

Heavers Farm whole school nurture policy

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1. Introduction

At Heavers Farm, we have had a self-contained Nurture provision since 2018. Through this provision we have supported many pupils in removing their barriers to learning by offering a bespoke approach to meeting their individual needs.

The support offered is based around the 6 principles of nurture, as recommended by nurture UK, using the Boxall method of assessment to monitor and track pupils social and emotional progress. Given the success of the provision and the positive impact it has had on our school community, we have been taking steps to use these 6 principles to create a whole school nurture approach. This has involved lots of staff training, working with children and families on what these 6 principles mean to them and how using them as a baseline for all we do at Heavers will have positive outcomes, not only on pupils' social and emotional development, though also their academic progress.

2. Aims of the policy

- To use our nurturing school approach to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff, students and families.
- To provide a flexible, preventative resource and intervention to respond to the needs of all pupils attending the school. This links into Heavers nurture group, SEND, behaviour, mental health and Attendance policies.
- To provide a secure setting where children feel safe to learn by experiencing nurturing and encouragement by adults who actively work towards enabling the development of relationships, building trust, confidence and reliability.
- To provide an on-going assessment of children's social, emotional and academic development.
- To ensure all stakeholders are aware of the underpinning of the 6 principles of nurture which is embedded into our school ethos.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to behaviour as a means of communication.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people.
- Provide the right support to students, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop a nurturing culture amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- To enable all pupils to remove their barriers to learning in order to achieve their full potential.
- To work in partnership with parents to achieve a consistent, holistic approach.
- To enable pupils to develop independence and responsibility for their choices

3. The 6 principles of nurture

A nurturing school is underpinned by important values that supports 6 key principles. These principles are woven through from our visions and values to the core learning, putting the children at the heart of everything that we strive to achieve at Heavers.

The classroom offers a safe base

All classrooms provide a secure base, where predictable routines are clearly outlined and practiced. Adults are reliable and set firm boundaries without causing the children to feel negative. There are opportunities for children to emotionally regulate where required using the in-class regulation stations. All children are valued, encouraged and celebrated. This is reflected in the visual representation of diversity within our school community.

Children's learning is understood developmentally

The foundations of learning begin at birth and develop through close relationships with an adult. Children will develop independence through dependence and social empathy and learning develops from being valued and encouraged by others. All staff respond to each child at whatever emotional or social age they present at and plan accordingly. Developmental progress is assessed through the Boxall profile tool which will show progress and identify gaps in emotional and social development.

All behaviour is communication

Understanding that a child is communicating through behaviour helps staff to respond in a firm yet nurturing way. Firm boundaries help children to feel safe and secure. Whilst we encourage accountability for behaviour we also understand that this behaviour can be from a place of dysregulation. When children feel they are understood this helps to diffuse the situation and enable the child to regulate and give a space for reflection. By reflecting on behaviour, this allows time for unpicking the underlying reasons. This principle underlines the adults' response to challenging behaviour by using our curiosity 'Given what I know about this child and their development, what is this behaviour trying to tell me?'

The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing

Nurture is about listening, being responsive, remembering and engaging in reciprocal shared activities, reading and talking about events and feelings. Children respond to being valued and in practice this involves noticing and praising small achievements. Wellbeing is threaded into the curriculum and children know how to use strategies to support their own wellbeing. In addition to this, children are aware of the wellbeing menu of support offered through the various services on offer and how to access the when need arises.

Language is a vital means of communication

The importance of language as a way of putting feelings into words is crucial. Children can sometimes internalise their emotions and become overwhelmed. This could be due to not having sufficient emotional vocabulary to describe how they feel. We use the Zones of regulation programme to enable children to not only name the feeling, though to categorise that emotion and select a known strategy to enable them to work through and move into a more optimal emotional state of being.

Transitions are important in the lives of children

Whole school nurture approaches support the children to make the transition from home to school, which for some children this can be quite difficult. On a daily basis there are numerous transitions the child makes such as: between lessons, moving around school, changes in adults. All transitions, big or small, are treated with care and consideration of how the child could be feeling. Changes in routine can be extremely difficult for some children and this is carefully managed with preparation and support from staff.

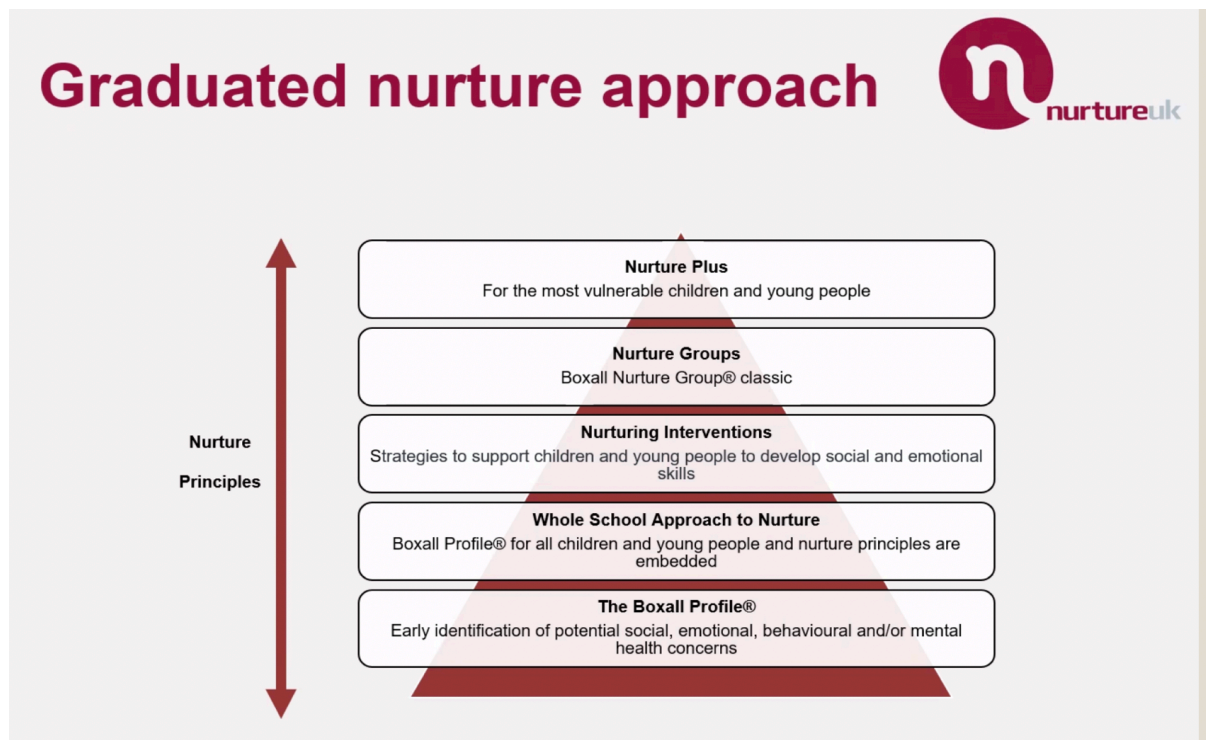
4. Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote nurturing practices. This applies to working to ensure the environment is nurturing including their approach to students and parents as well as colleagues, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

National Nurturing School Programme lead	Donna Haywood Rob Harnett
Nurture Lead	Donna Haywood
Nurture practitioner's	Sarah Mautsi Grace Brown Hanif Charles
Senior mental health lead	Donna Haywood
SENCO Deputy SENCO	Rachel Evans Antonio Sylvestri
Designated safeguarding lead Deputy DSL	Rachel Evans Uzma Salim
Curriculum links	All teaching staff
Emotional learning support coaches	Caroline Kelly Hanif Charles
Croydon nurture network lead	Donna Haywood
Lead Governor for mental health and wellbeing	Tanya Dennis

5. Our school nurture pathway

As a universal approach, we at Heavers Farm take careful consideration to ensure that our school feels welcoming to all members of the community. As a driver of this approach we ensure that all stakeholders have access to support via our graduated nurture approach.



Tier 1, The Boxall profile is an early identification assessment tool created by Marjorie Boxall used to identify gaps in children’s development. By using this tool, we can put bespoke plans in place to bridge these gaps. This assesses potential social, emotional and behavioural needs and can be a marker to any mental health concerns. We currently use this tool for all pupils that have a nurture intervention to indicate where their core needs are and track progress. As a trial last academic year, all pupils in Year 5 were assessed, where success led to having a Boxall profile for every pupil within the school in 2024/25.

Tier 2, The 6 principles are embedded into all aspects of school life. To ensure this approach meets the needs of all children we use the above model. This includes all nurturing approaches which are woven into school life. Our curriculum fosters a nurturing approach to learning.

Tier 3, Is aimed at providing social and emotional support within the classroom environments where needs arise. In addition to this, systems are in place such as the Zones

of Regulation® programme which supports emotional literacy as a whole school approach. This includes a regulation station within each classroom for children to access where necessary to regulate their emotions.

Tier 4, supports a planned approach for pupils who require a more structured form of nurturing intervention than can be provided in class. These pupils are referred by staff when other interventions have not fully resolved identified gaps. The nurture provision can provide a range of interventions which are delivered as group work, or on a one to one basis. As with other support offered, these sessions are based around the findings from the child's Boxall profile.

Tier 5, is where a referral to external services such as CAMHS would take place when other interventions are not enough or the needs are more severe.

6. Parents and Carers

6.1 Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers are valued at Heavers and their voice matters. We acknowledge the importance of parental engagement across all aspects of school life. Parents are informed of concerns swiftly and sensitively. We ensure opportunities are presented for Parents and Carers to be involved in their child's learning journey through parents' evenings and open days and sharing experiences through the class blogs. Parents are invited to additional meetings for children with SEND in order to work alongside school on Additional Support Plans (ASPs). Safeguarding systems in place are to work with the families. We appreciate the feedback received through frequent surveys and this information is used to inform decisions where appropriate. A PTA is in place and we welcome new interest and ideas. Regular surveys are undertaken to ensure Parent voice is considered when making decisions where appropriate.

6.2 Supporting families

We appreciate that at various times the level of support required can differ as needs change. As a result of this, we set up Heavers community hub. Through this hub we can support with food packages, pre-loved uniform and signposting information to external services that can assist with most needs. We hold a coffee morning each Wednesday where nurture staff are on hand to listen and inform. Staff are available in the playground and at classroom doors at drop off times for enquiries. An appointment system is in place for more detailed conversations. Safeguarding concerns are handled in a sensitive manner and always guided by what we can do to support the family.

7. Staff

7.1 Role of all staff

Staff at Heavers are supportive and inclusive. They are familiar with the 6 principles of nurture and follow the school ethos to ensure a nurturing approach. There are clear expectations of how staff relate to children in all events. Staff are actively involved in implementing the National Nurturing schools programme and embedding the ethos into our curriculum. Staff have knowledge of the children and are able to address their social and emotional needs. This includes training around Boxall profiling and how to support children beyond the Boxall.

They are aware of the importance of their own wellbeing and how that impacts them. All staff have a wellness plan in place and know how to access tips around self-care strategies. All staff know how to access support where needed through the systems available through the school mental health and wellbeing pathway.

7.2 Role of the Governing body

The governing body has had access to training and information around the Nurturing schools programme. They have taken a keen interest in the development of the transition from a school with a nurture provision into a nurturing school and fully support the development of the school approach to nurture at Heavers. They have regular updates on how as a school we are working towards this through the school development plan and discussions on the agenda at governing board meetings. As with all aspects of school life, the governing body has a duty to assess the progress and development, including impact of the nurturing schools programme and supporting the school in gaining a nurturing school accreditation. As the staff Governor for Heavers is also the programme lead for the NNSP programme at Heavers, it has enabled information to be shared as an ongoing topic during the quality of education and full Governors meetings.

8. Training

All staff have had training through the National Nurturing Schools programme. This training will be ongoing to ensure we have a consistent approach and to support their continued professional development. This includes competency of the Boxall profiling system.

9. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is Spring 2027

In between reviews, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team/Senior Mental Health and Nurture lead.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.

As and when other policies are reviewed with the Governing body, we will ensure they are consistent with the nurturing school ethos before approval.