

# Ardmona Primary School

## Nurture Group Policy

### Introduction

This policy has been in place since 2017 and updated on a yearly basis in line with recommendations from Principal.

### What are nurture groups?

Nurture groups are acknowledged as a good approach for early intervention for pupils with behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties. The over-arching principle is to provide a carefully, structured day, where there is a balance of modified learning and teaching, support and routine.

### Principle of the Nurture Group

The Nurture Group is designed to offer pupils:

- Security
- A trusting relationship with adults
- Support for children's positive emotional and social growth and cognitive development at whatever level of need the child shows by responding to them in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Direct Teaching

### The 6 Principles are:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally  
The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem
- Language as a vital means of communication
- It is understood that all behaviour is a communication
- The importance of transitions in children's lives is understood.

### Purpose and Aims of the Nurture Group

- To provide a small-scale setting in which children can experience nurturing care from caring adults, who actively work towards enabling their successful reintegration.
- To have a predictable, calm and purposeful environment and timetable.
- To develop self-esteem, social skills and coping skills (self regulation-Berry Street Education Model)
- To develop relationships between staff and students, building trust, confidence and reliability.
- To develop responsibility for self and others.
- To help children learn appropriate behaviour.
- To help children learn to make decisions and wise choices through understanding the consequences of certain ways of behaving.
- To work in partnership with parents and teachers to achieve consistency of approach.
- To provide an on-going assessment using the student incident reports CASES.
- To prevent possible exclusion.



## The Curriculum

- The Nurture Group provides a modified curriculum that is suited to the children’s needs and is set by the classroom teacher.
- The Group covers literacy and numeracy primarily while also looking at social development skills.
- The group sessions are divided into small periods of time with each activity serving a clear purpose.
- Each session offers the security of a consistent and familiar structure as follows:
  - Greeting ritual
  - Designated activity of the day (literacy/numeracy/social skills)
  - Tidying up equipment
  - Reading
  - Ending Ritual

Activities are designed to offer children criteria that guarantees personal success with the aim of boosting a child’s self-esteem and sense of identity.

## Inclusive Practice

In the nurture group, we recognise that every child matters and we aim to respond to each child’s needs, taking into consideration their:

- Cultural Background
- Life Experiences
- Strengths
- Communication Needs
- Emotional and Social Needs
- Developmental Needs
- Physical Needs
- Character strengths



## Parental Contact

Parents are a key element of nurture work:

- Parents are formally consulted prior to their child attending the nurture group.
- Staff support parents in the form of meetings. Giving appropriate feedback and consulting on the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

## Placement Criteria

Each child will be selected for intervention in the Nurture Group for individual reasons. Suggested criteria includes;

- Teacher expresses concern to Principal and Nurture Group Staff.
- Nurture Group Staff meet with class staff to assess needs, gather background information and Boxall profile completed.
- Parents are contacted and invited to meet with Nurture Group Staff and agreement is sought from the parents to begin intervention.
- We allow for necessary adjustments for inclusive education



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## Staffing

The Principal manages the Nurture Group.

- Two Educational Support Staff are employed to work daily with the children in the Nurture Group led by the principal.
- The ratio of staff to pupils is 1:2
- In the short-term absence of a team member, every effort is made to maintain stability of the program with a designated member of staff taking the place of the absentee member or re-engaged in the classroom program for set period alongside class room teacher.

## The role of the Staff

- The role of the staff in the Nurture Group is to nurture the relationships with students through positive and affirming relationships to developing the Child's self-esteem.

## Structure of the Nurture Group

The Nurture Group is well structured with a strong sense of routine and familiarity.

- Four (4) sessions run from 9:00am – 1.00pm (flexible/optional afternoon sessions for top tier students under discretion of teachers)
- The morning will include time spent on curriculum based skills, using an assessment of literacy and numeracy skills and social skills/life skills directed by teacher, breakfast, shared play, when the opportunity for free developing play occurs and adult led activities and finally special talk time and circle time, planned in line with targets set from the individual incident reports.
- There is a good link with the child's class through the celebration of achievement, we share the news of certificates, stickers or merit badges.
- The rewards in the nurture group are consistent and structured each day, consistent with the classroom reward system. Students are able to attain stickers and for one child the 'best listener of the day' and over time a prize from the 'prize box'. 'Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be A Learner.'

## Monitoring

Monitoring of children's progress and the effectiveness of the Nurture Group is of paramount importance to maintain high standards of nurture provision.

- Children's progress is continually monitored with a daily review of the session, weekly observations of the children. Completed weekly updated sheet. Traffic light feedback sheet.
- Weekly meetings with staff are arranged to review class progress
- Regular meetings are held with support staff and class teacher progress.
- Nurture staff regularly monitor and record the academic progress of children through group and anecdotal records/notetaking.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) and reviews are supported by classroom teacher plus SSS Staff and DET Agencies (e.g. SCOPE)

## Reintegration

Careful plans are required to resettle children back into their mainstream class.

This Policy was last updated in February 2021 and is scheduled for review in February 2024.



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