

Nurture Policy



Hazel Oak School

September 2025

To be reviewed July 2026

Agreed by Governors on ...

Signed by.....Chair of Governors

1 Introduction

This policy was written in line with recommendations from the Nurture UK. The Nurture Policy has been written to work alongside Hazel Oak's Behaviour Policy and all policies relating to Safeguarding.

Nurture Groups

A Nurture group provides a modified curriculum in an environment based on the principles advocated by Marion Bennathan and Marjorie Boxall. These include a small group of children supported by the whole staff and parents; two specific, trained Nurture group practitioners who support pupils through transition from their class base, throughout the session and to reintegrate afterwards. The rationale behind the approach is to enable those children who may have missed out on early experiences to make trusting relationships with adults or to relate appropriately to other children therefore reinforcing the foundations for positive future development. They may not have learned, resulting in difficulties with settling at school.

The six principles of Nurture Groups

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transition in children's lives

2 Aims and objectives

Provide a carefully structured routine, where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.

- To increase inclusive practice for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties and identify and embed individual approaches which can be used in a wider context to support such children and young people.
- To facilitate a positive whole school ethos in line with the school Behaviour Policy and pastoral approach.
- To develop awareness that behaviour is a form of communication.
- To raise the achievement of children and young people with SEMH by improving attendance and reducing/removing barriers to learning.
- Improve children's mental health through helping them to develop resilience, self-confidence and positive self-esteem.
- To increase joint working practices between school staff and outside agencies.
- To increase insight and understanding therefore enhancing parental involvement in supporting their child and building positive relationships between home and school and between parents and their child.
- To provide a small-scale setting in which children can experience nurturing care from two trained staff, who actively work toward enabling successful reintegration.
- To provide ongoing assessment using the Boxall Profile.
- To prevent possible suspension or exclusion and improve attendance.

3 Staffing

Nurture group staff will have completed the 4 day Nurture UK accredited course.

- Hazel Oak School is committed to a nurturing ethos and has the support of governors, Head teacher and other senior and middle leaders.
- Nurture team staff are supported by each pupil's class teacher, key stage lead, and the wider Pastoral team. The day-to-day running is the responsibility of the two nurture staff.
- Every effort is made to protect dedicated Nurture staff time.
- Training and coaching will be put in place for other staff members to support the running of the Nurture group(s) when needed, for example for pupils who have 1:1 support in place.
- If either of the trained Nurture group staff are absent from school, the Nurture group(s) will not run.
- Visits by other staff and outside agencies are carefully planned.
- Staff regularly liaise with outside agencies such as Educational Psychologist, Social worker where relevant.
- Staff will have regular supervision by the Educational Psychologist at least once per month.

4 Parental contact

Parents and carers are a key element of nurture work.

- Parents and carers across the school will be informed of the school's commitment to Nurture provision through school newsletters and the school website.
- Parents are consulted by telephone and letter prior to children attending the nurture group and will be invited to attend a coffee morning for them to gain understanding of the Nurture group and meet other parents and carers whose children will be attending.
- Regular contact is maintained with parents throughout the intervention period.
- A celebration event will be planned at the end of the intervention.
- Staff support parents during non-contact time in the form of meetings and a parents support group once a half term. This will enable them to provide feedback and give appropriate advice and interaction strategies.

5 Placement criteria

Each child will be selected for intervention in the nurture group for individual reasons. Children from any key stage will be considered. In selecting children, consideration is given to compatibility with other children, their developmental levels, individual needs and personalities. The selection process will include;

- The teacher will complete a Nurture Group Referral Form and an observation schedule by a set date before the start of each Nurture period.
- The Nurture staff, Educational Psychologist and Deputy Headteacher will meet to moderate the referrals and select priority cases to attend the Nurture group(s).
- A Boxall Profile will be completed by the class teacher in collaboration with the class teaching assistant/s.
- Parents are contacted and invited to meet with Nurture staff at a coffee morning and agreement is sought from the parents to begin intervention.

6 Structure of the nurture group

The nurture group is well structured with a strong sense of routine and familiarity.

- 4 morning sessions run from 9.30 to 11.45. It is important that children start the day with their regular class to maintain their feeling of belonging and also that time is allowed for them to transition back into the classroom following the intervention.
- The morning will include time spent on curriculum based skills, outside playtime as a small group, breakfast, shared play, when the opportunity for free developing play occurs together with adult led activities and finally special talk time and circle time, planned in line with targets set from the individual Boxall Profiles.
- Where a Nurture group is planned to run during the afternoon, the afternoon session this will take place for 3 afternoons from 1.40pm to 3pm.
- Arrangements will be made for children to continue to attend swimming lessons, PE and other extra special activities which may coincide with Nurture group sessions, if this is something of high importance to the child.
- There is a good link with the child's class through the sharing of Achievement. Certificates and stickers are awarded in celebration of achievements.
- The rewards in the Nurture group are consistent and structured. Each day children are able to attain stickers and points linked to the school values.
- On returning to their class, children are welcomed by their teacher, support staff or whole class, depending on the needs and wishes of the individual child. Good news from the Nurture session is shared.
- The nurture group make time to celebrate birthdays with cake and candles and a card from their Nurture group friends.

8 Setting

The Nurture groups will have a dedicated space and allocated time in additional spaces, including:

- The Nurture Room will be based in the garden lodge, which will be specifically resourced in collaboration with the Educational Psychologist.
- The morning Nurture group will have access to the cookery room every morning between 9:30-10:00am.
- The Nurture Group will have also access the garden during their allocated playtime.

7 Monitoring

The continuous monitoring of children's progress is of paramount importance in evaluating the effectiveness of the Nurture group provision.

- Monitoring of children's progress includes a daily review of each session and weekly observations of the children in relation to their identified targets.
- Half termly meetings with class staff are arranged to review the impact on class progress. Other feedback and/or requests will be shared by the Nurture group lead via emails or face to face in order to achieve consistency in meeting children's needs.
- Class teams complete Boxall Profiles each term.
- Regular meetings are held with the Deputy Headteacher to review progress and discuss any other relevant issues.
- Nurture staff regularly record evidence of academic progress of children currently attending the Nurture group.

- The Educational Psychologist will review the Nurture provision formally on an annual basis.

8 Reintegration

Careful plans are required to resettle children back into their main school class following the daily intervention and at the end of the intervention period.

- The Boxall profile and the Reintegration Scale (adapted for Hazel Oak) are used as a guide to assess whether children are ready to spend more time in class.
- In discussion with class staff, Nurture staff and the pastoral team, the pace of return, dates and assessment of in class support will be agreed by the moderation panel. The Head teacher or Deputy Head will have the final say on any decisions.
- The Nurture lead and supporting Nurture trained Teaching Assistant are paramount in supporting full reintegration back into the classroom.
- Parents are informed of the plans for reintegration and offered support if required.
- Children are given clear explanations of the plan using visual timetables and verbal reminders, social stories etc.
- The progress of reintegration is closely monitored, and pace of return is arranged to suit the needs of the child.