



Kilcooley Primary School and Nursery Unit

Nurture Group Policy The Rainbow Room

June 2025

THE NURTURE GROUP

1. PURPOSE OF THE NURTURE GROUP

To provide a flexible, preventative resource, which is responsive to the particular needs of the children attending.

To provide on-going assessment and support for primary age children (Foundation & Key Stage 2 Years) showing signs of emotional stress and/or behavioural or socialisation difficulties with the aim of enabling them to access the curriculum and return to full participation in their mainstream class.

To provide a secure and reliable small class 'setting' where children can be helped to learn to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve their self-esteem and develop confidence. This will be achieved through close and trusting relationships with adults, and thus enable successful reintegration and return of pupils to their mainstream class.

To work in partnership with the class teachers, parents and external agencies to enable consistency of approach.

2. DESCRIPTION

Nurture Groups are a unique preventative resource, based on well documented psychological theory and research.

The Nurture classroom mirrors the home environment. The home area is furnished with a sofa, cushions and a carpet. The kitchen area has a cooker and fridge. It also houses a dining table and chairs where the children will share breakfast and have the opportunity to participate in baking lessons and participate in school trips. More formal work takes place in the classroom area.

Children will attend for 4 days per week and for a period of up to 4 school terms.

There will normally be no more than 8 children in the Nurture Centre at any one time.

The Nurture Group runs from January to December. The children will therefore attend the Nurture Group for a maximum of the last 2 terms of their P1 year and the first term of their P2 year, integrating back into their class base full time in early December to allow for class observations and the completion of Boxalls.

If enrolment in P1 is low, children will be identified from KS1 to attend the Nurture Group.

The Nurture Group will be staffed by a teacher and a nurture assistant.

Non- contact time will be available 1 full morning each week for Nurture staff to:

- See parents.
- Keep detailed assessment records.
- Carry out in-class observations.
- Meet with Educational Psychologists, Behaviour Support Team Leaders, staff from other Nurture Groups and 'other Agencies'.
- Liaise with other staff.
- Attend INSET.
- Contribute to regular monitoring/review meetings with SMT/Steering Committee.
- Liaise with other Nurture Groups to develop a support network.
- Disseminate good practice to other schools.
- Meet with the relevant class teacher for planning.

Throughout the school year all efforts will be made to ensure that the Nurture staff will not be asked to cover for colleagues.

3. NURTURE GROUP STEERING GROUP

A Steering Committee Group will be established to meet twice a year to deal with strategic planning and review the Nurture Group's Operational Guidelines.

Members of the Steer Group comprise:

- Principal
- SENCO
- Nurture Teacher
- BOG representative

4. ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

All referrals will be made by either the class teacher or as a result of direct observation of Nurture Group staff.

Parental agreement is necessary prior to a child becoming a fulltime member of the Nurture Group.

Nurture Group placement will be considered for children who are underachieving for emotional, behavioural and/or social reasons. This will include:

- Children who are very restless, who usually do not observe class rules, behave impulsively or aggressively.
- Children who are withdrawn and unresponsive and who have difficulty relating to others including children with significant speech difficulties.
- Children with known early or recent history suggests that they may be at risk.

The balance of the group will be considered at all times.

A Boxall Profile will be completed to inform admission decision by the Admissions Panel comprising of the Principal, SENCO and Nurture Group Staff.

5. STRUCTURES FOR THE MONITORING OF PRACTICE AND PUPILS' PROGRESS

There will be:

- Systematic assessment of pupils.
- Regular monitoring of pupils' progress in school.
- Appropriate involvement of Educational Psychologists, Behaviour Support Team and other appropriate outside agencies.
- Systems for referral of pupils needing additional provision.
- Classroom observation, planning, monitoring and evaluation by the Principal and/or Vice-Principal.

6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF PUPILS

Each child will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis and consultations with the Educational Psychologist and other involved professionals will be arranged as appropriate.

Formal review with parents will take place each term, this is in addition to the ongoing informal review of pupils' progress with parents.

7. ROLE OF THE NURTURE GROUP TEACHER

The Rainbow teacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the class. The teacher has the following duties:

- To carry out the professional duties of a teacher.
- To carry out and contribute to the policies and procedures, including child protection procedures where appropriate.
- To organise and plan the activities of the classroom, bearing in mind the individual needs of each child.
- To liaise weekly with the class teacher in respect to the curricular, emotional and social needs of each child.
- To maintain the Nurture Group principle. This is to provide a carefully routined day, where there is a balance of learning, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- To keep individual records of the children's progress and intended programmes of work.
- To co-ordinate the work of the Nurture Group Assistant.
- To discuss the children regularly with relevant professionals.
- To actively work in partnership with parents.
- To ensure that Health and Safety procedures are followed in line with the school and EA policy.
- To ensure requisition, provision and maintenance of suitable resources/materials for the effective operation of the Rainbow Room as made possible by the annual budget.
- To liaise with the child's class teacher during the review of PLPs.
- To observe children in the classroom, playground and at lunchtimes in terms of managing less structured sessions.
- To participate in INSET and joint planning with the class teacher and school SENCO regarding Education Plans.
- In the absence of the Nurture Group teacher all pupils will be integrated with their mainstream class. The assistant will provide support if necessary.

8. ROLE OF THE NURTURE GROUP ASSISTANT

The Nurture Group Assistant is employed in the Nurture Group full time, working under the direction of the Nurture Teacher. Their role is to assist the teacher in whatever tasks are necessary and to participate in appropriate INSET. The Assistant will follow the roles and responsibilities of a special needs classroom assistant.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF PROVISION

- The Nurture Steering Group will monitor and review the Nurture Group provision as part of its ongoing self-monitoring responsibility. It will ensure that operational guidelines are followed and that the stated criteria are met.
- The Principal/Steering Committee and Board of Governors will review the effectiveness of provision via appropriate monitoring and evaluation.
- Reports to facilitate monitoring, review and evaluation will be provided by the Nurture Teacher.

10. WIDER SUPPORT STRUCTURE FOR THE NURTURE GROUP

The Board of Governors will consistently seek commitment and support for our Nurture Group from appropriate educational and non-educational partners.

Partnerships are being developed with health service, RISENI, early parental support programmes, voluntary agencies and community – police, church, forum.

11. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In line with Kilcooley Primary School staff development and in-service policy, the Board of Governors and school management recognise:

“That our school's greatest resource is our staff (teaching, auxiliary and ancillary). It is our firm belief that this resource needs support, advice, training and opportunities for development if it is to continually provide the best educational experiences for our pupils.”

Accordingly, all Nurture staff will have the same opportunities for professional and personal development.

12. REINTEGRATION POLICY

A primary aim of our Nurture Group is to ensure that all pupils can return as speedily as possible to their mainstream class and engage in the social, emotional, academic, physical and spiritual education provided in a positive, co-operative manner. In order to support pupils' reintegration, the following procedures will be adhered to:

- All Nurture pupils will have daily contact with their mainstream class at registration, PE with support, lunch and for the last hour of the day before home-time.
- All Nurture pupils will be in their mainstream class for at least one day per week during their nurture placement. This time in the mainstream class will increase as soon as the child shows that they are able to cope adequately.
- Initial reintegration will be on a staggered, progressive basis during the child's last term in the Nurture Group.
- Joint planning will occur between the class teacher and Nurture teacher who will meet during non-contact time on a weekly basis.
- Activities which the pupil succeeds at will be promoted in both the Rainbow Room and class. These will be the focus of pupil activity during initial reintegration.
- Nurture pupils will be involved in class assemblies, trips and other special occasions with their mainstream class.
- The mainstream class will be prepared and enlisted to support the reintegration of Nurture pupils.
- Appropriate classroom involvement and engagement will be modelled consistently by the class teacher and Nurture staff.
- Clear, consistent and appropriately high expectations will be maintained by the class teacher and Nurture staff.

Reintegration will be closely monitored by both teachers. If necessary, appropriate adjustments will be made to the reintegration plan to ensure the successful reintegration of pupils within 1 year of admission to the Nurture Group.