



National
Autistic
Society



Church
Lawton
School

NURTURE POLICY

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What Is Nurture?

The concept of nurture highlights the importance of social environments - who you're with, and not who you're born to - and its significant influence on behaviour and cognitive ability. Children and young people who have a good start in life have a whole host of advantages over those who don't have such positive experiences at home when they are little. They tend to do better at school, attend regularly, enjoy activities with friends and are significantly less likely to offend or experience problems with poor physical or mental health. Nurture groups offer an opportunity to learn the early nurturing experiences some children and young people lack, giving them the skills to do well at school, make friends and deal more confidently and calmly with the trials and tribulations of life, for life.

Nurture groups are founded on evidence-based practices and offer a short-term, inclusive, focused intervention that works in the long term. Nurture groups are classes of between six and 12 children or young people in early years, primary or secondary settings supported by the whole staff group and parents. Each group is run by two members of staff. Children attend nurture groups but remain an active part of their main class group, spend appropriate times within the nurture group according to their need and typically return full time to their own class within two to four terms. Nurture groups assess learning and social and emotional needs and give whatever help is needed to remove the barriers to learning. There is great emphasis on language development and communication. Nothing is taken for granted and everything is explained, supported by role modelling, demonstration and the use of gesture as appropriate. The relationship between the two staff, always nurturing and supportive, provides a role model that children observe and begin to copy. Food is shared at 'breakfast' or 'snack time' with much opportunity for social learning, helping children to attend to the needs of others, with time to listen and be listened to.

As the children learn academically and socially, they develop confidence, become responsive to others, learn self-respect and take pride in behaving well and in achieving. Nurture groups have been working successfully for more than 40 years in the UK and now in other countries including Canada, New Zealand and Romania, and have been praised, supported and recommended by organisations such as Ofsted, Estyn and HMIE.

The Six Principles of Nurture

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

All students in the nurture have a diagnosis of Autism and associated difficulties such as ADHD. It provides a modified curriculum in an environment based on the principles advocated by Marion Bennathan and Marjorie Boxall. We hope to provide support and guidance to enable the child to access the curriculum. Alongside this we use strategies to support the child and to raise their self-esteem and confidence which enables them to have positive experiences throughout their school life.

Our Nurture group consists of pupils from different key stages. The group consists of up to 9 children and is staffed by one teacher and two TAs who work closely with other staff in the school to provide positive outcomes for the students.

Our Aims

- To have a predictable, calm and purposeful environment and timetable.
- 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 learn to make decisions and wise choices through understanding the consequences of certain ways of behaving.
- To work in partnership with parents to achieve consistency of approach at home and school.
- To provide an on-going assessment using the Boxall Profile.

The curriculum

- The nurture group provides a modified curriculum that is suited to the children's needs.
- The group covers Maths, English, Science, ASDAN and Art. Areas such as Cooking, and Adventure Learning are also included.
- The sessions are divided into small chunks of time with each activity serving a clear purpose.
- Activities are designed to offer children criteria for doing well that guarantees success with the aim of boosting a child's self-esteem and sense of identity.

The Boxall Profile.

We use a tool called the Boxall Profile to determine whether the child needs a nurturing approach. We use this assessment as we feel it is a precise way of assessing the children, planning the intervention and measuring the success of each child. We use the Boxall profile as our entry and exit criteria into the Nurture group.

The Boxall profile is an eight page booklet. The profile has 2 sections: Developmental Section and the Diagnostic Section. When assessing the profile, the 2 sections are looked at together very closely. We look at the Boxall profile results and any other contributing factors which inhibit the child's ability to access the curriculum.

Planning.

Our planning is done to take into account the academic needs of the child, but it is also linked directly to the Boxall profile. Each child will have targets set from the Boxall profile. These are used to create a target sheet.

Target.

- Gives purposeful attention.
- Resources, strategies and Activities to be used.
- Staff to use hand gestures and use nonverbal communication.
- Attract child's attention by using their name before giving instruction.
- Use of our visual timetable to ensure the students are aware of the structure of the day.
- To complete short tasks that are achievable for the students.
- Use of rewards to encourage the children.

Outside Agencies

The staff who are responsible for the children in our Nurture group are fully aware of any issues that are relevant to their progress and development.

Referral

The following types of children are considered for inclusion in the group:

Those who appear to be emotionally insecure, which could present itself as lack of self-acceptance, low self-worth or a lack of trust.

- Children who are withdrawn and unresponsive.
- Children with poor social skills, who cannot share or are demanding or uncooperative.
- Those with a poor attention span.
- Children who demonstrate immature behaviour.
- Children who behave aggressively, impulsively or inappropriately in other ways.
- Children who find change upsetting.
- Children who appear unable to integrate into a mainstream classroom setting.

Referral Procedure

Class teachers are invited to put forward children whom they feel will benefit from the group.

All children are assessed using the Boxall Profile to determine their eligibility.

If a decision is made to invite a child to join the group, a letter is sent home to inform their parents/carers of the offer of a place.

A parent's guide is sent home and following receipt of a completed consent form, the child is invited to join the group.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise the importance of involving the parents/carers of a child in their education.

Each parent/carer receives a copy of our Parents Guide giving details of the staff involved and what we do.

We aim to keep parents/carers informed of their child's progress and provide them with support and advice.

Parents/carers are invited to join the group periodically to see what their children are doing and to join in some activities.

Re-integration

A reintegration readiness form is completed for each pupil alongside the Boxall Profiles. This charts their improvements and progression towards reintegration.

Following reintegration, pupils will be further supported by means of drop-in sessions available at lunchtimes by Nurture Group staff

Success Criteria

- We provide affirming, positive and manageable sessions.
- Time-out is seen as an effective sanction.
- The incentives used are seen as desirable by the children.
- What is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is made clear.
- Any inappropriate behaviour is spotted quickly and dealt with.
- A session's routines provide security.

- The activities are tailored to guarantee success.
- The children are given unconditional warmth and acceptance.
- There is a focus on group-building activities.

- The children have greater attention in class.
- The children gain confidence and are more willing to take on new challenges.
- The sense of success enables the children to put more effort into their work.