



What is a Nurture Group?

The aim of a Nurture Group is to provide a carefully routines session, where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.

Our Nurture Group uses an approach which offers a range of opportunities for children to engage with early nurturing experiences they may have missed resulting in attachment difficulties and development trauma. This provides pupils with social and emotional skills to be successful in school both academically and socially as well as developing their resilience and strategies for managing their own difficulties in their lives.

“Nurture groups are an in-school, teacher-led psychosocial intervention of groups of less than 12 students that effectively replace missing or distorted early nurturing experiences for both children and young adults; they achieve this by immersing students in an accepting and warm environment which helps develop positive relationships with both teachers and peers.” (NGN;

[https://www.nurturegroups.org/sites/default/files/ngn - nurture groups-2017-05web.pdf](https://www.nurturegroups.org/sites/default/files/ngn_-_nurture_groups-2017-05web.pdf))

Nurture Principles

The Nurture Group Network have 6 Principles that pupils and adults must be fully aware of to ensure that the provision is a Nurture Group in line with The Nurture Group Network.

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

Our Nurture Group is called 'Raising Stars' and our child friendly principles are:

1. Raising stars is a safe place
2. A space where everyone feels welcomed, valued and listened to
3. We always communicate how we are feeling
4. We care and show appreciation of each other
5. Always be honest and move forward from mistakes
6. To believe and love ourselves.

Boxall

As part of the Nurture Group Network, the use of Boxall Assessments is essential. On completion, the scores of each individual student are compared to the standardised emotional literacy scores of "competently functioning" children of a similar age group. Individualised, achievable targets for social and emotional aptitudes are then set for the student which are reviewed and re-assessed periodically. Both profiles have two sections, each consisting of a list of 34 descriptive items.

- A – E = most basic skills – need to be focused on first
- F – J = next area to develop
- Q & R = until these improve there will be limited progress
- S –U = interfere with how the child learns to socialise appropriately.
- V – Z = Child displays negative behaviour towards self.

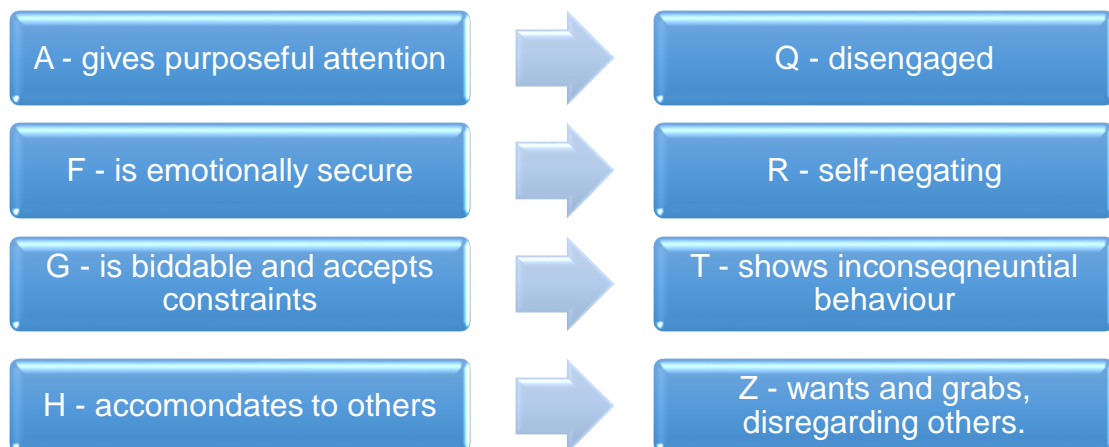
Section I: Developmental strands

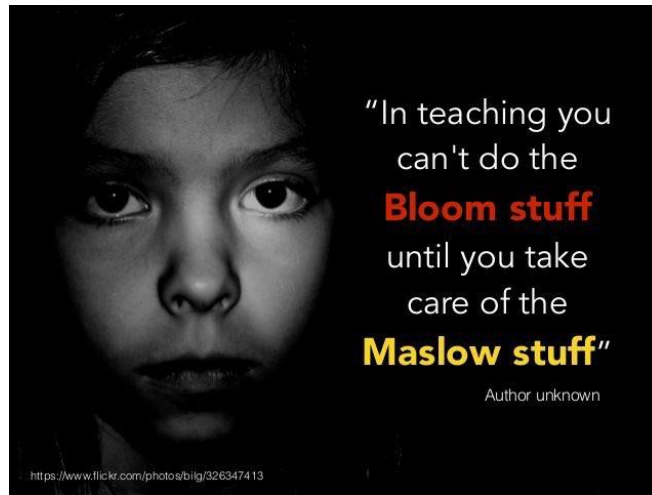
This measures progress through the different aspects of development in the student's early years- the first assessing the child and young person's organisation of their learning experiences, the second, their internalisation of controls.

Section II: The diagnostic profile

This consists of items describing behaviours that inhibit or interfere with the child's satisfactory involvement in school- self-limiting features, undeveloped behaviour and unsupported development. They are directly or indirectly the outcome of impaired learning in the earliest years. The earlier such children are identified the greater the hope of being able to address and remediate their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties by offering patient and supportive teaching.

Pupils are assessed prior to starting the Nurture Group and a mix of pupils is essential, pupils are assessed every half term. Once a child has had a Boxall Assessment, then they have an individualised learning plan created by the SENCo and Nurture Practitioner. Pupils should start by working towards target areas in alphabetical order, starting with A and these must be achieved before moving on to the next target. Best practice ensures that targets from their Boxall Learning Plan are included on One Plans.





Curriculum

The Nurture Curriculum is planned using a rich text, these have been grouped depending on which principle they focus on. A picture book rich text covers between 2 and 3 weeks depending on the content and contains a variety of personalised activities to meet the principles as well as individual Boxall targets.

The importance of a Nurturing Curriculum ensures that we keep pupil trigger points in mind, we need to *know* our pupils and their backgrounds the best we can to ensure we are sensitive to their areas of need. Common topics and themes can raise worries, anxieties, anger and confusion in children such as World War II and evacuation, Great Fire of London for pupils who have experienced or loss through fire, familiar holidays such as Christmas or Mother's Day can cause distress and when planning for these times, especially during more unstructured activities, we need to make adaptations to suit our most vulnerable pupils.

Each pupil works towards their own "helpful behaviours" each day, where staff identify the positive contribution pupils have made and celebrate their achievements, children try to focus on a few and it is important staff work hard to 'catch them being good'. Their helpful behaviours contribute towards time which the whole group work towards for a 'pro-social' experience, such as a trip out or a treat in school.

Children attend Nurture for either an afternoon or a morning session. When a pupil is in the classroom, they are visited by a Nurture Group practitioner to help them remain focused and positive and to 'keep the pupil in mind'.

The Nurture Curriculum is planned to ensure activities are text led by that they focus on the Principles of Nurture as well as meeting individual targets.

Continuous provision

Within the Nurture Curriculum, we focus on building relationships with others and mindfulness as our continuous provision. The children have time to play daily with a range of toys to build social opportunities and to ensure they are learning the skills to work with others.

Each session, pupils have peer massage, these is either through a massage story or using massage tools to music, children can have this done to themselves or do it to others and this teaches them about respecting personal space and safe touch. Children also have mindfulness and mindful minutes to redirect their thinking and using a positive mind-set.

An important feature of Nurture is that the pupils feel 'safe' and at home. There should be lots of photos of the children up and furniture should be 'homely' and familiar, such as sofas and bookcases. Part of this is to have daily snack, to promote communication and healthy eating habits together. Pupils have the responsibility of setting the table, preparing the snack and choosing where their peers sit, there is always a conversation started to help pupils.

The Zones of Regulation is also used in Nurture and within the classroom, this is to help pupils recognise their feelings and early identification of emotions when things are tricky. This is important to encourage pupils to talk about how they are feeling, especially if things are not going well. The children have access to a range of tools to help them remain 'green'.

Learning Journals

It is common for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties to struggle to make academic progress, the Nurturing approach ensures that the children have opportunities to develop skills and strategies for managing these difficulties initially to allow them to access the curriculum alongside their peers.

As a result of this academic progress is often slow, we use the learning journals to record evidence of how pupils are working towards their Boxall targets. Furthermore, the termly Boxall assessments will show an increase in progress which can be recorded in the learning journals.

Teacher accountability

The class teacher holds the sole responsibility for the pupil, even when they're in Nurture. They must be willing to support the pupil transition from the classroom to Nurture and support them using their positive behaviours. The Nurture Principles should be displayed in the classroom for children to see and for teachers to refer to.

Teacher's standards

- *have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these*
- *demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development*
- *Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils*
- *know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively*