and Next steps.

Moby is a social use of language programme. These stories were developed to heighten young children's awareness of the use of social communication skills and their concept of self and others.

Activities are designed to offer children criteria for doing well that guarantee success; the aim is to boost a child's self-esteem and sense of identity.

ENTRY/ADMISSION CRITERIA

- Parental agreement is necessary
- Nurture Group placement will be considered for children who are underachieving for social, emotional and behavioural reasons. This will include:

- Children who are very restless, cannot listen, behave impulsively or aggressively
- Children who are withdrawn and unresponsive and who have difficulty relating to others
- Children whose known early or recent history suggests that they may be at risk of developing emotional, social or behavioural needs.
- The balance of the group will need to be considered at all times.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT MONITORING AND REVIEW OF PUPILS

- Each child will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis and consultations with the schools Educational Psychologist and other involved professionals will be arranged as appropriate. The school will use the Boxall Profile, alongside other assessments, to aid target setting and individual pupil monitoring whilst attending the Nurture Group.
- Formal reviews with parents will take place on a termly basis.

REINTEGRATION / EXIT CRITERIA

- Reintegration will be planned in consultation with the Head Teacher, Inclusion Manager and parents, Class teacher, Nurture Group teachers, SENCo.
- Most children will be reintegrated into their mainstream class during their second or third term, although a few may be identified as needing further support.

PARENTAL LINKS

The school will work in partnership with parents of pupils in the Nurture Group.

The Head teacher and Inclusion Manager will be responsible for dealing with any complaints from parents concerning the Nurture Group.

Complaints, which remain unresolved, will be referred through the school's normal complaints procedures as outlined in the schools Complaints Policy.