



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

NURTURE GROUP POLICY

DATE: - 19th September 2017

SIGNED BY CHAIR OF WHOLE GOVERNING BODY: -

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MINUTED: - 26th September 2017 (WGB)

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: - Autumn 2019

REVIEW FREQUENCY:- Bi Annually

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NURTURE GROUP POLICY

Why Nurture Groups?

Most children start school with assumptions based on their early experiences at home and 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 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 to the day which is predictable, 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

The role of the Nurture Group Leaders

The nurture group will be run by EYFS teacher and SENCo. Senior leaders will be involved in formal reviews as required; to support curriculum development.

The leaders will carry out the following;

- Discussions with class teachers to make the selection and re-integration of pupils through Boxall profiles.
- 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.
- Liaise with class teachers fortnightly to share progress of pupils.
- Actively work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent meetings as well as parent/pupil 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.

The Nurture environment

The room consists of 5 areas which provide a secure, safe base for learning.

These are:-

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

- Work area

Teaching and Learning – the children have their own themed curriculum, which will heavily involve the core subjects taught through a very practical approach. The curriculum will also have large emphasis on PSHE, Social and emotional learning. Activities are planned around a half termly theme to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. Weekly planning undertaken by Nurture Group Leaders, with planning then forwarded to the class teachers.

Each morning follows a similar pattern divided into 8 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 a key themes.

First Task- Adult led 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.

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

Sensory time – 15 minutes for children to access this specially equipped area within the school.

Playtime – children will join their classmates on the playground

Second task – Adult led 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.

Third task - Self chosen child activity – this session is about collaboration and successful interaction between the peer groups. 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. Throughout the morning children's achievements are acknowledged and celebrated and, where necessary, adult intervention takes place to develop and support skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Identification and Referral

The nurture group supports a range of children across EYFS and KS1. The identification process is initially starts with the class teacher. All children who are not making sufficient progress or are struggling emotionally/socially are initially discussed at pupil progress meeting with senior leaders. Teachers will then discuss initial nurture group referral with parents. These children will then begin screening process – All children are screened using Simon Bishop admission criteria, British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS), Goodman's strengths and difficulties test (SDQ). This is a straight forward 'yes', 'no' or 'sometimes', tick sheet carried out by the class teacher and parent. This will identify for the 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 leaders. A selection are then identified to go forward to the next stage of selection. Boxall Profiles – 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. From the Boxall profiles, a group of up to 12 children are identified to form the group. 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 invited to nurture group events regularly
- Parents are welcome to meet with nurture group staff any time after the school day.

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 termly 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 assessment through the daily record sheets kept up to date by nurture group staff. These are recorded electronically and copies are forwarded to the appropriate class teachers at the end of each week.

Children are assessed termly in order to establish the impact the Nurture group is having on their academic progress. This is done through the use of Boxall profile and teacher assessments against the national curriculum.

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 group staff, the pupil, class teacher and parents.

Staffing

Our Nurture group has 3 members of highly skilled staff two whom have completed the theory and practice of a nurture group. It is overseen by senior leaders.

Staff Absence

In order to maintain consistency and security the nurture group is never covered by supply teachers. In the event of staff absence other teaching staff may provide short term cover. However, if this is not possible the children whom access this intervention will remain with their mainstream class.

Visitors to the 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 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.

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)