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MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



Nurture Group Policy

Policy type	Local Academy
Adopted by the Trust Board	
For review	March 2021
Person responsible	O. Bates

Kensworth CE Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to the school to share this commitment.

POLICY STATEMENT

Nurture Groups were established by Marjorie Boxall, an educational psychologist, in 1969. Across the country Nurture Groups are an integral part of school life, helping children to develop and reach their full potential. At Kensworth CE Academy we support the philosophy behind the nurture principles and want all children regardless, to achieve to the best of their ability and reach their full potential. Giving all our children the very best starts in life.

What is a Nurture Group?

Nurture Groups range in size of between four and six children and always have two members of staff. The group meet in a designated room that should reflect both a classroom and home environment. Each Nurture Group will look a little different depending on the differences in school setting, types of building, amount of space, the particular children in the group and the skills of the adults running the group.

The Principles of Nurture

There are 6 principles that establish the organisation and ethos of a nurture group:

1. **Children's learning is understood developmentally** – children's developmental progress is assessed through the Boxall Profile handbook. Staff in the nurture group respond to each child whatever emotional or social age they appear to be and aim to move them on appropriately.
2. **The nurture room offers a safe base** – the nurture room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of children's relationships with each other and with staff. Children will see two adults working together, communicating effectively and supporting each other. Visual timetables will be used and routine established early on by adults who are reliable, positive and caring yet firm with setting and implementing boundaries.
3. **The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing** – children respond to being valued and thought of as individuals. Children will be called by their name, time will be given to express feelings and every achievement, whatever it may be, will be recognised and praised in a variety of ways. Children will experience nurturing care from adults and in time, as children develop their skills in empathy by other children in the group.
4. **Language is a vital means of communication** – words are used instead of actions to express feelings. Children in nurture may lack the vocabulary and understanding to put into words how they feel. The small group setting and informal nature of experiences provides opportunities for talking and sharing.
5. **All behaviour is communication** – understanding what a child is trying to communicate through behaviour helps staff to respond appropriately. If a child can sense their feelings are understood this can help to control their behaviour and diffuse a difficult situation.
6. **Transitions are significant in the lives of children** – changes in routine are invariably difficult for some children and there needs to be good organisation and support in place. The nurture group helps children make the sometimes difficult transition from home to school; from class to class or from school to school smoother with good management, preparation and care.

Who attends a Nurture Group?

Children are incredibly complex and each one is a unique individual. When a child is noticeably having difficulty reaching their potential academically, socially, emotionally or mentally we have a responsibility to jump in for the

child's best interest. Some of the reasons for joining a nurture group may be:

- Poor social and language communication skills
- Developmental delay
- Language delay
- Poor social skills that could lead to behavioural problems if they are not supported
- Children who for whatever reason have not been able to make a trusted relationship with a caring adult
- Children who have suffered a trauma in their family such as bereavement or marriage breakdown, and who may need extra support to help them cope with the situation
- Children who are lacking in self confidence

How are children selected?

The Head Teacher (SENDCo), Assistant SENDCo and Class Teachers will discuss possible children needing nurture with the Nurture Leaders. The Class Teacher will complete a Boxall Profile, the assessment indicator used, and the Nurture Leaders will evaluate the needs and how they fit with the overall group of children.

Nurture at Kensworth CE Academy

Our Nurture Group is called 'Squirrel Squad'. The name was chosen by the first group of children in Nurture in the Spring Term of 2016. Due to the size of our room our group size will range from four to six children together with two adults. The group meet on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 1.10pm to 3.00pm.

A typical afternoon

Each afternoon follows a similar structure and is divided into six parts:

1. **Welcome and calming activity** – the children are collected from their classrooms and taken to the Nurture room. Soft music is played and a variety of tools are used to become settled into the group. This may be blowing bubbles or feeling stones. During this time each child is given the opportunity to share how they are feeling.
2. **Teaching time** – this will relate to a 'topic' we may be focusing on, to do with a type of behaviour or feeling. Often stories and props are used. Topics will also link with children's class work where appropriate.
3. **Creative time** – relating to the teaching time the children will do a practical activity. It may also include the opportunity to use the outside area or to cook.
4. **Snack time** – before and after this the children wash their hands. They all take turns to set the table, wash and dry up. A variety of snacks are on our menu, ranging from toast, making sandwiches, fruit skewers and also whatever the children may have cooked or baked during creative time. Whenever it is a child's birthday we will celebrate with a cake and sing "Happy birthday".
5. **Free choice** – there are a range of different activities for the children to choose from each afternoon. Examples are colouring, jigsaws, board games, dolls house or car mat.
6. **Calm down** – At the end of our time together the children settle on the carpet again to share how they are feeling. The children are walked back to join their class at 3.00pm.

Staffing

The Nurture Group is led by two Teaching Assistants, experienced in working 1:1 and with groups. If one member of staff is absent then a decision will be made, depending on the nature of the groups needs, whether the group can run with 1 member of staff or that children will remain with their mainstream class.

Parental Links

Parents and carers are a vital part to a child's development. Their consent will be sought before a child enters the Nurture group and an informal, informative meeting will be arranged with Nurture staff and parents to discuss any questions they may have. Towards the end of each academic year parents and carers will be invited to a tea party to share a special snack time hosted by the children. There will be time to discuss how Nurture is working for their child and to join them playing.

Monitoring

The children's progress is discussed with their class teacher and SENDco/ Assistant SENDco on a regular basis. Class teachers complete Boxall Profiles each term. Academic progress is checked through the academy tracking system.

Reintegration

As a general guide children are in Nurture for a minimum of two terms, although of course there may be need for them to stay longer. A process of reintegration back into their normal class will be individualised and may take a few weeks before they are back in full-time. Parents will be consulted that this is to take place and given feedback on how it is going. Class teachers and Nurture staff will communicate effectively to ensure a smooth reintegration. The children will be given clear explanations of the plan using reminders and timetables.

Visitors to Nurture

Visitors can cause disruption to Nurture as it can mean a break in routine. Any change in routine can be difficult for some children so therefore visitors to Nurture should always be pre-arranged in order to prepare the children for what will be happening. There will be times when the children will be involved with invitations and hosting of a session but this will be well planned and organised.