

## Nurture Group Policy



*'I can do all things, through Christ who strengthens me.'* Philippians 4:13



### Introduction

Mrs Tallentire and Mr Dougall (members of staff) raised money during their half term holiday in May 2018 to provide a nurture pod for school, running 5 half marathons in 5 days. Parents, children and staff fully supported the fundraiser in recognition for there to be a priority and space to provide opportunities to support the emotional well-being of our pupils. It is a Boxall Nurture Group and is part of the whole school approach to inclusion to provide support for pupils with Social and Emotional needs and also to enable the mainstream classroom to function and challenge all learners. It is a flexible and preventative intervention which is responsive to the needs of the pupils. Children will be on SEN support plans and some but not all will be linked to outside agencies. Recommendations from outside agencies will be taken into account when planning activities and curriculum focus tasks during Nurture.

### Purpose and Aims of the Nurture Group

- To provide a sense of safety, security and belonging.
- To help children learn to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve self-esteem and develop confidence through close and trusting relationships with adults and their peers.
- To provide on-going assessment and support for children showing signs of emotional stress and behavioural difficulties with the aim of enabling them to access the curriculum and participate happily and fully in school life.
- To work in partnership with class teachers and parents to enable consistency of approach both at home and at school.

The six Nurture Group principles underpin the Nurture Group practice at St Mary's.

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

The following structure and routine will form each session to create a sense of safety that will allow relationships to develop:

- Meet and greet
- PSHE/SEAL activity
- Snack
- Play
- Curriculum Focus
- Back to class

### Staffing

The Nurture Pod is staffed full time by a Nurture Group leader (Mrs Tallentire) and a Nurture Group Partner/teaching assistant (Mrs Lewandowski). Having two members of staff helps facilitate the modelling of positive adult relationships in line with the philosophy of Nurturing.

The Nurture Group staff work closely with Head teacher and SENCO (Mrs Box) in the selection and reintegration processes and in ensuring the children receive the on-going Quality First Teaching and appropriate provision linked to their needs.

### The Nurture Pod

The Nurture Pod is situated on the school field, with access to the playing fields. It has a homely feel, made up of a sofa, beanbags, cushions, rugs, throws, toys and books, as well as space for more formal teaching to take place. There is also a microwave, toaster and other resources to provide home like snack provision that children are encouraged to take ownership of within the group. The majority of play sessions within Nurture will take place outside on the fields and will include den building, obstacle building and construction tasks. Play materials at pre-school level as well as educational equipment for more formal work are available. The aim is for children to attend for between two and four terms and are then reintegrated into their mainstream class although this of course is flexible dependent on the needs of the children. The Nurture Group accommodates six to eight pupils at any time. Children respond to the class register in their mainstream class and most attend Nurture Group for hourly sessions (currently morning sessions) although this is also flexible and dependent upon needs as well as staffing. Children join their class for PE and all other appropriate activities. The children spend lunchtimes with other children in the school and are encouraged to join in the nurturing lunchtime activities planned around their individual needs. Mrs Lewandowski is also employed as an additional member of staff and ‘play leader’ every day during lunch times to provide support and enhanced social opportunities through play. A timetable of activities has been carefully planned to ensure we offer a range of activities to support the individual needs of our children.

We also recognise that for some of our children the pod needs to be available to use as a ‘drop in’ session where the children know that they can speak to a member of our Nurture team at any time they need to.

### Selection Process

Referrals are made by the class teacher to the Head teacher and SENCO (Mrs Box). Children are observed in their mainstream classes and assessments are made using the Boxall Profile.

Nurture Group placements are considered for children who are underachieving for social, emotional or behavioural reasons. This will include:

- Children, who are very restless, cannot listen, behave impulsively or aggressively.
- Children who are withdrawn and unresponsive and who may have difficulty relating to others.
- Children whose early or recent history suggests that they might be at risk.

The balance of the group with respect to gender and social, emotional & behavioural difficulties is considered at all times. All referrals are discussed with the Head Teacher, parents, Class Teacher and the Nurture Group team. The Head Teacher has the final say on all admissions. Parental permission is required for all pupils attending the Nurture Group. Children can be admitted at any point through the year as needs are identified and there is capacity.

### Special Educational Needs

The nurture group is regarded as a Wave 3 intervention. All the children are placed on the school's SEN register. Each child has an Individual Support Plan which is considered when planning provision within Nurture and target setting. Referrals are made to outside agencies as appropriate for each child, through liaison with the Head teacher, Class teacher Nurture Group Leader/Team and parents.

### Monitoring of the Programme

Each child is monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Nurture Group staff. All pupils have targets for learning and behaviour. They are encouraged to work towards these targets and are rewarded for achieving them. Each child has an Individual Support Plan set up by the Nurture Group Team, Class Teacher, parents and child. This is reviewed termly with parents. Parents are encouraged to come and talk about concerns at any time and are also welcome to come and join in with Nurture sessions if this is felt appropriate or beneficial for the pupil. Boxall Profiles for each child are completed on a termly basis and progress is tracked. Children's academic progress is also assessed and tracked, in line with school policy, and the Nurture Group Leader attends termly Pupil Progress meetings with the Class Teacher and Head teacher.

### Reintegration Process

After two to four terms, planning for full re-integration takes place in consultation with the Class Teacher, Head teacher, Nurture team, parents and pupils. As we are a small school some Nurture sessions may take place for just 1 session of the day, but where staffing and needs of the children allow for further sessions then they will also be put in place.

Based on the child's Exit Boxall Profile, class targets are set for the child to work with on return to their mainstream class. A summary of progress in the Nurture Group is provided for the class teacher along with suggestions for supporting the child in class. An individual 'Reintegration Programme' is written for each child ensuring return to mainstream class full-time is gradual and has an element of ongoing nurture support. For some children additional SEN provision is required on return to mainstream class.

### Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is an important aspect both to establish a link between home and school and to improve the continuity when dealing with difficult behaviours. Parents are informed of the

structure and theory behind Nurture when their child first starts and social stories are visual timetables are also sent home to ensure the children are fully prepared for their Nurture the following day and routines become very familiar.

### **Health and Safety**

As with all aspects of school life at St. Mary's, the concept of health and safety is of vital importance and whole school policies and procedures are followed. The Nurture lead working in the Nurture Group has undergone 'Team Teach' training in the use of appropriate touch and restraint techniques. All staff are fully trained in using CPOMS effectively and school policies are adhered to at all times. All staff are fully trained in developing sensory classrooms and specific training around Nurture and children's social and emotional wellbeing. There is always two adults during any session.

### **Role of the Nurture Group Leader**

- To be responsible for the day to day management of the group.
- To carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.
- To plan a Nurture Curriculum addressing children's individual needs as identified through Boxall Profiles and incorporating National Curriculum learning objectives for Literacy and Numeracy.
- To provide a careful routine for the day/session where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- To keep individual records of pupil progress.
- To actively work in partnership with parents.
- To liaise with the class teachers and to attend reviews where possible or necessary.
- To work in partnership with the Nurture Group Assistant for the well-being of the pupils.

### **Role of the Nurture Group Partner/Assistant**

- To work in partnership with the teacher to ensure the well-being and development of the pupils.
- To attend courses and training as required.
- To be involved in the screening and selection of pupils for the Nurture Group.
- To be involved in observations of the children in mainstream and group times.
- To be involved in planning and discussion about pupil progress.

All staff at St Mary's, regardless of whether or not they have children currently receiving Nurture intervention will have read and understood this policy.

**Date: March 2019**

**To be reviewed: March 2020**