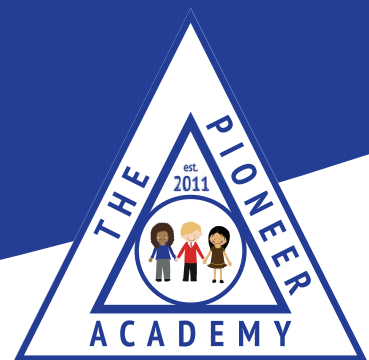# NURTURE

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

Safe - Happy - Learning
www.thepioneeracademy.co.uk

The Pioneer Academy Principle Vision

The Pioneer Academy promotes and achieves excellence by ensuring the very best care and guidance for every child within our family of schools. It recognises the importance of outstanding teaching and learning by actively encouraging creativity and innovation, whilst having consistent standards of behaviour and attendance. Treating everyone as equal, whilst celebrating diversity, is a non-negotiable; protecting all through safeguarding, health and safety and welfare is paramount.

FOREWORD

At The Pioneer Academy (TPA), we are committed to ensuring that our children feel safe and happy in school so that they can build positive relationships and have the ability to approach their learning confidently and successfully.

However, we recognise that, for some of our children, the demands of a busy school environment is difficult for them to manage and leaves them struggling to cope with their emotions and anxieties. These children will often become unhappy, display anger and aggression or become withdrawn: these are behaviours which challenge and concern staff in equal measure. As professionals, we understand that poorly developed self-regulation skills in children are often a symptom of missed early learning experiences and a lack of secure attachment relationships with the adults who care for them. We acknowledge that behaviour is a form of communication, that we have a duty to discover what the behaviour is telling us and to support children to develop the skills to communicate effectively.

For the majority of children, good, inclusive classroom practice and positive behaviour management strategies will provide the support needed but, for others, a more tailored approach is needed. Through well structured Nurture groups, we aim to provide our most vulnerable children with unconditional warmth and acceptance. A stable and predictable daily routine, which focuses on developmentally appropriate activities, will help them to recognise, communicate and regulate their emotions. Moreover, through this carefully targeted and sensitive support, we enable children to build trusting and secure relationships with adults and a sense of self-worth which will allow them to experience success in the mainstream classroom and beyond, avoiding the potential long-term consequences of educational disengagement.

This handbook is designed to help all staff to understand the theory behind Nurture groups and how Nurture principles can be embedded as a whole school ethos. It will also support those involved in the strategic development and day to day operation of Nurture groups in our schools.

Lee Mason-Ellis
Education Trust Leader

Carole Hitchens
Head of Nurture

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

If we can better understand WHY and HOW some children behave the way they do, we can then find ways to help them enjoy and succeed in school. Being aware of, and making positive changes to, practice in response to this knowledge has major implications on how we support all of our children.

Nurture practice is based on two major areas which impact on childhood development: Attachment Theory and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Attachment Theory

British psychologist John Bowlby is most often quoted when discussing attachment theory. He began formulating ideas about how early and prolonged separation from parents and carers, as a result of World War II, resulted in significant social and emotional problems in children and young adults.

Bowlby believed that attachment is part of the evolutionary development of the human brain which is manifested by children seeking physical closeness to a trusted adult when they perceive a threat or physical discomfort such as hunger or cold. It is, therefore, unsurprising, when we think about how dependent babies are on adults, that the creation of a *'deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another'* is key to a child's survival.

Over the first year of life, every child begins to develop attachments to parents or carers. As attachments form, some common and expected behaviour patterns develop:

• Stranger anxiety – the child responds with fear or distress to arrival of a stranger.
• Separation anxiety – when separated from parent or carer the child shows distress and, when that attachment figure returns, the child seeks closeness for comfort.
• Social referencing – the child looks at the parent or carer to see how they respond to something new or different in the environment. The child looks at the facial expressions of the parent or carer (e.g. smiling or fearful), which influence how they behave in an uncertain situation.

Attachment figures do not need to be parents, regular carers or even the person who feeds them; they are typically the people who respond most sensitively to their needs. For most children, the principal attachment figure will be the mother but other family members may also develop this role. By about 18 months, most children will have formed several attachments which will have varying levels of importance - a primary attachment figure being most significant. Behaviour relating to attachment develops even further over early childhood e.g. babies tend to cry because they are hungry or in pain but, by about two years of age, they usually cry to gain the attention of their carer who they believe will help them to solve the issue of hunger or pain.

Bowlby believed these early experiences formed an 'internal working model' or template which the child uses to form relationships as they progress through life. If a secure attachment bond is not formed during these early years, an internal model which disrupts the development of positive relationships with adults or peers can develop and have a life long impact.

Types of Attachment

John Bowlby's colleague, Mary Ainsworth further identified a range of attachment types:

- **Secure attachment:** The majority of young children tend to have an attachment style typified by strong stranger and separation anxiety and will seek to be close to their parent or carer whenever they are around.
- **Insecure-avoidant:** Typically, with this attachment type the child avoids or ignores their carer, showing little emotion (whilst experiencing inward anxiety) when their carer leaves them and displays little enthusiasm when the carer returns.
- **Insecure-resistant:** An insecure-resistant (sometimes also called insecure-ambivalent) attachment tends to be characterised by a child showing intense distress during separation, and being difficult to comfort when their carer returns. Children with this attachment type may also show some rejection or resentment towards the carer after a separation.
- **Disorganised attachment:** This type was added quite recently. Children with a disorganised attachment tend to show no consistent pattern in behaviour towards their carer. For example, they may wish to be close to them in one moment, then totally avoid or ignore them the next.

Many children who display behaviour which suggests an insecure attachment type, find it harder to form trusting relationships with adults or peers. However, it's not certain that differences in attachment types are solely the cause of behaviour problems as family background can also account for notable differences in childhood behaviour. It is important to consider all factors when deciding on how best to support children and their families.

Attachment Disorder

A misunderstanding about children who show insecure attachment behaviour is that they have an 'attachment disorder' and Coram, a leading children's charity, urges caution. Having a specific attachment type should not be confused with a clinical diagnosis of a disorder and school staff need to be wary of giving such labels to children. While insecure attachment traits may result in disruption to a child's development, they do not by themselves identify disorders. The term 'attachment disorder' refers to a very rare set of behaviour responses in children who experience extreme difficulty in forming close attachments and the incidence of such disorders is low. However, we need to be aware there are substantially higher rates amongst Looked After Children or those who have been exposed to abuse or neglect.

There are two main classifications:

- *Inhibited attachment disorders:* Significant difficulties with social interaction such as extreme detachment or withdrawal – usually attributed to early and severe abuse from parents or carers.

- *Disinhibited attachment disorders:* Indiscriminate familiarity and affection towards adults – often as a result of frequent changes of primary carer in the early years.

A diagnosis of an attachment disorder can only be undertaken by mental health professionals and school staff must be wary of making assumptions or trying to diagnose a disorder.

References:
Bretherton, I. (1992) The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth
Rose, N: Research Ed (2019) Attachment Theory: What do Teachers need to Know?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

It is normal for everyone to have experienced some level of adversity in their life. However, there are large differences in the type, severity and frequency of adversity faced. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) were first identified in research conducted in the USA by CDC-Kaiser Permanente between 1995 and 1997 and are defined as stressful or traumatic events that children experience before age 18. The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely they are to suffer from chronic health problems, poor academic achievement, and substance abuse later in life.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include:

- domestic violence
- parental abandonment through separation or divorce
- a parent with a mental health condition
- being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional)
- being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional)
- a member of the household being in prison
- growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems

When the exposure to adverse experiences is severe or prolonged, and without the loving support of a caring adult, normal survival responses become dysregulated and the child goes into a state of "toxic stress". This type of stress alters the development and functioning of the brain and has a long-lasting, destructive impact on the developing mind, which we call "trauma". This trauma affects the way children think and act and has a permanent effect on how they cope with life.

Understanding such mental and emotional trauma is key to understanding the behaviour of many of our children. The body and mind have primitive physical and mental responses to threat and trauma. At different stages of a child's development, and in the face of stress, responses will vary however, the two major response patterns are hyper arousal and dissociation.

Hyper arousal: "Fight or Flight" Responses

In the initial stages of threat, an alarm reaction is triggered in the brain. This is characterised by an increased heart rate, raised blood pressure, shallow breathing, a sense of hypervigilance and a tuning out of non- essential information. All of these actions prepare the body for defence—to fight with or run away from the perceived threat.

A traumatised child will face this reaction on a regular basis and, over time, the brain may react in this way to any perceived threat. In other words, although distanced from real threat and trauma, the stress-response system of the child's brain is activated regularly. A traumatised child may also show hyperactivity, anxiety, impulsivity, sleep problems, hypertension and unregulated behaviours. Everyday stress, which normally should not produce any response, now results in an exaggerated reaction. These children are hyper-reactive and overly sensitive due to the fact that they are in a persistent state of fear. Furthermore, these children will very easily be moved from being slightly anxious to feeling threatened to being terrorised. In the longer term, these children face a set of deep rooted emotional, behavioural and cognitive problems as a result of the original traumatic events faced.

Dissociation: The Freeze or Surrender/Submit Responses

In early stages of distress, a young child will cry or call out to let their carer know that they are under threat. However, for many neglected or abused children, the cry for help is regularly unsuccessful as it is often the parent or carer who causes the trauma. In the absence of a trusted adult the child, after many emotionally painful events, will abandon this approach and a common reaction in the face of new perceived threat may be to freeze. Freezing allows better awareness of sound, sharper observation and a better ability to scan the environment for potential threat. In addition, lack of movement is a form of camouflage. In the face of escalating threat, increasing anxiety and decreasing cognitive processing, the freeze response can provide an advantage by allowing the child to figure out how to respond.

Children who have been traumatised will often use this freezing mechanism when they feel anxious, particularly if they have suffered pain or have had their movement restricted in some way. At this point, they tend to feel out of control and will cognitively (and often, physically) freeze. When adults ask them to do something, they may act as if they haven't heard or they refuse. This causes the adult to ask the child to comply again often involving more threats or sanctions. This situation will make the child feel even more anxious, threatened and out of control and the more anxious the child feels, the quicker they will move from anxious to threatened, and then to terrorised. If sufficiently terrorised, the freezing may escalate into complete dissociation when the child disengages from the external world and creates their own internal world. Children can go to a "different place" or assume the persona of heroes or animals and you might see them as numb, robotic, non-reactive, day dreaming, acting like they are not there or staring off into space.

Because a child's brain changes during its development in response to personal experiences, how the brain responds to their specific trauma is likely to be internalised and permanent.
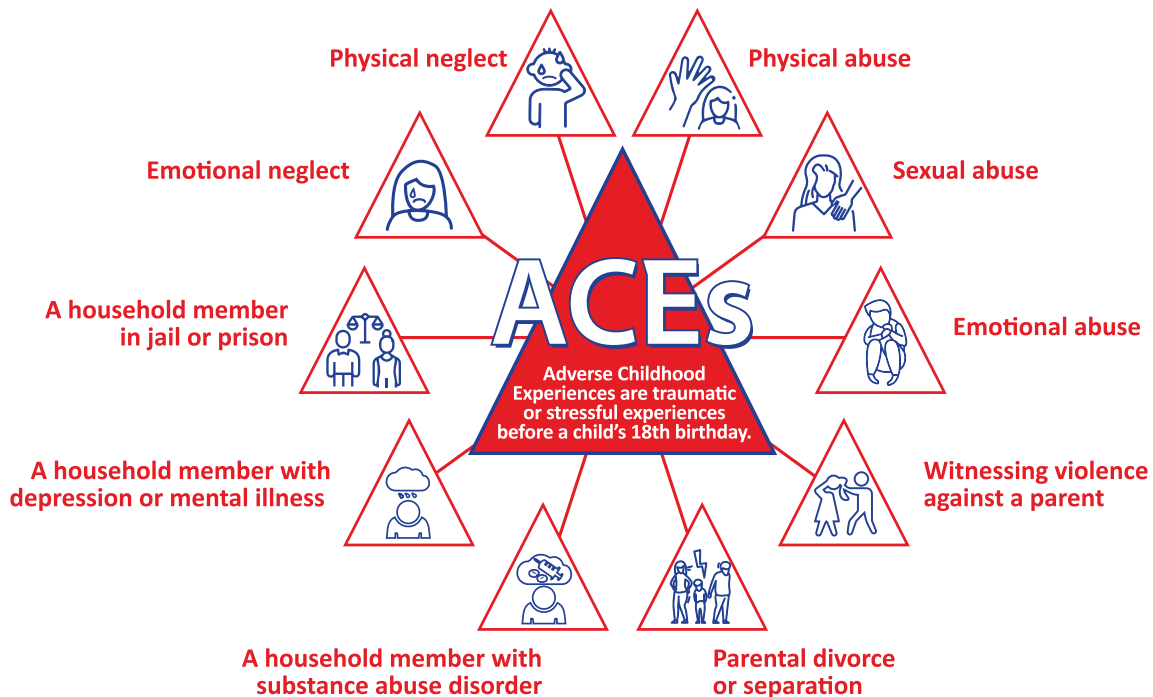
References:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)
The CDC-Kaiser Permanente adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study
Attachment Aware Schools (2017)

Implications for schools and staff – Safeguarding, Behaviour Support and creating a Trauma Informed Culture

It is important to recognise that, whilst some children have suffered ACEs, it doesn't mean that all behaviour is as a result of these. If any child is behaving in a way which is concerning, regardless of identified external factors, then that concern needs to be reported to the designated safeguarding leader (DSL) like any other safeguarding concern, and follow school policy.

Good, positive behaviour management and learning support strategies, which benefit all children as part of quality first teaching, are the best way to support children who face challenges related to trauma or attachment. Details of suggested strategies to support children with specific behaviour concerns and, often associated, barriers to learning can also be found in the TPA SEND Toolkit and it is important to follow the usual SEND assess, plan, do, review procedures outlined in the toolkit to monitor progress and to identify if further, more specific, support such as Nurture or additional professional advice is needed.

Strategically, it is essential that senior leaders expect, support and embed a trauma informed, positive relationship culture across the whole school so that all children, including those who attend Nurture groups, can be successful in the longer term and can thrive in the mainstream school.

Key Expectations for All Staff
- Maintain an awareness of the impact of insecure attachment, ACEs, toxic stress and trauma and strive to ensure that all pupils feel safe and happy in order for them to engage in learning.
- Maintain an organised, predictable and calm environment based on positive relationships.
- Ensure that simple behaviour expectations are in place and that they are communicated and understood by children and adults.
- Show unconditional positive regard to all pupils, other staff and parents at all times.
- Remember that behaviour is a symptom of the problem, not the problem itself. Be curious about the causes of behaviour and aim to support and remove them.
- Work to identify and eliminate stress triggers from the learning environment.
- Keep calm and avoid raised voices; communicate directly and positively, being careful not to overwhelm children with too many instructions.
- Take an interest in the children, their lives and interests – they need to know staff care.
- Explicitly teach and support pupils to use self-regulation strategies. Use a whole school approach if possible.
- Listen to children using active listening strategies.
- Focus on the positive – communicate children's successes to them and their families regularly.
- Aim to support the child's parents/carers and connect with the whole family as this improves the child's outcomes.
- Always welcome children back to the school or classroom after time away, however short and for whatever reason.
- Be consistent and specific when giving praise or supporting children to make better choices.
- Provide children with appropriate choices which are fair but practical. This will allow them to feel a needed sense of control.
- When discussing the consequences of poor behaviour choices, remain unemotional and assume a tone that says, 'That's just the way we do things – nothing personal.'
- Do not take a child's actions personally.
- Ask for support when needed and use coaching and other opportunities offered to support your own wellbeing.

WHAT SURVIVAL LOOKS LIKE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL - A CHILD'S VOICE

Freeze	Flight	Fight	Submit
I show little interest or appear bored I am easily confused I forget instructions or routines I find it difficult to stay on topic during a discussion I find it difficult to progress through a task I struggle to listen I stare into space and daydream I am always getting bumps and knocks I am easily distracted	I run away I keep myself SUPER busy I find it hard to cope in unstructured time I need to be first or at the front I bump into other children I avoid doing my learning I talk with a baby like or strange voice I am hyperactive I can be giddy or silly I hide under tables or in other small spaces	I become hot and bothered I show anger or aggression I need to be in control I tell lies or blame others I shout and argue back I push friends away or avoid making friends I am often found alone I make demands on friends and adults I am inflexible and stubborn I am unable or unwilling to follow rules and instructions I show disrespect	I am socially withdrawn I am compliant I am introverted and quiet I am passive I am resigned to any consequences I have an expressionless face I often play alone I have a low mood I often put my head on the table

If I show these things, please spend some time to help me regulate my emotions, activate the calm part of my brain and help me feel safe. The things below might help me ...

Do my learning with me Do some deep breathing or sensory activities together Tell me that I am safe and secure Gently ask where my mind is and invite me back Make the task smaller and give me a set of steps Explain kindly who and where I am and what I am supposed to be doing Gently explain the task and what you want me to do	Keep close by me Allow me to spend time in a calm down zone Give me an easy and familiar task Use a visual timetable and NOW/NEXT to keep my day predictable Tell me I am safe and allow me to go to a safe space or my trusted person if I need to Gently talk me through the things I find tricky Remind the whole group, not just me, what we should be doing	Give me a responsibility in the class Support my social skills Play and have fun with me Use a visual timetable and NOW/NEXT to keep my day predictable Allow me to spend time in a calm down zone/sensory space Show empathy before talking to me about the consequences of my behaviour Accept that I might not remember what I did and why I did it	Give me repetitive and simple tasks Let me have a sensory break Tell me I'm safe Let me spend regular time with a trusted adult Do my learning with me Be patient and calm with me if I find things hard Let me blend in as I can't cope with special attention

Reference: Inner World Work

The Origin of Nurture Groups in the UK

Nurture groups were originally the idea of educational psychologist Marjorie Boxall in the 1970's. She saw large numbers of young children entering primary school in Inner London with severe emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Boxall recognised that the difficulties presented by most of these children were a result of poor nurturing experiences in their early childhood development, meaning they were not able to build trusting relationships with adults or to respond appropriately to other children. They were clearly not yet ready to meet the demands of normal school life and this further damaged their, already low, confidence and self-esteem.

Boxall's idea was to place these children in 'Nurture Groups': small groups of children with a leader and an assistant, whose aim was to engage with the children at the developmental stage they had reached and to support them in meeting learning goals step by step. As the children started to feel more accepted and valued, their confidence grew and they began to learn, with 80% returning to their class full-time by the end of the programme.

The children always remained very much part of their class, registering and going home with them at the end of each day. The whole school was trained to understand the culture of Nurture and were expected to support the ethos and use successful strategies for the children back in the classroom, providing consistency and predictability.

In developing Nurture groups to address children's needs Boxall noted that:

"The emphasis within a Nurture group is on emotional growth, focusing on offering broad-based experiences in an environment that promotes security, routines, clear boundaries and carefully planned, repetitive learning opportunities."

"The aim of the Nurture group is to create the world of earliest childhood, build in the basic and essential learning experiences normally gained in the first three years of life and enable the children to fully meet their potential in mainstream schools."

Effective Intervention in Primary Schools: Nurture Groups by Marion Bennathan and Marjorie Boxall

Evidence of Success

Several national research projects show that Nurture groups are successful in significantly improving long-term outcomes for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The Nurture Group Network has compiled several pieces of evidence from academic studies over the last 20 years and found that children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties made significantly more progress in social and emotional functioning, academic attainment and attendance by participating in Nurture groups rather than keeping them in their mainstream classroom.

Key research findings:

- In less than one academic year, 87% of Nurture group pupils were able to successfully return to their mainstream classroom. A matched group who didn't receive Nurture group provision were three times more likely to require statutory assessment and seven times more likely to be placed in specialist provision **(Iszatt & Wasilewska, 1997)**.
- Significant improvements in Boxall Profile scores for children following a Nurture group intervention **(O'Connor and Colwell, 2002)**.
- A large study by **Cooper et al in 2001** identified that pupils in Nurture groups make significant progress in social and emotional development and academic progress. He also found that Nurture groups had a positive impact on the parents of pupils attending the Nurture group and the wider school.
- In **2007 Sanders** found positive outcomes for pupils in Nurture groups compared with similar children who were not in a Nurture group. These improvements included motivation to complete work, greater social engagement and greater independence. Other findings included more effective inclusion in mainstream lessons, less staff absence and increased parental engagement in school life.
- **Cooper and Whitebread's study in 2007** compared 359 children in Nurture groups with 184 control children and found improvements in social, emotional and behavioural functions. They also found there were better outcomes for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in schools with Nurture groups, even if the children were not in the Nurture group.
- **Reynolds (2009)** conducted a wide study in Glasgow with 221 children using control groups. The findings showed significant gains in self esteem and academic attainment. The research also suggested a strong link between attachment and academic success.

TPA CASE STUDIES
CHILD A

Background

CHILD A was 5 years of age when they were brought to the attention of the Nurture team by the school Family Support Worker during a weekly inclusion meeting, as the local authority had initiated a child protection plan. Prior to this, social care involvement had been intermittent. This child had not been highlighted prior to this change in circumstance since there were no urgent signs in class to suggest that home life was causing a barrier to their learning and the child was receiving a nurturing environment in EYFS.

However, significant events, below, had since occurred leading to an escalation in social care:

Bereavement: Father took his own life
Mental health decline of mother
Care for child visibly deteriorated
Home environment became unfit
An older sibling involved in drug misuse

Action

Nurture staff conducted a class observation and found the following:

CHILD A appeared dazed and distant while class teacher addressed the class
At times, they were unresponsive to adult's instructions despite being addressed directly
They were always unresponsive to questioning or instruction directed at the whole class
During free play and playtime they engaged in solitary play
There was little engagement with peers on same table

CHILD A attended Nurture for 5 hours a week. During that time, the Boxall Profile was used to pinpoint developmental targets and strategies that would work towards building new neurological pathways and to provide them with the tools and confidence to relate to themselves and others positively.

Two targets were set as identified by the Boxall Profile:

Engagement with peers
Insightful involvement

Strategies

CHILD A was given a high level of specific praise for positive interactions within and outside of the Nurture setting. Opportunities for paired or small group work were provided and CHILD A was encouraged to communicate by adults modelling the desired interaction and providing support during the process by staying physically close.

Social interaction during Circle Time was practiced, often using a ball to roll to one another to aid reciprocal conversation. Speak & Listen sessions provided a space for CHILD A to reflect upon proud moments in school or home and to recall delicate memories or thoughts regarding the passing of Dad. These sessions were 1:1 and took place in a quiet, separate space for privacy.

CHILD A learned through structured and free play that other children can be trusted too. They were shown that their contributions were of value and their presence meaningful to those around them.

Outcomes

Slowly, small steps were observed as CHILD A began to engage with peers independently during Snack and Chat and Lunchtime.

With consistency in routine and by building trusting relationships, improvements were seen in the targeted areas and others. Through simple, consistent use of strategies an environment for purposeful and positive change was provided. All these factors together created a space for CHILD A to feel safe and secure; to learn that adults can be trusted, and to build trusting relationships.

CHILD A attended Nurture for 7 weeks, at which point visible signs that progress had been made were clear both in the classroom setting and in the Nurture setting.

Not only was there significant and promising progress made with the child, social care noticed improvements with Mum as she acted upon their requirements and communicated openly with them. Mum began asking for help and, as a result, the social care plan was de-escalated.

In a 7 week period, 5 hours a week and evidenced by the Boxall Profile, Nurture contributed to a steady and consistent progression that resulted in an improvement in child's overall wellbeing, self-esteem and relationships proving that early intervention and a cross agency approach is key.

Ongoing work with the child continues to sustain the progress made and to build on areas that require further growth. Although CHILD A no longer attends Nurture, the relationships built with the child and the Mother will continue throughout the child's school life.

The class teacher continues to use strategies implemented in the Nurture room to ensure that, although CHILD A has completed their transition out of the 'Nest', their Nurturing journey continues in the classroom.

CHILD B

Background

CHILD B was 4 years 8 months when they joined Nurture. At the time of referral, CHILD B was struggling to access learning even in the nurturing environment of EYFS. The family were also fairly new to the UK and had travelled from Portugal so language, along with poor attendance, was an issue. Distressed behaviour was raised as a major concern during inclusion discussions and class based interventions were having little or no impact. The family were initially reluctant to accept that there was a cause for concern. Significant barriers identified were:

Physical aggression towards peers
Speech and Language concerns
Unable to follow instructions
Lack of focus and concentration
No secure peer relationships and social skills lacking
Poor self-care skills
Emotional outbursts
Poor attendance
Sensory impaired
Poor diet (packed lunch was inadequate and lacking in nutrition)

Action

Class observations by the Nurture Team also noted the following:

    CHILD B was unable to access learning tasks set
    Inconsistent expectations from key adults
    Little to no engagement with peers – often out of seat without direction from adults
    Physical aggression towards peers and adults
    Emotional outbursts

A Boxall Profile was completed and further discussions were held with the class teacher and Inclusion Team. Targets identified from Boxall Profile were discussed and agreed with class teacher. The SENDCo and Nurture Lead met with parents to discuss CHILD B attending the Nest and concerns from home. Parents were invited to visit Nurture and all consent forms were completed.

Boxall Targets identified:

    Gives purposeful attention
    Participates constructively

Strategies

CHILD B attended the Nest for 4 sessions per week over a 12 week period.

Lots of verbal praise was used initially for accomplishing small tasks like 'good sitting'. The Time to Talk book was used and Ginger Puppet introduced to support good listening expectations. This was accompanied by supporting visuals both in Nurture and in the classroom.

Social interactions during Snack and Chat, Circle Time and lunchtimes were used to model desired behaviours and sometimes the Ginger Puppet was used to re-enforce the expectations in a non-threatening manner. These positive social interactions helped to improve CHILD B's speaking and listening skills.

CHILD B had a designated seat close to a keyworker in order for adults to model expectations.

Simple, key language was used, both in Nurture and in classroom, e.g. good listening, good sitting along with positive hand gestures and visuals.

Personalised incentives, linked to Boxall targets, were used (Listening Lion, Kindness Tree) and these were also used in the classroom and shared with parents to use in the home for consistency.

Visits to Nurture from class teacher improved relationships within the classroom.

Regular contact with Dad improved the Home-School relationship as there were more positives to share and the family then became willing to engage further with the school.

Visual supporting resources were made for home use.

The inclusion team worked with the family to improve attendance.

Free Play activities, supported by key workers, encouraged positive interactions with peers using Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words focus.

Outcomes
There was improved attendance and a steady reduction of physical aggression towards peers.

With consistent expectations and clear boundaries, CHILD B's concentration and focus improved immensely.
This was supported by the consistent use of visual aids in the home, Nurture and classroom.

The positive relationships built with staff and children in Nurture were carried forward into the classroom setting.
CHILD B was able to form new and secure relationships with both peers and adults.

There were major improvements in Speaking and Listening skills enabling CHILD B to complete independent learning tasks.

CHILD B demonstrated improved social skills and use of English Language.

Improved Boxall Profile.

CHILD B still likes to regularly share achievements with the Nurture Team and has continued to make steady progress.

Impact
CHILD B is now in class unsupported, no longer needing to access Nurture. Working together with staff in the classroom we have managed to not only sustain progress made, but to continue to build on all areas of growth.

CHILD B is now a confident happy learner, whose self-esteem and resilience have improved immensely. This has been evidenced by the Boxall Profile.

The Nurture team continue to informally monitor from a distance, but maintain a healthy positive relationship with CHILD B. All staff continue to use shared language and strategies. These are also passed on to each receiving class teacher to ensure continuity each year.

CHILD B is now in Year 2 and continuing to make progress, often sharing proud moments and achievements with the Nurture team.

CHILD C

Background
CHILD C joined the school during the Summer Term of Year 3 and initially no concerns were evident. However, following on from Summer Holidays a change in behaviour was observed by school staff. During the Autumn Term of Year 4, CHILD C displayed:

Outbursts of anger in the classroom resulting in tables/chairs being overturned and class being evacuated several times
Unresponsive to class teacher

CHILD C, together with his younger sister, lived with their mother up until the age of 8. He has had no contact with his father. Whilst living with his mum, who was unable to care for her children, CHILD C took on the responsibility of ensuring that food was eaten where possible by making a sandwich for himself, sibling and his mum. His maternal aunt, after intervention from Social worker, took on the role of parental responsibility moving the children to her address, a one bedroom flat, whilst waiting for a larger property to be assigned. The mother had made promises to see the children and then cancelled at the last minute which has had a negative impact on CHILD C. Auntie reported lack of sleep at night, repeated pattern of crying himself to sleep and the family sharing the one bedroom.
She was hoping to be moved to a larger property as she was planning to start her own family.

Action

The Inclusion team became involved and CHILD C was referred to Nurture, he was also referred to PSB and CAHMS. CHILD C attended Nurture twice a week; during this time a Boxall was completed and showed us areas of focus:

Developmental Strands
• Gives purposeful attention
• Connects up experiences

Diagnostic Profile
• Disengaged
• Self-negating

Activities were planned to close these gaps within Nurture and shared with the Class Teacher. A meeting was held with Auntie during Parents evening to share best ideas to ensure consistency.

Due to Covid-19 the sessions naturally were disrupted but, as he is a vulnerable child, a place at school was made available to him. He found this transition difficult and his behaviour escalated once more.

Strategies

CHILD C was given time to calm himself in a safe environment and he was then able to reflect on what had happened in class to make him angry and began to think, with support, about how he could self-regulate his emotions.

Over time we found that taking him to the familiar and safe environment of the Nurture room during learning time to work 1:1 was a far better option for him. Although the full Nurture programme was not followed, key elements of Nurture were used to support him:
• The use of a Sand timer to demonstrate how long he needed to focus on learning followed by the same duration of time for Lego Therapy or Role play.
• Praise and Reward stickers.
• Colouring activities.
• Snack and Chat.

Outcomes

Gradually we were able to increase the time CHILD C spends back in his classroom. The class teacher has implemented recommended strategies to aid CHILD C and his journey continues with close monitoring from all key staff.

Aims of a Nurture Group

For some children with complex SEMH needs, a quality first teach approach may not be enough and, if these strategies do not have an impact, a Nurture group intervention may be the next stage of support in the assess, plan, do, review cycle.

Nurture group principles and practice are based on attachment theory and allow schools to take a proactive approach in order to meet the needs of identified children. Through a comprehensive assessment procedure, we are able to identify, and monitor progress against, a set of individual early development targets. Clearly planned support, which focuses on providing discussion opportunities and social interaction, is delivered in a welcoming, calm environment. Nurture groups, following the recognised **Six Principles of Nurture**, (developed by Educational Psychologists Eva Holmes and Eve Boyd for Nurture UK) allow children to experience a flexible approach to learning, more suitable for their stage of development and away from the demands of a mainstream classroom and the stress, anxiety, confusion and perceived failure it can bring.

Summary of Aims:
- To provide a small group setting (6 to 8 children) where they can experience support from 2 or 3 caring and suitably qualified adults who work together to enable successful reintegration into the classroom.
- To have a predictable, calm and purposeful environment and timetable, free from curriculum pressures.
- To develop self-esteem and social skills.
- To develop trusting relationships with adults and other children.
- To develop personal responsibility.
- To help children to recognise and choose appropriate behaviour and self-regulation.
- To support children to understand and accept the consequences of certain behaviour choices.
- To work in partnership with teachers and parents to achieve consistency between home and school.
- To provide ongoing assessment to monitor progress against targets.
- To prevent exclusion.
- To work towards a full reintegration into a mainstream classroom environment.

The Six Principles Of Nurture

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally

Children are given opportunities to experience what they may have missed in their earlier lives and learning is planned to meet these developmental gaps as identified by Boxall Profiles. Adults respond to children 'as they are' and by being accepted in this non judgmental way, they are encouraged to develop and grow.

2. The classroom offers a safe base

Nurture staff understand that the children need to build trust in adults and to feel contained in a safe environment. Through the provision of a welcoming space and a predictable routine alongside calm, consistent responses, adults provide a safe place for the child. This is the heart of Nurture and requires careful consideration of the skills and aptitude of staff chosen to run the Nurture group. Staff are trained and supported to build their own resilience and understanding of children's needs.

3. The importance of Nurture for the development of wellbeing

Most children in Nurture groups lack a fundamental belief in their self-worth. The Nurture group has a focus on developing self-esteem, acknowledging and celebrating achievements and successes in a way that is acceptable for each child. Staff are sensitive to the needs of individual children and offer highly personalised approaches to building well-being. Nurture involves listening and responding. Staff constantly engage with the children in shared activities and play to encourage talk about feelings and events. Every contribution is valued and nothing is brushed aside or left unacknowledged.

4. Language is a vital means of communication

Language is more than a skill to be learned; it is how feelings are put into words. Nurture group children often struggle to do this and instead 'act out' their feelings through their behaviour. In Nurture, children are given both formal and informal opportunities to develop language skills. Children are encouraged, through sitting together at the table, games and imaginative play, to understand their feelings and put them into words as well as recognising the feelings of others. Nurture staff consciously model the language and coping skills that the children are encouraged to learn.

5. All behaviour is communication

Staff understand that all behaviour is a means of communication and work hard to make sense of what a child is trying to tell us through an understanding of their background and individual challenges. Having this understanding allows staff to respond in a calm and yet firm, non-punitive way. They will aim to find links between the external and internal worlds of each child and, by doing so, help them to make connections between thoughts, feelings and actions.

6. The importance of transition in children's lives

Transition and change is often difficult for the children who attend Nurture. Due to life experiences, they find any change, transition or ending, no matter how small we perceive it, hard to cope with or manage. The Nurture group recognises these vulnerabilities and provides a safe and secure space in which children can learn to manage their anxieties. By giving them this safe and secure environment, the foundations are laid for them to gradually increase their flexibility in accepting the unexpected. Children are carefully prepared for transitions whilst helping them to develop emotional resilience when faced with new or different situations.

SETTING UP A NEW NURTURE GROUP

Planning Ahead

- SLT should consider whether a Nurture group approach is an appropriate intervention for their school. Key indicators to be considered are a high level of behaviour-related incidents or exclusions and high or increasing levels of SEMH need within the school community.

- Governors, SLT and all staff need to understand the purpose, aims and rationale behind Nurture so it is important to arrange awareness training for all of these groups.

- The development of Nurture should be incorporated into the school development plan (SDP) with clear targets, timescales and responsibilities agreed.

- The SENDCo and any potential staff should arrange to visit other Nurture groups within TPA to understand the environment and day to day operation of Nurture groups.

- Investigate the availability of accredited CPD programmes for staff. Courses are best arranged through www.Nurturegroups.org The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups training is a minimum requirement for all staff. Ideally, the SENDCo and Nurture Leader should attend the National Nurturing Schools Programme to support a whole school approach.

- Consider an appropriate location. Can it be a space in the existing building or is a purpose-built provision needed? Wherever possible, the Nurture group should have exclusive use of the space identified and easy access to their own toilets and a designated outdoor play area.

- Funding for setting up the room and buying resources to be investigated. A resource list is on page 26.

- Monitoring and assessment criteria and expectations for the group to be shared with all staff.

- A school Nurture Group Policy to be agreed. A draft policy is available in the SEND Toolkit area of the Shared Drive which can be adapted for each provision. This is to be available on the school website.

Staffing Considerations

- Children rely on the same adults being there for them each day, so evidence of regular attendance is a key aspect to consider when appointing staff.

- Good, professional staff relationships are essential as how adults interact with each other provides a valuable model for the children.

- Staff need to be resilient and skilled in using positive behaviour strategies, reflecting a sound understanding of Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

- There must be at least two members of staff running the group. It is recommended to aim for an adult/child ratio of 1:3.

- Staff to be interviewed by the Headteacher and SENDCo with support from central team, if required. Interview questions and job descriptions are available on the Shared Drive or on request.

- Consider how time can be allocated within the week for staff to plan, observe children in their mainstream classrooms, liaise with teaching staff and the SENDCo, meet with parents and to monitor and record progress.

- Consider how Nurture staff can be supported with the emotional demands of working within their role. Supervision or additional coaching may be needed.

Preparation

- Become familiar with the TPA screening tool which will help to identify children who would potentially benefit from a Nurture group intervention. This can be found on the Teacher Shared Drive in the SEND Toolkit and further support on how to use this is available from TPA central team. This tool is intended to help schools identify suitable children for Nurture and the results then form part of a wider discussion with the inclusion team to make a final selection. Further details on selection are on page 21.

- Ensure Nurture staff complete accredited Nurture training.

- Nurture staff complete Boxall Profiles with the class teachers for the children selected. This will allow individual targets for each child to be set and appropriate activities planned.

- Prepare individual record files and go through expectations for assessment and the recording of progress with staff (further information is on page 36). Evidence gathered will become part of the usual SEND assess, plan, do, review cycle.

- Plan for the first half term. The structure and content of sessions is outlined on pages 28 & 29. Consider how the needs of the National Curriculum will be balanced with nurturing activities when planning the sessions. Refer to the Nurture curriculum planning guidance on the TPA Shared Drive.

- Consider how to run the Nurture group sessions alongside other classes. It is important that these decisions are kept consistent so that the children have a predictable day/week. Things to consider:
    - What time will the sessions begin, allowing children to register with their class?
    - How long will each session be?
    - How can children still attend classes such as PE, Art or ICT if they thrive there?
    - How will breaks and assemblies be managed?
    - How will children be supported to transition between classroom and Nurture?

- Plan the layout of the space. Include a comfortable seating area, a cooking and eating area, a calm down zone, a space for play and plenty of display boards for children's learning. A full list is available on pages 26 & 27.

- Decide whether to include pets. Organise equipment and create a pet policy (see SEND Toolkit area of the Shared Drive).

- Consider what support you might need from the Local Authority and other outside agencies.

Selecting Children for the Nurture Group

A Nurture group intervention is for children with a very specific set of needs which cannot be met in the mainstream classroom. Their difficulties will be profound and, most importantly, linked to circumstances of stress and adversity in early childhood as described in the section on attachment and ACEs. Typically these children will find it difficult to:

Trust adults

Share resources or attention from adults or their peers

Ask for help

Explore the world around them

Lack resilience

Understand their emotions

Regulate their behaviour responses

Have a feeling of self-worth

It is important not to include children who present with these characteristics but do not have gaps in early childhood development or suffered adverse experiences. Children with ASD may, for example, have these traits but would not be suitable for a Nurture group unless they have also experienced significant disruption to their early development. Crucially, Nurture must not be seen as an automatic solution for children who display distressed behaviours.

Follow the procedures below to select the children:

- Class teachers to show evidence that good, positive and trauma informed behaviour strategies are embedded in their classroom and that they have implemented strategies as outlined in the SEND Toolkit before referring to the SENDCo. The referral form in the SEND Toolkit should be used for this purpose.

  Class teachers, together with the SENDCo, should then complete the TPA screening tool to assess suitability for Nurture. This has been developed so that it addresses, and gives weighted scores to, key factors which may indicate whether Nurture is a suitable intervention. Factors include:

  Risk of exclusion

  Indicators of trauma

  Attendance and punctuality

  Social, Emotional and Mental Health factors (child and the family)

  Involvement with social care or Early Help

  Involvement with other outside agencies

- In order to gather further evidence, the SENDCo and class teacher will find it helpful to complete a Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (see page 37). This provides an additional, objective assessment of children who need support with self-regulation. It explores emotional symptoms, behaviour problems, hyperactivity and inattention, peer relationships and problems with social skills.

- Once the evidence has been collected and it is felt a child is suitable for Nurture, the SENDCo, Headteacher, family worker and Nurture leader should meet in order to make a final decision about inclusion in the group, taking into account all known factors about the child and their family background. At this stage, it will be worth compiling a Boxall Profile (see page 36) to give a more detailed picture of need and also form the baseline assessment for monitoring progress.

- Bear in mind that the dynamics of the group will contribute greatly to its success. When having discussions on selection, aim for a group which includes a good balance of children. Consider a mix of needs, pre-established relationships, a balanced boy/girl ratio and a mixture of quiet and boisterous personalities. It is also important to consider any additional support the child or family may be receiving which might effect the impact of a Nurture group.

- To be successful, it is vital to involve the parents and carers from the start so, once the decision has been made, the class teacher should inform them that their child has been selected to attend the Nurture group. It is good practice to invite them in to have a discussion about the reasons why the decision has been made and how the group will help their child. A visit to the Nurture room to see the space and to meet the Nurture team is helpful at this point so that they can ask questions. If Nurture is a new addition to the school, an invitation to an opening event is a good way to encourage their support. The decision must also be put into writing by the SENDCo; a letter template is available on the SEND Toolkit area of the Teacher Shared Drive which may be be adapted to suit your setting.

- At this meeting, ask the parents to complete a child information form (see SEND Toolkit area of TPA Teacher Shared Drive). This will give the Nurture team further useful information about the child and helps to form a link between home and school. This also provides a useful reference point when reviewing progress.

RUNNING A NURTURE GROUP

The following sections give practical advice and signpost key resources to help in the running of a successful Nurture group.

Creating the Nurture Room Environment

Once a suitable space has been found, it needs to be carefully prepared so that it becomes a sanctuary for the children, providing them with a safe space to feel relaxed and be themselves. The children need to be reassured that they are safe and secure in their space so it is worth considering suitable locks for the doors and a system of entry for adults who are not in the Nurture team.

It is useful to think of the room as a cross between a homely environment and an Early Years classroom. It should have specific areas for learning, play, eating and relaxing with special consideration given to a separate room or screened off area where children can calm down or spend time alone with sensory support equipment if needed. Ample storage should also be accounted for when resourcing the room.

Cooking and eating together are a big part of Nurture so, ideally, the room should include a kitchen area. If it is not possible to do this, access to kitchen facilities elsewhere in the school should be arranged but a sink, toaster, kettle and storage for food, drinks and cooking basics is essential.

Much of the high quality social skills learning is done around the dining table when eating or learning together. Space should be allocated for a dining table and chairs large enough to seat all the adults and children. The table can also be used for art and other learning activities as it would in a home environment.

A large sofa and/or beanbags, depending on space, provide soft and comforting places to relax, read, share stories and to chat with friends or adults. Cushions, throws and blankets can provide additional comforting resources and add to the homely feel.

A home corner/role play area is recommended for children to develop language and explore their feelings through imaginative play. Modular furniture should be purchased to create an easily adaptable area which can be updated to reflect different topics or activities which support the development of social skills such as a shop, doctors surgery, café or classroom. This should be changed at least once every half term or more if needed.

A clear area of floor space, where children can engage with a free choice of toys, games and imaginative play, should be allocated.

It is important that the main Nurture room itself is child focused, so any adult work space should be located in a separate space if possible. If this is not an option, ensure that adult workspace is discrete and does not stand out as a major focus of the room.

A comprehensive list of recommended furniture, resources and equipment is listed on pages 26 & 27, along with photographs of existing Nurture rooms for reference on the TPA Teacher Shared Drive. Central team are able to offer additional support and advice when resourcing the room.

Display Guidance

The Nurture room displays should be engaging, regularly updated and, first and foremost, support and celebrate the learning and successes of the children. Visuals, photographs of the children and examples of children's voice are key as they act as positive affirmations for the children and help to reinforce their understanding of their social and emotional targets. The SEND Toolkit area of the TPA Teacher Shared Drive includes examples from existing Nurture room displays for reference. Consider a neutral scheme for display boards and lettering which is low arousal and will enhance the calm environment.

Displays must include the following key aspects which, with the exception of behaviour expectations, should be in place before the Nurture sessions begin so that staff can point them out and explain them to the children during the first session.

- **Agreed behaviour expectations:** displayed in several locations around the room and outside if you have access to an outdoor play area. These should be supported with visual prompts and/or photographs of the children meeting expectations. These expectations should be decided on and agreed by the children during the first session and then displays can be prepared and ready for future sessions.

- **Incentive and reward charts** for making good behaviour choices and using social skills targets in context such as good listening, using good manners and being kind.

- **Visual Timetables** for the day and the week.

- **Visual emotions check in/out register** close to the entrance.

- **Self-regulation strategies** displayed in several locations around the room, including the calm down space. If a whole school programme, such as Zones of Regulation, is being used, this should also be used in Nurture so there is consistency across the school.

- **A picture display of 'The Nurture Family'** at the entrance – photographs of the children and adults in the group.

- **Social Skills** reminders and prompts to support targets.

It is recommended that supporting images such as Widgit, Communicate: In Print or similar are used to support messages around expectations and timetables.

Topic and theme displays can be developed as learning and activities progress over the programme. Every child should have at least one piece of work or their photograph displayed. This helps to build their confidence and self-esteem.

The displays should evolve, change and be added to or changed as subsequent groups attend Nurture ensuring they remain fresh, up to date and relevant to the current group.

Nurture Room Resource Checklist

Dining table and chairs large enough for all children and adults	
Comfortable soft seating – a sofa and/or beanbags depending on space	
Large rug	
Cushions	
Blankets/throws, some weighted	
Music player	
Camera or iPad	
Storage units/boxes	
Kitchen equipment	
Oven	
Hob	
Fridge	
Microwave	
Toaster	
Kettle	
Large kitchen bin	
Plates	
Cups/mugs	
Bowls	
Cutlery	
Baking and cooking equipment including kitchen scales	
Set of pans	
Tea towels	
Paper towels	
Aprons	
Paper napkins	
Table covers (wipeable)	
Household cleaning equipment	
Role-play adaptable furniture and selection of themed resources	
Selection of play mats, e.g. farm, town	

NOTES

Resources which encourage imaginative, cooperative play and talk	
Construction: Lego/K'nex	
Farm: animals/buildings/equipment etc.	
Transport: trains/cars/lorries etc.	
Dolls: ensure multicultural/disability awareness	
Puzzles	
Soft toys	
Board games	
Dolls house	
Book shelves to create a book corner	
Range of picture books, including TPA books and SEMH focused topics	
Selection of calm down/sensory resources	
Dark tent or Ikea Egg chairs	
Plastic face mirrors for exploring emotions	
Selection of arts and craft materials	
Painting resources	
Selection of plain and coloured paper	
Pencils: sketching/colouring	
Felt pens	
Crayons	
Chalks	
Scissors: child and adult and left handed	
Glue sticks	
PVA glue and application sticks	
Craft selection: trims, braid, sequins, beads, feathers, etc.	
Felt/fabric	
Gardening tools	
Drying rack for art	
First aid box (follow school guidelines for content)	

NOTES

STRUCTURES AND ROUTINES
Planning Guidance

In line with Boxall's vision, it is essential that staff create an environment that is 'equivalent to the first three years at home'. The children need to be unconditionally accepted at their developmental age, regardless of their chronological age, with learning focused on activities children would be doing at a pre-school level. A calm, carefully controlled pace which reacts to children's needs is important as children need to be supported to move from one activity to the next. Routine and repetition are key, helping to reduce behaviour issues which are often triggered by unpredictability. This creates an environment where children can begin to learn, develop and grow.

In order to cover the main areas of social development and address the Boxall targets over the course of the programme, it is useful to have a SEMH focused topic for each half term. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum, originally developed in the early 2000's, provides a useful framework of topics which staff can use flexibly and adapt so that they are relevant to the developmental needs and targets of the children.

It is expected that planning also includes activities which make links to the National Curriculum in English and Maths for the relevant key stage involved. A curriculum overview, prepared at the planning stage, provides useful evidence of where links to the National Curriculum are being made across the programme.

To support planning, a **TPA Nurture Group Curriculum Guide** is available in the SEND Toolkit area of the Shared Drive along with session planning sheets and half termly curriculum overview forms.

A planning file should be created to include daily plans and the half termly overview.

Daily Timetable

Nurture sessions may have some level of flexibility however, in order to best support the development of children in Nurture, ask yourself the following questions when planning and developing your sessions:

• Do you have clear and easily understood expectations and boundaries which are regularly shared with the children?

• Do you have a consistent procedure for supporting good behaviour choices?

• Do you have a predictable routine of activities planned across the day and week?

• Are there opportunities for a high level of positive interaction between children and adults?

• Are instructions made explicit and simple and supported by visuals?

• Are there opportunities for children to receive individual attention?

• Do staff give lots of specific praise and make the children feel valued and encouraged?

• Is there a clear focus on building happy, trusting relationships?

• Do planned activities allow children to experience and celebrate individual and group success?

• Are the children given the chance to be independent and take on responsibilities?

• Do adults consistently model a calm and caring approach?

Aim to provide a balance of activities which allow children to work in groups, pairs and individually. Adults can then support them to manage a wide variety of situations and challenges they may face in school.

Include activities over the week which are sensory, fun, collaborative and encourage the children to develop their social and communication skills without judgement. Sessions should also, crucially, include an opportunity for all the adults and children to sit, eat and talk at the table together. This could be a snack, lunch or both depending on your agreed schedule. It is important to agree and display a rota of jobs such as tidying up, setting the table, handing out food and washing and drying up which helps children understand the importance of responsibility and fairness.

Suggested session format

The following format provides an opportunity for every child to engage in the session at a level to suit their needs and developmental stage. Once agreed, it is important to keep to the same routine.

- **2 minutes:** Children self-register using the emotions board at the entrance. Staff sensitively follow up later in the session, on a 1:1 basis, if a child indicates they are feeling angry or sad.

- **10 minutes:** Greeting song or routine which welcomes each person, child and adult, by name. Revisit expectations and targets and go through the timetable for the day.

- **15 minutes:** Snack and Chat; a chance to share news or do a short, focused Circle Time activity if needed

- **30 minutes:** Daily activity

- **20 minutes:** Adult supported free play and learning opportunities

- **10 minutes:** Set the table and tidy up ready for lunch

- **30 minutes:** Eat lunch together (adults and children)

- **15 minutes:** Clear the table, wash up, dry dishes and put away

- **20 minutes:** Story time

- **10 minutes:** Ending song or routine

Include a positive beginning and end to each session which involves all children and adults, reaffirming each of them as a valuable member of the group and helping to build their self-esteem and feeling of self-worth.

The timetable of the session should be clearly displayed with supporting visuals which are easy for the children to understand. This will allow children to look at it when they arrive and throughout the session to keep track of what is happening. Widgit, Communicate: In Print are good sources of appropriate images or personalised versions can be created. Shorter sessions, often done in the afternoon, will not involve lunch so can be adapted accordingly.

Flexibility

Whilst a planned timetable is important, flexibility in response to children's needs is sometimes justified. It is important to use professional judgement and follow your instincts to adapt sessions in response to how the children present on the day. Consideration can also be given to including any 1:1 support sessions for children such as play therapy, counselling, etc. if staff are suitably qualified to deliver this and it is included as part of their provision plan.

Snack and Chat

Meeting around the table to eat is an important aspect of Nurture as it allows the opportunity for children to develop social skills. Try to rotate a selection of different snacks such as toast, biscuits or cake (sometimes having items which have been cooked by the children) and a choice of milk, water or squash. Ensure provision is made for children who have special diets.

Laying out place mats, cutlery, plates and food provides lots of opportunity to count out loud and talk about names, colours, shapes, designs and sizes. To show fairness, it is a good idea to have a rota of jobs over the week. The children have a chance to practice turn taking and speaking and listening skills and the adults are able to model these skills when talking to each other and to the children. A relaxed, low key atmosphere promotes laughter and sometimes encourages children to speak out if they have more serious things to discuss, just like any family mealtime. Allow the children to set the agenda.

Circle Time

Developed by Jenny Mosley, Circle Time provides a chance for children to learn how to listen, interact, speak, watch and participate effectively. Sessions can be planned to address children's targets or in response to issues observed in the group. It is recommended that regular Circle Time sessions are included in Nurture groups and can be included as part of Snack and Chat on a regular day or as a stand alone activity. By carrying out enjoyable and age-appropriate Circle Time activities, children are encouraged to understand emotions, develop positive behaviour choices and therefore experience increasing self-esteem. Ideas for activities can be found in the SEND Toolkit area of the teacher Shared Drive or at **circle-time.co.uk**

Daily Activity

Make sure daily activities take place on the same day each week so that the children are prepared in advance for what they are doing. This predictability and sense of order helps the children who come to Nurture to feel safe and secure. Don't forget to take lots of photographs for display and personal scrapbooks.

The following activities are suggested but it is also useful to check with teachers about specific topics to cover, especially if there is a themed week planned or an
IPC topic the children need to cover.

Cooking: This is a fantastic activity to do together; so much fun and learning takes place and the children love to receive praise when they take what they have cooked to members of staff and to their families. The recipe can be written on a board by an adult and, supported with visuals, talked through as a group in advance and then left as reference. Allow children to experience independence in the task, it may be messy but will help to give a real sense of achievement! A good idea is to create a personalised 'Nurture Cookbook' which the children can take home at the end of the programme to share with their family.

Gardening: If you have even a small amount of outdoor space, it is a great idea to get the children outdoors to cultivate their own patch of garden or to design and plant up some colourful pots. Gardening is a healthy and rewarding activity that the group can enjoy together and will help the children to develop new skills and develop their understanding about the science of growing. From planting, digging, and growing their own food and plants, through to planning, watering and tidying; gardening helps teach the importance of being organised, whilst encouraging them to take responsibility for designated tasks. They will soon experience the pleasure of success when plants grow. It also generates other creative ideas such as designing plant markers, decorating pots and making other items to decorate their outdoor space such as birdfeeders and wind chimes.

Art: It is really important to create a welcoming room and, if the children are able to feel that they have contributed to it, this is even better and promotes a sense of belonging and self esteem. In addition to the SEAL focus, it is fun for the children to follow relevant IPC topics or themes such as the seasons, animals or celebrations such as Christmas, Easter and Diwali. Choosing a book to read in story time and developing linked art activities can also provide a range of opportunities. Try to include different aspects such as drawing, painting, modelling and collage to develop a variety of skills and methods of expressing themselves as individuals. Other opportunities might link to planned drama sessions, making invitations, programmes, masks or puppets for example.

Games: Playing games develops many valuable skills needed to be successful in life such as sharing, taking turns, being part of a team, listening to and following instructions and learning how to win or lose gracefully. The category is quite broad and can cover board games, bingo, traditional playground games, parachute games or ball games. The choice of activity may be determined by the weather, individual targets or simply children's preference. Professional judgement is key here so that a positive environment is maintained.

Science: Practical science experiments and investigations are a great opportunity to capture the children's imaginations and will generate lots of opportunity for learning, questions and discussion. It is useful to link with class or year group topics, so ask teachers for their plans and practical ideas but lots of simple, effective and fun activities can also be found online or in **Dr Marks's Magical Science** books. As an added bit of fun, you could provide protective science goggles and a white shirt and the children can pretend to be scientists! It will give plenty of opportunity to take great photographs for display.

PHSE: Activities done in these sessions can link to the chosen SEAL topic for the half term but may also relate to children's individual targets and needs of the group. Circle Time activities can be used in these sessions rather than in Snack and Chat time if you need to spend longer on a particular area of need.

Drama/Music: It is really valuable to work on a group project once every half term and children enjoy putting on a performance for invited guests whether that be their teachers, other members of the school or their parents/carers. The production can relate to a favourite group book or link to topics being covered in Nurture. A session each week can be used to prepare and rehearse for the production, design invitations, plan refreshments, prepare costumes and props, etc. If there are children who don't want to perform, talk to them about other roles they may want to take on the day such as handing out programmes, drinks, welcoming guests, etc. All of these roles are great ways of giving responsibility and building self-esteem.

Free Play

A key part of Nurture is to allow the children some time each day to explore toys and activities at their own developmental level and to choose who they interact with. It is important that Nurture staff plan some child initiated curriculum learning opportunities into free play time as suggested in the **TPA Nurture Group Curriculum Guide**.

This time provides opportunities for adults to observe social interactions between the children and they should take time to engage in conversation or join in with the children as they explore, to further support their social and emotional skills. This is especially important for some of the quieter children who find it harder to engage with a group and will benefit from some individual attention.

The **role play area** is an important part of free play and the theme of this area should be changed at least every half term, to encourage a range of conversation and learning opportunities. Adults may want to support play in this area.

Story Time

This is a special time for the children and adults as it provides a way to come together on the sofa, wrap up in blankets with cuddly toys and enjoy a positive and calm time before returning to their classrooms or leaving school for the day. It is also a good idea to use this time together to praise and recognise children who have shown good listening, good manners, kindness, etc. and to give out rewards for the day. It is important that every child leaves with a sense of success.

Children like to choose the books themselves so it is worth considering a rota so that everyone gets a turn, or offer it as an incentive for good choices made over the session. Well illustrated picture books, aimed at pre-school or KS1 are usually the best to engage the children and stimulate interest and discussion at a level they can access. Ensure the book corner provides a wide choice of these books and also includes the TPA picture books and a selection of titles which cover a variety of SEMH themes which can be explored and discussed as you read. Sometimes, it is useful to have a focus book for a period of time and this can provide inspiration for a range of activities.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND SUPPORTING SELF-REGULATION

The Role of the Adults

The relationship that develops between the children and adults is central to creating a positive and effective environment. Children need to feel secure that adults will accept them unconditionally, understanding their often unpredictable behaviour responses and able to explain it to them in a way they understand. Adults offer calm, consistent and non-judgemental support to the children, enabling them to recognise different emotions and, through explicit teaching and co-regulation, give them a range of strategies to improve self-esteem and the ability to self-regulate. This can be a challenge for adults but they must remember the reasons why children come to Nurture and respond sensitively at all times. Often these children carry pain, confusion and damage and their ways of coping are often unpredictable. The adults in Nurture must believe in every child and have the task of setting the emotional tone of the group which enables the children to change and grow. Children need opportunities to connect with, and build trust in, adults through regular eye contact, smiles, humour and joyful shared experiences which replicate the important relationships they may have missed.

Incentives and Rewards

Children love to feel successful, receive praise and be rewarded for their efforts so carefully planned incentive schemes are useful to promote and maintain good behaviour. It is helpful to focus on one or two targets each term which are realistic and easily achievable for the children and those which have been most often identified by Boxall Profiles, observations or teacher feedback. Child friendly visual reward schemes which are clearly displayed allow children to see their success on a daily basis and help to improve self-worth. Try to give each child kind encouragement and praise each day for their efforts and choose them to add a part to their charts at least twice a week. Themes below are suggestions but, with a little imagination, others can be developed for other desired social skills. There are also a variety of options available to print in the SEND Toolkit area of the Shared Drive.

Tree of Kindness: Each child aims to build their own picture of an apple tree. If they have shown kindness during the session, they can be awarded a part of the tree.

Listening Lions: Children aim to collect a family of lions. If they are able to maintain good listening at appropriate times, they may choose a part of the family to add to their chart.

Good Manners Garden: Children create individual pots with flowers. This encourages children to show good table manners, to use please, thank you and show politeness to adults and each other.

In addition to being awarded a part for the display, children also enjoy being able to choose something for the group to enjoy together the next day, perhaps a book to read or a favourite game.

When a child completes their individual picture, it is a good idea to create a certificate for them which can be presented in the weekly achievement assembly and allows the wider school community and parents to share their success. It is important to communicate with the class teacher or member of SLT who is responsible for giving out the certificates and also to contact parents to invite them to the assembly.

Consequences

Whilst an encouraging and supportive environment, based on strong relationships between children and adults is key to securing good behaviour, inevitably there will be times when consequences are necessary. At the start of the programme, it is helpful to discuss and agree with the group what is classed as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and agree a set of expectations for the Nurture room which focus on the positive behaviours expected. Children need to be gently reminded of these expectations early on in each session and know that adults trust them to be successful in meeting them.

In Nurture, it is easy for the children to understand if there is only one, consistent consequence for not meeting the agreed expectations and the most effective and recommended is 'Time Out'. Nurture rooms should include a separate calm down space which can be used for children to take time out when asked to do so or if they choose to remove themselves for another reason. This helps them to think about their own self-regulation and take responsibility, removing them from the other children so that activities can carry on without disruption. Over time, and if done calmly and without judgement, the children will accept time out as a fair consequence. At the start of the programme, or when a new child joins, the procedure should be explained so that they understand what will happen, what they are expected to do and what happens next.

The room or designated space for time out should contain a beanbag or comfortable chair, a selection of sensory toys, a 5 minute sand timer and visuals to remind them of time out procedures and support self-regulation (a printable calm down kit is available on the SEND Toolkit area of the teacher Shared Drive or Zones of Regulation resources can be used). If the child is very distressed or angry, the time out should not begin until they are calm; an adult may need to support and co-regulate with the child until they are able to complete their assigned time out.

Gradually, children will learn to recognise their emotions and triggers and use a set of strategies which they prefer to help them self-regulate; they will begin to take themselves to the calm down space before poor behaviour choices are made and adults should praise and encourage this.

Importantly, when children return to the group, no matter what the circumstance, adults should welcome them back warmly and the other members of the group encouraged to do so too. The incident should then be forgotten.
If a child refuses to take their time out, it is important that the adults do not start an argument or power struggle. Calmly reiterate the expectation and then carry on without the child involved until they follow the request. It is useful to agree a plan with SLT for a rare event that leads to a child being persistently defiant.

It is important that the class teacher and support staff also uses the same approach for consistency so good communication and agreement across the school is vital. A behaviour plan may need to be agreed with the SENDCo to support this consistency of approach for some children in Nurture.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

There are four main methods of assessing children's progress and the impact of the Nurture programme and it is useful to consider them together when making decisions regarding individual children. Files should be created for each child to contain the records listed below.

- **Boxall Profiles:** These are an essential aspect of Nurture and enable staff to identify targets, plan activities and assess progress. They are completed by Nurture staff and class teachers at the start of the programme and updated each term to assess progress. Results are shared with the SENDCo and included as part of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.

- **SDQs:** Completed by class teachers as part of the referral process and again at the end of each half term.

- **Classroom Observations:** Nurture staff and class teachers record ongoing observations of children in their mainstream classroom to monitor interactions with adults and their peers and engagement with learning.

- **Pupil, Parent and Teacher Feedback:** Completed at the start and at the end of the programme.

BOXALL PROFILES

Using and Interpreting the Profile

The key assessment tool for Nurture groups is the Boxall Profile. It provides a framework for structured observations so that specific areas of need can be identified and enables staff to plan activities to address them. It is essential to follow Nurture UK guidance on how to interpret the findings and create individual profiles of the children. When staff complete accredited Nurture UK training, access to online Boxall Profiling and supporting resources are included in the package. Membership of Nurture UK should be renewed annually to allow ongoing access to the Boxall Profile.

The profile is in two sections:

1. **Developmental Strands:** These consist of elements which describe different aspects of pre school, early development.

2. **Diagnostic Profile:** This shows the areas which inhibit a child's successful engagement in school and are, directly or indirectly, the outcome of poor learning opportunities in the very early stage of development.

In the first section the Developmental Strands are arranged in two clusters focusing on positive aspects of development:

- Organisation of experience, which describes a child's ability to organise themselves, pay attention, show interest and be constructively involved with learning and people around them.

- Internalisation of controls, which describes a child's emotional stability, their ability to form a variety of relationships, adapt to new situations and different social requirements.

In the second section, the Diagnostic Profile, we see three clusters which focus on areas which challenge good development.

• Self-limiting features which indicate a lack of self-awareness and ability to motivate themselves to develop and grow.

• Undeveloped behaviour which indicates a lack of support in early years to enable the ability to relate to others at an age appropriate level.

• Unsupported development which indicates the lack of essential early nurturing care.

Children who receive high scores in the second section, particularly the third area, often show negative behaviours as a defence against the pain and hurt they have received. In this case, the earlier they are able to access a nurturing environment, the better.

Children who would benefit from a Nurture intervention typically show low scores on the Developmental Strands and higher scores on the Diagnostic Profile.

As Boxall Profiling is an assessment based on observation, it should only be completed by adults who know the children well. It provides a useful initial insight into the world of a child, allowing adults to begin to understand and question the potential causes of their behaviour. The level of understanding the profile gives then allows adults to find ways of making the child feel valued and secure through targeted activities.

When to use the Profile
Early intervention is an important aspect of Nurture support. If good quality classroom practice and a trauma informed school ethos have little impact, it is recommended that the school follows the referral procedures laid out on page 21.

This process is important so that the real areas of need can be identified and an informed decision made on whether the child would be suitable for Nurture. Even if their scores indicate that they are not suitable, the profile will provide useful information about the child and can inform adults working with them in school of potential areas of focus.

It will also provide staff with information to allow focused discussions with the parents. Transparency in communication is important and, going through the Boxall Profile with parents, can help the school and parents to work together from the same viewpoint.

The Boxall Profile should be updated by the class teacher and Nurture staff at least termly and discussed with the SENDCo so that progress can be monitored, support further tailored to the needs of the child or transition to mainstream planned.

GOODMAN'S STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ)
This is a simple assessment tool which complements the Boxall Profile well. It is recommended that the two tools are used together to build a clear and detailed picture of a child's specific needs. Copies are available in the SEND Toolkit area of the Shared Drive along with guidance on interpreting the results.

The SDQ consists of a series of descriptive phrases describing different attributes and behaviours. Adults assess children on how true each statement is in relation to that child, based on their behaviour over the previous six months. It is important, therefore, that this is conducted by staff who know the child well and it is also useful to involve parents or carers who have experience of seeing their child in a different setting.

Once the results have been scored and interpreted, each of the categories below will be classed as normal, borderline or abnormal and a total difficulties score given.

• Emotional symptoms
• Conduct problems
• Hyperactivity
• Peer problems
• Prosocial behaviour

SDQs are to be updated at the end of each half term; the scores can then be used to monitor progress, and to help staff target specific areas of difficulty.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In order to ensure that the Nurture group children are transferring the desired social skills to the mainstream setting and to effectively tailor the Nurture activities and focus in response to need, it is important that both Nurture and classroom staff take time during the week to observe children as they interact with adults and peers. It is useful to assign Nurture staff as a 'key worker' to each child who will visit them in class. This helps with consistency and promotes positive and trusting relationships. Nurture staff can also use the time to support the child to implement strategies and skills which are successful in the Nurture setting and to share advice and resources with classroom staff. An observation sheet is available on the TPA Shared Drive.

It is helpful to plan a regular meeting time during the week so that Nurture staff and teachers have the opportunity to discuss the outcomes of observations and what actions are needed in response to identified needs.

PUPIL, TEACHER AND PARENT FEEDBACK

The purpose of Nurture is to help children become successful learners who can function well in their mainstream classroom and beyond. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Nurture group and its impact on children can also be assessed by asking for the opinions of pupils, parents and teachers at the end of the programme. The feedback can be used to generate further discussion about how to adapt and improve the support for the children identified. Feedback forms can be found on the TPA Shared Drive.

ATTENDANCE, EXCLUSIONS AND BEHAVIOUR INCIDENTS

One of the desired outcomes for children attending Nurture groups is that they experience fewer exclusions and are involved in fewer behaviour related incidents. Schools should also expect to see an improvement in attendance as a result of children and their families having a more positive view of school life. It is useful for Nurture staff to have regular updates with the SENDCo, class teachers, Family Workers and Attendance Officer so that they are aware of, and can show evidence of, the wider impact of Nurture.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Scrapbooks are a useful way to record the personal Nurture journey for each child. Filled with photographs and memories, they help each child to remember their time in Nurture and act as reminder of the targets they have achieved and activities they have done. It is important to keep them updated so they can be used to evidence the Nurture curriculum and where links to the National Curriculum have been made. They provide key information for parents and visitors and make a great keepsake for the children when they leave. Examples can be seen on the Shared Drive for reference.

SETTING AND AGREEING PERSONAL TARGETS WITH CHILDREN

Once relationships have been established and children begin to settle into the routine of Nurture, adults can begin to have individual conversations with children and set targets to encourage personal responsibility. The idea of having a key worker works well to support this process. The children are usually quite open about what skill they need to work on and are willing to share their own ideas, but it may be useful for adults to make some suggestions based on their observations and Boxall targets from which the children can choose. The Nurture Curriculum Guidance lists the Boxall Targets in child friendly form for this purpose. Adults need to approach this conversation positively and ensure they give the children confidence that they are able to achieve the targets that are agreed.

It is important not to overload the children so one or two targets each half term is enough. In order for the children to remember their targets, it is useful to share them as a group at the start of each day and encourage the children to support each other in achieving them, giving each other praise when a target is met. Children will soon begin to learn the importance of both group and personal responsibility.

Print off the targets with a photo of the child and have them on display or easily accessible so that if a child shows they have met a target, they can be invited to put a tick next to it. Once they have ten ticks, it is good practice to celebrate as a group and they can be rewarded with a treat, being allowed to choose a special toy to hold during story time or being the first to share their news the next day, for example. They can then agree a new target. It is also worth bearing in mind that the targets may be revisited later if children need another reminder.

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHER STAFF

Nurture is a whole school early intervention strategy which supports an ethos of inclusion and aims to prevent under achievement of children with SEMH needs (one of the four areas of SEND as classified in the SEND Code of Practice 2105). For a Nurture intervention and, most importantly, the children to be successful, there is an expectation that the whole school community embraces nurturing principles as part of their normal practice. All school staff, including lunchtime and office staff, need to understand the principles and practice which underpin a nurturing approach and their responsibility in supporting the work of the Nurture team. This will help to ensure that a nurturing ethos is embedded within the school and that all staff have consistent expectations and approaches when interacting with children. It may be useful for the SENDCo to prepare a 'Nurture agreement' so that everyone involved is aware of their responsibility for any child who attends Nurture. An editable version is available in the Nurture section of the SEND Toolkit.

Expectations of each key staff member is listed below but may be adapted to suit specific settings.

KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

Class Teacher
- Understand that children who attend Nurture are still the responsibility of the class teacher as laid out in the SEND code of Practice 2015.

- Follow the agreed TPA SEND referral process when proposing a child for the Nurture Intervention, ensuring good quality first teach strategies are embedded in classroom practice prior to referral.

- Remain the main point of contact for parents.

- Give an unconditional welcome to children who attend Nurture at all times, register them and include in class routines and lessons until the Nurture group staff collect them.

- Ensure that plans are in place to include children who attend Nurture in school activities such as assemblies, concerts, visits, trips and certain subjects. The arrangements should be agreed by both the class teacher and Nurture group leader and shared with relevant staff, the child and their parents/carers.

- Build and maintain positive relationships with children who attend Nurture.

- Plan to include them in learning when rejoining the class after Nurture sessions.

- Liaise with Nurture group staff on a regular basis and complete assessments or give feedback when requested.

- Agree and support, with Nurture leader and SENDCo, a programme of reintegration back into class.

- Ensuring consistency, implement strategies and/or behaviour plans as advised by the SENDCo and Nurture staff which enable the child to be successful in class.

- Visit a Nurture session at least once every half term.

- Communicate expectations and agreed procedures and strategies to relevant support staff.

- Attend review meetings with Nurture group staff, SENDCo/Inclusion team, outside professionals and parents/carers as part of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.

KEY AREAS OF STAFF RESPONSIBILITY:

Nurture Staff
- Be involved in the selection of children for Nurture.

- Organise and maintain a clean, tidy and purposeful learning environment in accordance with Nurture group principles.

- Plan a focused and creative Nurture curriculum to ensure the children meet the SEMH targets on their Provision Plan as indicated by Boxall Profiles and SDQs.

- Develop a positive, trusting relationship with the children who attend Nurture.

- Support children to transition successfully between classroom and Nurture.

- Keep up to date progress files on each child and individual scrapbooks to evidence learning.

- Work with the SENDCo and class teacher to ensure that the child is prepared for class reintegration.

- Organise and maintain ongoing assessments to review the child's progress with class teacher and SENDCo.

- Develop a positive relationship with parents and carers by being available at the start or end of the day, offering encouragement, sharing successful strategies to use at home and inviting them to termly Nurture events.

- Liaise with the class teacher regularly, support them to complete assessments and gather feedback.

- Respond to concerns reported by class teacher by supporting the child in class at agreed times and providing strategies to support the child.

- Attend regular review meetings with class teachers, SENDCo/Inclusion team, outside providers and parents/carers where appropriate.

- Be available to class teachers and parents at agreed times of the day.

SENDCo
- Oversee the selection of children for Nurture.

- Review and monitor the Nurture curriculum to ensure it meets needs of the children.

- Review assessment and progress data with the inclusion team, Nurture staff and parents/carers as part of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.

- Keep records showing the impact of Nurture for individual children on the online SEND management system.

- Liaise with outside providers to access additional support if needed.

- Work with parents/carers to apply for EHCP if necessary.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The relationship with parents and carers plays a vital role in ensuring success for the children in Nurture. This relationship needs to be developed and encouraged by the Nurture staff in close liaison with the SENDCo and Family Worker, if available. Key to the success of the relationship is:

• Empathy, understanding and the ability to see a situation through the parents/carers eyes

• A non-judgemental attitude

• Open and well timed communication

• Clear information given about the role of the Nurture group

• Consistency

• Confidentiality

When the parents or carers are approached about including their child in the Nurture group, the discussions should initially be held with the class teacher and/or SENDCo. They can then introduce the parents to the Nurture team who can give a tour of the Nurture room, give out information to take away and answer any questions. If the Nurture room is new, it is a good idea to organise an opening event and invite parents along with their children.

At least one member of Nurture staff should aim to make themselves available at the start and end of the day to have informal discussions with parents/carers in addition to formal termly meetings to discuss progress. Invitations to termly Nurture events such as tea parties and plays which involve both children and parents are also a really important part of Nurture and create a relaxed and welcoming feel. Informal coffee mornings and drop in sessions for parents are a great way to build relationships and to share successful strategies which can be used at home, further adding to a consistent approach for the children. You may want to consider inviting other agencies to raise awareness of further community support.

Children will be most successful when the parents/carers are given the time and space to reflect on the relationship with their child themselves and develop their own solutions to overcome the difficulties they may have. Nurture staff must not raise concerns about parenting directly but if parents raise issues about their personal circumstances, the Nurture staff, usually supported by the SENDCo and/or Family Worker, are well placed to signpost them to other external professionals or local agencies who may be able to support the family further. This professional support is usually more appropriate to their specific needs and Nurture staff should not take responsibility for solving all the issues a family may face.

It is, however, important that the Nurture staff are knowledgeable enough to discuss the children's progress and offer support and advice to the families with regard to supporting their child at home and provide consistency of approach. Assessment results and feedback forms from teachers, children and parents are useful to focus the discussions and provide common ground from which decisions can be made.

PLANNING FOR TRANSITION BACK TO CLASS

When is a Child Ready?

This will vary depending on the individual needs and responses of the child. Decisions on transition should be child led and their thoughts and feelings taken into account at each stage. Individual transition plans should be based on observations of the child's development both in Nurture and in their classroom. Consider a gradual transition from around week 8/10 of the intervention and reduce sessions in Nurture gradually, keeping the child and their parents/carers informed and prepared at all times. The pace of transition, the balance of class time to Nurture time, will depend on the needs of the child.

Key questions to consider are:

- Is the child regularly meeting their individual targets?

- Do their Boxall Profile or SDQ scores show progress?

- How is the child responding in Nurture and in class during observations?

- Is feedback from classroom staff, the child and parents/carers positive?

Child Led Indicators

Be aware of anything in the child's behaviour or language which may suggest that they are ready to spend more time in mainstream lessons. It is useful for Nurture staff to keep a written record of when a child shows any of the instances below:

- The child begins to ask to complete class learning in Nurture or wants to stay in class to learn.

- The child begins to share a keen interest in a particular subject.

- The child shares positive experiences from their time in the classroom or is happy and engaged in observations.

Once a pattern has been recognised, it is time to bring together the class teacher, SENDCo, parents/carers and the child to review the evidence collected and develop a transition plan which is agreed and understood.

Communication with Staff Members

Transition will be more successful if communication is regular and consistent throughout the transition period. It is important to agree the following but bear in mind that flexibility may be needed in response to the child and how they react to the changes. All transition plans should be discussed and shared with Inclusion Team/SENDCo.

- A regular weekly meeting time with teacher and support staff to review transition.

- A shared language and visual incentives (e.g. Listening Lion) for consistency.

- Effective behaviour management and self-regulation strategies and related resources to support this.

- A phased timetable which includes a child led, gradual return to full time in mainstream.

- An updated behaviour plan to reflect any changes. This needs to be agreed with the SENDCo and recorded.

Support for the Child

It is important to maintain the increased self-esteem that the child has gained in Nurture so they will need to have access to a range of initial and ongoing support.

- Individual discussion with the child, supported by visuals if necessary, about returning to class.

- Regular positive verbal reminders of expectations in class and praise for meeting them.

- Visual reminders of expectations shared with class teacher and support staff and used as reminders.

- Focused Nurture activities during this time linked to the SEAL focus of CHANGES.

- Positive praise from adults for successful classroom time.

- Timetable for Nurture staff to support in the classroom over the course of transition.

- Access to Nurture room if needed, especially at potentially difficult times such as break and lunch.

- A 'buddy' to support the child through transition.

- A designated calm down area and routine.

FINAL STEPS

Personal Files
Ensure that files are updated and passed on to the SENDCo; advise class teachers so they are aware of how to access them should they be needed to provide evidence for future support and provision. Files should consist of the following:

- Boxall Profiles
- SDQs
- Class teacher feedback sheets
- Observation sheets
- Child's voice records
- Parental feedback sheets

Scrap Books
These are a personal record of the child's journey through Nurture which they can share with their class and at home at the end of the intervention. They should be prepared by Nurture staff as a visual explanation of the children's experiences and why they are important to their development. Scrap books can include examples of play ideas and activities to continue at home and also reflect curriculum focused learning that the child has done during their time in Nurture. The completed scrapbook can be presented to the child when they leave Nurture as a celebration of all they have achieved.

Gather Feedback
It is always useful to reflect on and improve the intervention so give out feedback forms to parents/carers, teachers and children, supporting their completion if needed. Feedback forms are available on the SEND Toolkit area of the Shared Drive.

PREPARING FOR OFSTED

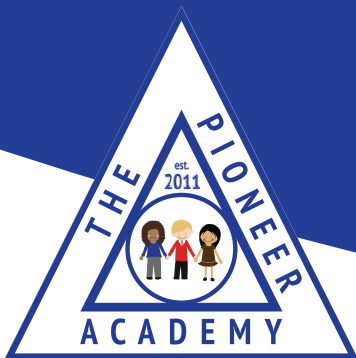## Key Questions to Consider

EVIDENCE

- Can you evidence that the Nurture programme targets the specific needs of each child and is not just a generic programme?

- Are you confident that children selected are suitable for the programme (those who are truly unable to access mainstream learning because of SEMH concerns, especially Attachment and Trauma related)? Can you explain and evidence the selection process?

- Can you provide evidence of SEMH support strategies tried in mainstream before being given a Nurture intervention as part of APDR cycle? Case studies will be really helpful to show the background of the child and their progress both in class before, during and after Nurture.

- Do children have clear individual targets that they, and all key adults, understand?

- Consistent strategies are used to support targets in both Nurture and in the mainstream classroom. Does the SENDCo have behaviour plans and/or individual support plans in place to evidence this?

- Nurture Evidence files are up to date with the following information:
  - Boxall Profiles: Entry profile and then updated at least termly.
  - SDQs: Completed by class teachers as part of the referral process and again at the end of each half term.
  - Classroom Observations: Nurture staff record ongoing observations of children in class and within Nurture sessions with evidence of how observed needs are being reflected in session planning.
  - Pupil, Parent and Teacher Feedback.

- Can we show how we link Nurture activities to the curriculum and adapt to children's developmental stage of learning? How do the Nurture team and mainstream teachers work together to meet curriculum needs?

- Are you familiar with the TPA Nurture Curriculum guidance and is it evident in the planning?

ENVIRONMENT

- Is the weekly and daily timetable clearly displayed with visuals and explained to children regularly so they know what they are doing?

- Are children's individual targets and group behaviour expectations clearly displayed in the room and in the individual scrapbooks?

- Are children able to tell adults about their targets and why Nurture helps them? It will have a big impact if the children are able to talk to the inspectors about this.

- Can we show that the activities challenge children but allow them to be successful and feel good about themselves?

- Do displays and scrapbooks celebrate both SEMH and learning achievements?

- Can all staff confidently explain why some children need Nurture rather than a mainstream class?

- Can all staff talk about Nurture principles and how this ethos is extended across the school?

- Can the SENDCo and Nurture staff explain why the room is designed the way it is to support SEMH, social skills, language and regulation?

ADDITIONAL READING AND INFORMATION

- Bretherton, I. (1992) The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth

- Bennathan, M. and Boxall, M. (2000) Effective Intervention in Primary Schools: Nurture Groups

- Fulton Cooper, P. and Tiknaz, Y. (2006) Nurture Groups in School and at Home – Connecting with Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

- Boxall M. and Lucas S. (2010) Nurture Groups in Schools: Principles and Practice

- Sonnet H. (2008) Nurturing Success: How to Create and Run an Effective Nurture Group

- Maté, G. (2019) Hold On to Your Kids

- Brooks (2020) The Trauma and Attachment-Aware Classroom

- ELSA Support: www.elsa-support.co.uk

- Dr Karen Treisman: www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk

- Trauma Informed Schools: www.traumainformedschools.co.uk

- The Nurture Group Network: www.Nurturegroups.org

Safe - Happy - Learning
www.thepioneeracademy.co.uk