



**Ramsden Hall
Academy**

**Parallel
Learning
Trust**

Ramsden Hall Academy

Nurture Policy

Last review date:	November 2020	Review period:	Annually
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Nurture Policy

Why Nurture Groups?

Pupils who start school with assumptions based on early experiences at home, about their capacity to enjoy learning; they are willing to try something new and can learn from their mistakes. They have developed expectations about how adults will behave: whether they will be helpful and interested or disapproving and easily angry. Most children therefore enjoy the challenge of school and will be supported at home if difficulties arise.

However, in the case of the pupils at Ramsden Hall, they arrive in school without having the necessary positive early experiences. This could be for very many different reasons depending on their personal situation. For them, the very thought of attending school can be a daunting and anxiety provoking action.

The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing

Nurture is listening, being responsive, remembering and engaging in reciprocal shared activities such as play, having meals, reading, talking about events and feelings. Children respond to being valued and being thought of as individuals. This involves calling the children by their name, noticing and praising every small achievement; nothing is hurried in nurture groups. The whole of Ready to Learn ethos follows the Nurture approach and the six principles of nurture.

The Principles of Nurture

Six important principles underpin the organisation and ethos of a nurture group:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally

The foundations of learning begin at birth and develop via a close relationship with an adult. Independence develops through dependence. Social empathy as well as learning develops from being thought about, valued and encouraged. Staff in the Ready to Learn department respond to each child, at whatever emotional or social age he appears to be in with the appropriate degree of control and nurture. The quality of this response enables the child to move on. Children's developmental progress is assessed through the Boxall Profile handbook.

2. The nurture room offers a safe base

There is a structure to the day which is predictable, there are adults who are reliable and firm and can set boundaries without being punitive. Children see two adults working together and supporting each other. This provides security and reassurance. The nurture group rooms offer a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of children's relationship with each other and with the staff.

3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing

Nurture involves listening and responding. In a nurture group 'everything is verbalised' with an emphasis on the adults engaging with the children in reciprocal shared activities e.g. play / meals / reading / talking about events and feelings. Children

respond to being valued and thought about as individuals, so in practice this involves noticing and praising small achievements; 'nothing is hurried in nurture groups'.

4. Language is understood as a vital means of communication

Language is more than a skill to be learnt, it is the way of putting feelings into words. Nurture group children often 'act out' their feelings as they lack the vocabulary to 'name' how they feel. In nurture groups the informal opportunities for talking and sharing, e.g. welcoming the children into the group or having breakfast together are as important as the more formal lessons teaching language skills. Words are used instead of actions to express feelings and opportunities are created for extended conversations or encouraging imaginative play to understand the feelings of others.

5. All behaviour is communication

Understanding what a child is communicating through behaviour helps staff to respond in a firm but non-punitive way by not being provoked or discouraged. If the child can sense their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. The adult makes the link between the external/internal worlds of the child. This principle underlines the adult response to the children's often challenging or difficult behaviour. 'Given what I know about this child and their development what is this child trying to tell me?'.

6. Transitions are significant in the lives of children

The nurture group helps the child make the difficult transition from home to school and from primary, special education or home-school, to Ramsden Hall. However, on a daily basis there are numerous transitions the child makes, e.g. between sessions and classes and between different adults. Changes in routine are invariably difficult for vulnerable children and need to be carefully managed with preparation and support.

Ready to Learn

Our nurture area is called Ready to Learn and comprises of 4 rooms:

- Redwood
- Cedar
- Green Heart
- ARC

Redwood

Redwood is a classroom where pupils have the opportunity to practice their literacy and numeracy skills (skills lessons) and focus on their half termly topic. They explore different themes through crafts, short activities and discussions. We focus on connecting up experiences. Redwood classroom is well equipped with drinks and snacks. Pupils are encouraged to take part in helping themselves and serving others at an appropriate time, and some are able to do this independently. Redwood has sofas and chill out areas as well as games and activities, and pupils are encouraged to take part in social time with their peers. It is a safe space for pupils and there is always options available so that they have a choice in which activities they do. This is a base for our pupils where they can meet in the morning,

chat with nurture staff and check on their visual timetable. Redwood lessons encourage pupils to develop and make progress on their Boxall profile, particularly the developmental strands. In Redwood the ethos is to focus on positive behaviour and to encourage pupils to talk to staff or others about negative feelings.

Greenheart

Greenheart is a classroom where pupils are encouraged to develop their social skills and specifically develop their Boxall profile developmental strands. Greenheart is branded as a “No Writing Zone” to remove the fear of having to take part in written tasks. Pupils take part in planned practical activities and games, which help to develop different themes over the course of the year. Pupils can opt out of these activities as long as they are demonstrating positive behaviour towards others. The lessons are geared towards developing positive interactions between peers. Sometimes this requires a high level of support, e.g. a teacher led activity. For others this is an independent activity, e.g. 2 pupils playing a game together/building lego together and sharing ideas without the need for the teacher to be overseeing. The timetable in Greenheart is organised so that pupils with a higher level of need have sessions that are more regular in Greenheart. Pupils take part in practical learning tasks and activities, which help them to recognise their own emotions and emotions in others. Pupils explore a variety of themes including peer pressure, online safety and building relationships. Greenheart lessons encourage play and free flowing activities as well as discussion about the student’s experiences. Pupils are encouraged to work together and develop their self-esteem as a group.

Cedar

Cedar is a small room which is used for interventions, 1:1 and 1:2 work. The room provides a safe space where an LSA or Teacher may feel it is appropriate to offer Cedar time to a student who is struggling. The room is well equipped with mindful colouring, games and activities and a chill out zone with beanbags and cushions. The room is used by the school counsellor, as a base, for her sessions.

ARC – Animal Respect and Care.

Lessons are carried out in the animal outdoor classroom and Pupils learn about caring for something and about how to respect living things.

The role of the Nurture Group Leader

- To run the Ready to Learn area with 3 teaching staff and four LSA’s
- To include the needs for all year 6,7 and 8 pupils.
- Be involved in formal reviews as required; to support curriculum development;
- Be involved with the selection and re-integration of pupils
- Maintain the Nurture Group principles- this is to provide a carefully structured session where this is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.

- Organise and plan the activities and curriculum of the classroom, bearing in mind the needs of the children.
- Keep records of individual children's progress
- Co-ordinate the Nurture-group staff and Pupils.
- Liaise with other professionals when appropriate including visits from local Community Support officers
- Activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil craft sessions as well as an after school group for ex-sparkler children.
- Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities.
- Manage the Nurture Group budget.
- Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

Teaching and Learning

The Ready to Learn pupils have their own themed curriculum with a large emphasis on PSHE, Social and emotional learning. There are clear links to other core and foundation subjects. Activities are planned around a termly theme to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. Weekly planning which where possible incorporate the progression of key skills is undertaken by the Nurture Group Leader, with planning then forwarded to the main school teachers and staff.

Redwood

Pupils have three tasks to complete around a particular skill or topic. When they have completed their work they can play a social game or be read to or play with each other on some computer games. This room's main focus is about asking for help from staff, realising it is ok to make mistakes and not be fearful of the work. If the student has had issues at home or school, they can stay in the room and have toast and drinks and just use it as a safe place and not worry about the academic work this time. Pupils who do the work are praised and rewarded, those who opt out of the academic task are supported in their social development.

Greenheart

Greenheart sessions follow a curriculum map, which focuses on a theme for each half term. The tasks for the lesson are written on the board and the final task is always to take part in an activity of your choice with a peer. Tasks are based around practical activities e.g. crafts, games, discussions and group tasks. The pupils very much guide the learning in Greenheart. Pupils in Greenheart have a target strand from their Boxall profile, which is identified by their teacher. The pupils are assessed through observations in the classroom and the Boxall profile provides the basis of these assessments. The themes in Greenheart are:

- Identifying my emotions
- Effective communication
- Friendships
- Peer pressure
- Building positivity
- Celebrating team work

Identification and Referral

All new pupils in year 6, 7 and 8 to the school are placed in a Ready to Learn group. Before they start they have a number of taster days and the lead teacher visits the student in their previous placement, or at home if they are not currently at school. All pupils are then assessed using the Boxall profile and observations to decide which of the five groups would best suit their emotional needs. The criteria for each group is as follows:

Yellow

Most vulnerable pupils who need the most nurturing approach. They will have 70% of their lessons in Ready to Learn.

Green group

Vulnerable but with a more aggressive nature. They will have 70% of their lessons in Ready to Learn.

Purple

Score slightly higher on the Boxall in the H to J sections. 60% of lessons with Ready to Learn..

Red

Usually the older pupils who have had some Ready to Learn time already. 40% lessons with Ready to Learn staff or in the area.

Blue

Those pupils who have been ready to transition out of Ready to Learn, but keep 4 lessons a week in the area to support them when they need it and to help stop the feeling that they have been rejected.

Pupils can be moved between the groups every half term depending on their needs.

Involvement of Parents

Parental/Carer support is considered very important for the child's progress and parents are included in a loyalty scheme, which encourages being actively involved in their child's education.

Before pupils start at Ramsden Hall:

- Parents/Carers are fully involved in the process to starting at Ramsden Hall.
- Transition meetings held between the Headteacher, Transition Manager and pupil to ensure we are an appropriate placement for the child.
- Parents will meet at least one member of the nurture staff when they bring their child in for their taster sessions.
- Feedback from taster sessions is given from the nurture staff to the transition manager which is then relayed to the parents/carers.

During their time here:

- Parents/Carers in the nurture group receive a weekly telephone call home from nurture staff to update them on their child's progress.
- Pupils receive weekly rewards and certificates, which are taken home to show parents/carers.
- Nurture staff are involved in home visits in order to reintegrate after an incident or prolonged absence.
- Parents/Carers are invited to visit each term for Pupils to show off their work and progress and to meet with nurture staff to celebrate their success.
- An annual written report is sent home.
- Parents/Carers can meet with nurture staff at anytime by making appointments through the office staff or emailing nurture staff directly to request a phone call.

Assessment

The Boxall Profile (which allows for an individual picture of the child's social and emotional needs) is used as the assessment tool. This is carried out termly in order for staff to be aware of any progress or change in the areas of need to be developed.

Alongside the formal assessment process is the informal, behaviours, both positive and negative are recorded on the school Sleuth system which is observed by the pupils from tutor and all Ready to Learn staff.

Re-integration

The most effective length of time to be a member of a nurture group is 2-4 terms. At any time throughout this, depending on the progress of the child, a re-integration programme may begin. Each of the five groups have different levels of nurture requirements and pupils will be moved from group to group over year 6, 7 and 8 on an individual basis for each child to slowly build them to be ready to enter the main school by year 9.

The re-integration process is fully supported by nurture group staff, the pupil, class teacher and parents.

Staffing

Our Nurture group has 2 teachers who have all participated in the Nurture Group training and achieved the relevant accreditation. An instructor and a teacher who has been trained by the Ready 2 learn leader and teaches ARC through the nurture. Two full time LSA's and a part time LSA who also follow the nurture approach.

Staff Absence

Protocol for Absence of staff in Ready to Learn:

- Ready to Learn staff to follow normal procedure for absence.
- In addition, communicate with Ready to Learn staff with notes (in addition to cover work) regarding specific student needs.
- Ready to Learn staff to communicate with absent staff, any relevant information (if appropriate) for their return to work.

- Groups and timetables well displayed in staff areas and classrooms.

Arrangements to Monitor and Review

This policy was written in consultation with staff and Governors. It should be read alongside other policies in school (Behaviour, SEN, Equal Opportunities etc)