

# NURTURE ETHOS AND NURTURE GROUPS POLICY

## **POLICY AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES 2020-2021**

**INTRODUCTION**

Nurture groups are a very important part of the school’s support provision for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). Nurture groups in Rainbow Room are key but are also only a part of the school’s wider Nurture ethos and culture which is adopted and maintained throughout the school.

Oaktree Nursery and Primary School carries out termly reviews of the operation of each group to ensure that the needs of the pupils are being met and that resources are being used appropriately.

**NURTURE ETHOS**

Nurture is a whole school approach to effective teaching and the enablement of pupils to reach their full potential. All members of staff understand that some children are not, at particular times, emotionally able to learn to their full potential and that there are emotional barriers to their learning which the school can help to reduce. Through positive relationships, nurturing practices, and good role-modelling, children’s attitudes towards school, learning and their peers can change.

The nurture approach, although used with all of our pupils, specifically targets and supports the school’s most vulnerable children.

All school staff are dedicated to 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 self-esteem

4. Language is a vital means of communication

5. All behaviour is communication

6. The importance of transition in children's lives

Lucas,S., Insley,K. and Buckland,G. (2006) Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve, The Nurture Group Network.

**PURPOSE/AIM OF NURTURE GROUPS IN THE RAINBOW ROOM**

* To provide a flexible and preventative resource which is responsive to the particular needs of the children attending school e.g. children who are involved with Social Care, TAC and those families working with a wide range of school (eg. PSA, SENCo) and external agencies.
* To provide on-going assessment and support for FS, KS1 and KS2 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 calm and relaxing environment where children feel safe and secure and can learn by re-experiencing pre-school nurture from caring adults who actively seek to form secure attachment bonds with individuals, building close and trusting relationships.
* To help the children learn to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve their self-esteem and develop confidence, overcome trauma, and deal with life changes.
* To work in partnership with class teachers, support staff and parents to enable consistency of approach both at home and at school.

**DESCRIPTION OF NURTURE GROUPS**

Rainbow Room is an adaptation of the traditional ‘nurture group’ where children have alternative weekly nurture group sessions that incorporate the nurture group principles, therapeutic play and art approaches, group counselling and talking therapies.

Nurture Groups are a unique early intervention based on well documented psychological theory and research. They are underpinned by attachment theory and neuroscience.

The school invests heavily in this provision from its own budget in recognition of the high level of need and the high value placed upon this work. It is staffed by a trained Nurture Manager and Nurture Leader and Specialist TA with specific skills in Nurture group work. The Nurture Manager has attended the 4 day training course provided by the Nurture Group Network- ‘The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups’. Key staff have Level 3 Child Protection training.

The Nurture Group is based in a unit which includes a classroom, a chill out room, access to hot and cold water, a cooker and simple cooking equipment. Pre-school level toys, games that encourage team participation, a role-play area, play therapy area and creative art supplies are all available to children. There is access to toilet facilities.

Children attend for a time period of two to six terms, however some children benefit from an extended period of time or specialist provision, especially when experiencing on-going trauma or difficult family circumstances.

There are 6-12 children in a Nurture Group at any one time.

The children are on the register of their mainstream class.

The children spend lunchtime and playtimes with other children in the school. Some children may need extra support at these times. Rainbow Room offers a lunch club every day which can be accessed by any child in the school. Places are limited to 3 per class per day- teachers often ask children who would like to go then choose children who have worked hard that day, or may identify children who are presenting with a concern or worry. Teachers may also send children to Lunch Club if they have an issue to talk about. They must notify a nurture staff member of this.

If a child has come into school or become visibly upset in class and has an immediate emotional issue that needs attention, and cannot be dealt with in class, teachers can take the child to Rainbow Room during class time.

**REFERRAL PROCEDURES**

* All referrals are made by Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Parents/Carers or the Headteacher. A Rainbow Room Referral Form should be completed and a discussion between the referrer and a member of Nurture staff must take place.
* The Boxall Profile is a fundamental and essential part of the referral process into any Nurture group. After the initial referral, the Nurture staff will determine whether a child is suitable for group and if so, a Boxall Profile will be completed. These can be completed by the Class Teacher or Teaching Assistant (the person who is closest to that child) or by both together. They can also be completed by a parent/carer in the case of a home referral.
* The Boxall Profile scores are evaluated in conjunction with individual risk and protective factors.
* Some referrals may arise as a result of academic progress meetings where children’s social and emotional needs are identified as a barrier to learning. The Nurture Leader attends an SEMH progress meeting with the Headteacher, SENCo and Class Teachers as appropriate.

**ENTRY/ADMISSION CRITERIA**

1. Parental agreement is necessary (see Parental Links)
2. Nurture Group placements are considered for children who are underachieving for social emotional/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.

The Criteria for Groups include:

* + Red- Anger Management Group
  + Orange- Impulsive behaviours, low level disturbances, emotional and social
  + Blue- Attachment, emotional and social, TLC (boys)
  + Pink- Attachment, emotional and social, TLC (girls)
  + Green- Anti-bullying Group
  + Yellow- Self-esteem and confidence Group
  + Rainbow- Traditional nurture group
  + Turquoise- Self-esteem, confidence and team-work
  + Purple- Young Carers group

In some cases there are the same groups for different key stages and at times two groups may join together e.g. red and orange.

**The balance of the group needs to be considered at all times.**

Please see separate information sheet for more in-depth information regarding the Criteria for Groups (on display in Rainbow Room).

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF PUPILS/ EXIT CRITERIA**

* Each child is monitored and reviewed on an on-going basis and discussions about children’s improvements and wellbeing between the Nurture staff and Class Teachers will be on-going.
* Meetings regarding children’s individual progress take place twice a year.
* The Boxall Profile is used to track children’s progress across all strands. Observational evidence, significant improvements in the Boxall strands, and being ‘on target’ for the majority of strands, indicates that a child may no longer need group sessions.
* Where reintegration is not considered appropriate, the Headteacher will agree an alternative action plan in consultation with parents/carers and other professionals involved. In some cases, Nurture staff may refer a child to TAMHS (Targeted Adolescent Mental Health in Schools), Play Therapy or alternatively, the SENCO may refer for further assessments.

**EXTENDED SESSIONS/ SPECIALIST PROVISION**

* In some cases children may have perfect scores on the Boxall Profile but may benefit immensely from continued group sessions e.g. children who have had attachment issues, children who are in foster care placements.
* In extreme cases a child may need specialist provision e.g. longer periods of their day spent in Rainbow Room. This is decided by the Nurture team, the Class Teacher and Headteacher. In this case, deep consideration must be given to the reintegration processes.
* For a small number of children, Nurture staff are able to offer 15 minutes reward time at the end of morning/afternoon session. This must be agreed between Nurture staff and the Classteacher and a sticker chart (or point system) used to decide whether they have earned their reward.
* Rainbow Room is not to be used as an exclusion area for children who have misbehaved in class unless it is felt that the child is acting out because of underlying emotional issues, trauma or as a result of difficulties at home. School staff must follow procedures outlined in the Behaviour Policy.
* In some cases, the Nurture Leader or Assistant may be able to assist in class in calming a child down. However, Nurture staff should only be sought as additional help after the Teacher and Teaching Assistant have tried to manage the situation themselves.

**BEHAVIOUR MONITORING ACROSS EARLY YEARS AND KEY STAGES 1 & 2**

Nurture staff must be made aware of children showing signs of ongoing behavioural difficulties. Behaviour incidents are recorded on CPOMS which alerts the Nurture Manager, Nurture Leader and Headteacher. This could result in the Classteacher/ Nursery Nurse being asked to complete a behaviour timeline.

For Nursery age children, it is important for all practitioners to continuously monitor behaviour against developmental norms, identifying when a child is showing extreme behavioural difficulties. Note should be given to pre-school age children in their last two terms, to whether the child is displaying school readiness for Reception. If this is not the case, e.g. unable to sit for circle time or is showing aggression, Nursery staff should refer to Nurture staff, the Headteacher or SENCO. This may result in Nursery staff being asked to write a behaviour timeline, Nurture staff completing classroom observations and/or behaviour plans put in place. This will help staff develop early intervention strategies for children prior to starting in Reception.

**PARENTAL LINKS**

The school works in partnership with parents/carers of pupils in the Nurture Group. Class Teachers must seek permission for children to attend group sessions and should obtain verbal consent from a parent after giving them a Rainbow Room Parent Info Leaflet and signposting them to our school website.

The Headteacher of the school is responsible for dealing with any complaints from parents concerning the Nurture Group. Complaints which remain unresolved will be referred through the school’s normal procedures.

The Parent Support Adviser liaises with Nurture staff in order to best support individual children and their families.

The Nurture Manager, Nurture Leader and Parent Support Adviser will run a Parent and Carer Group on a weekly basis. This includes tea and toast, arts and crafts, baking, and weekly guest visitors such as the school’s SENCO, School Nurse, Young Carers support worker, Course Adviser etc.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** **OF** **SCHOOL BASED STAFF**

**Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher supports the nurture ethos of the school and ensures that all members of staff, including the Senior Leadership Team, are all fully on board. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the functioning of the Nurture Group within the school.

She is responsible for:

* The operational management of the Nurture Group including the arrangements in the case of absence of the Nurture Group staff or closure of the Nurture Group
* Management of the Nurture Group Manager as a member of the school staff
* Oversight of the curriculum planning and monitoring of work within the Nurture Group
* Ensuring that Nurture Group staff participate in the school’s agreed Performance Management procedure
* Ensuring that Health and Safety procedures are followed in accordance with the school’s policy
* Ensuring that the Nurture Group operates within the guidelines of the school’s policy statement on equal opportunities and the school’s SEND Policy documents.

**Role of the Nurture Manager**

* Management of the Nurture Leader and Nurture Assistant as members of school staff and to carry out their annual Performance Management
* To inform Nurture staff of relevant information regarding children who attend group sessions.
* To take part in Nurture Team meetings to discuss child cases and improvement strategies
* To carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures including Safeguarding procedures
* Oversight of the day-to-day running of Rainbow Room
* Oversight of the curriculum planning and monitoring of work within the Nurture Groups
* To keep up to date with Local Authority guidelines
* To work in partnership with parents/carers

**Role of the Nurture Leader**

The Nurture Leader is responsible for the day-to-day management of the group sessions. The Leader has the following duties:

* To carry out, and contribute to, school policies and procedures
* To design, plan and deliver a range of evidence-based interventions, using targeted resources and strategies, including play and art therapy, with identified children to meet their individual needs, as appropriate, and to improve their social and emotional development and to have a positive impact on their behaviour.
* To maintain the Nurture Group principles. This is to provide a group where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
* To keep records of the children’s progress and intended programmes of work
* To advise regularly, and report to Class Teachers and other staff
* To co-ordinate the work of the Nurture Assistant/Inclusion Teaching Assistant
* To actively work in partnership with parents in the development of their children
* To liaise with the child’s Class Teacher and SENCo.
* To take part in Nurture Team meetings to discuss child cases and improvement strategies
* To use a range of assessment tools, primarily the Boxall Profile, to identify the specific needs of individual children
* To observe children in the classroom, playground and at lunchtimes in terms of managing less-structured sessions, helping children to manage successfully
* To participate in joint planning with the class teacher and school SENCo re children’s Individual Nurture Plans.
* To provide training opportunities as required for staff from other schools on the development of a nurturing ethos or nurture groups.

Non-contact time should be available (e.g a minimum of half a day per week) for the Nurture Group team to:

• see parents

• keep detailed assessment records

• carry out in-class observations

• meet with other professionals and outside agencies

• liaise with the school’s SENCo and other staff

• have supervision

• activity planning

**Role of the Nurture Group Assistant**

The Nurture Group Assistant works in partnership with the Leader. The post is full-time, working under the direction of the Nurture Group Leader. This role is to assist the Leader in whatever tasks are necessary including planning and the preparation of resources.

* To use a range of assessment tools, primarily the Boxall Profile, to identify the specific needs of individual children
* To take part in Nurture Team meetings to discuss child cases and improvement strategies

**MONITORING AND REVIEW OF PROVISION**

The school monitors and reviews the Nurture Group provision as part of its on-going self-monitoring responsibility. As well as through internal monitoring, Nurture groups are evaluated through OFSTED inspections.

The Nurture Group staff report on progress of each individual child and on the progress of groups as a whole (from entry to exit). This takes the form of an analysis of the percentage improvement in each strand of the Boxall Profile. Further data analysis is carried out by the Headteacher to measure the impact of the Nurture Groups on academic achievement and progress.

Reports are provided for the school Governing Body as appropriate.

**Appendix**

**Nurture Room during Covid-19 Lockdown**

Rainbow Room remains accessible to children through staff/parent referrals.

Group attendance is limited to year group bubbles to avoid unnecessary mixing.

During this time the nurture provision is provided by socially distanced 1:1 interventions, small group (in year-group bubbles) work and phone calls where necessary if the child is not attending school.

Nurture Room staff are available full time during the school day.

Enhanced cleaning of resources and equipment is in place.

**Policy Reviewed March 2021**

**Headteacher signature …………………**

**Adopted by the Governing Body Date: …………………………**

**Chair of Governors signature……………………………...............**

**Date of Next Review: September 2021**