**---------- Nurture Group Policy**

**Behaviour for Learning Policy**

‘Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success’

‘All behaviour is communication’

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 (Nurture Code of Conduct)

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 structure 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 ---------- Group

Our nurture group is called ---------. Our nurture group was first developed in school in 2014. We have two nurture groups, the morning group runs 5 mornings a week from 9.15 until lunchtime and the afternoon group runs 4 afternoons a week (Monday-Thursday) from 1.15-3.00pm. The group has a maximum of 10 children and its composition is carefully structured to create a balanced and functional group.

The role of the Nurture Group Teacher(s)

To run the nurture group with the support and guidance of the Deputy Head and Head Teacher and to

 Be involved in formal reviews as required; to support curriculum development;

 Be involved with the selection and re-integration of pupils

 Maintain the Nurture Group principles- this is to provide a carefully structured session where there 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

 Activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil activity sessions as well as a lunchtime group for ex-nurture group children.

 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 has 5 areas which provide a secure, safe base for learning. These are:-

 Kitchen area

 Dining area

 Play area

 Home area

 Work area

Teaching and Learning

The -------- children have their own themed curriculum with has a large emphasis on PSHE, Social and emotional learning. There are clear links to other core and foundation subjects. Activities are planned around a termly theme to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. Weekly planning which where possible incorporate the progression of key skills is undertaken by both Nurture Group Teachers and the Nurture Group Assistant. Each morning and afternoon sessions follow a similar pattern divided into 6 parts.

Relaxation, 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 to discuss how they are feeling each day.

First Task- Adult led activity – this session is a curriculum/topic based activity (with clear learning objectives and planned activities) where children work independently in their social books without interruption from peers.

Second Task – Self chosen child activity – this session is about collaboration and successful interaction between the peer group. It gives the child an opportunity to develop social skills and build relationships through play based activities.

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

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 afternoon 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 currently supports a range of children across school both in Key Stage 1 and 2. The identification process takes place on a roll-over system throughout the year.

Screening process –

* All children are screened using the Goodman’s strengths and difficulties test (SDQ). This is a straight forward ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘sometimes’ tick sheet carried out by the class teacher. This will identify for the teacher any areas of social or emotional need that a child may have.
* The results of the SDQ are discussed by the class teacher, nurture group staff and the Deputy head.
* Children 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 10 children are identified to form the group. 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.
* 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 before or 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 undertaken by the Deputy Head (using the track system).

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 who have all participated in the Nurture Group training. It is overseen by our Inclusion manager and Deputy Head. She has also completed the appropriate training and used to be one of the Nurture Teachers.

Staff Absence

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

Visitors to --------

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 ------- 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.

Behaviour System

We use a Behaviour Ladder in the Nurture room to manage behaviour on a day-to-day basis and to follow the school’s behaviour policy. Each child has a token with their name on it. They can move their name up the chart when their behaviour is good. They have to move their sticker to the lower part of the chart if they choose to behave in a way that breaks the school or Nurture code of conduct (irrespective of where they previously were on the chart) movements are not necessarily incremental through the lower part of the chart. If a child exhibits a behaviour which is deemed to be dangerous, they may move straight to the lowest rung of the ladder.

In our Nurture room we expect good behaviour, notice good behaviour and praise and reward good behaviour. To do this we utilise a range of rewards such as stickers, certificates, prizes and celebration time. We also work with our Nurture pupils to plan a series of reward events, which take place throughout the year. While we expect pupils to behave well, we recognise that there are times when poor and/or inappropriate behaviour may occur. On these occasions we manage behaviour quickly, consistently and in line with our behaviour policy. The purpose of this policy is to stop the unacceptable behaviour; allow the pupil to recover and learn from mistakes, and to modify their behaviour for the future.

Within the Nurture room, the Nurture Teacher and Nurture Assistant implement this framework with the priority of keeping pupils in the classroom. However, while consistency is the key, it is recognised that a flexible approach will always be required and staff will use their professional judgement to ensure a focus on individual development and inclusion within statutory guidelines.

-------- of the Day and ---------- of the Week

Each day the Nurture Group team will select one child who has demonstrated good manners, a good work ethic, been kind or listened well to instructions to be awarded the ----------- of the day. At the end of the week, one child will be selected for their good behaviour all week to receive a --------- of the week certificate and prize.

Nurture Group Celebration Time

Celebration Time is a key feature of the behaviour management policy at our school, it therefore has high status. Every Monday morning, the nurture group will choose one activity from the list for that Thursday/Friday’s Celebration Time. This activity will be displayed on the Nurture Group’s behaviour board so that all children will know what they are working for and can be reminded of it all week.

Choices and consequences

Negative consequences will always be based on the principles of being appropriate, proportionate and where possible child led. There is a wide range of negative consequences that can be applied for example:

- withdrawal of privileges

- missing break times

- losing minutes of free play and/or Celebration Time

- phone calls home

- oncall to senior management

- chill out time from Nurture room

The Nurture Group Behaviour for Learning is based on the principle of ‘catching children doing it right’ therefore positive consequences are very important. Positive consequences may involve:

- verbal praise

- written praise

- a phone call home

- stickers

- showing work to class teachers, Deputy Head and Head Teacher

- --------- of the day certificate and ---------- of the week award

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This document is a statement of the aims and strategies for ensuring positive behaviour. The Nurture Group team will ensure that all staff take responsibility for implementing this policy and associated guidance. It will be implemented in Summer Term 2017 and reviewed on a Termly basis with the Deputy Head and Head Teacher.