Nurture at Linlithgow Primary School

"Sometimes children need just a little extra support to help them on their way to learning, making friends and growing into confident and successful young people. Nurture groups can help provide that support for children to give them the skills they need to do well at school, make friends and deal more confidently and calmly with the trials and tribulations of life, for life".

The Nurture Group Network, helping children and young people to succeed.

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 develops 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 nurture group respond to each child at whatever emotional or social age s/he appears to be 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 which is predictable. The nurture group room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of the children's relationships with each other and with the staff.

3. **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 snack, reading, learning, 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 offering labelled praise for small achievements; nothing is hurried in nurture groups.

4. **Language is 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 a shared snack 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** - 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 world of the child. This principle underlines the adult response to the children's challenging 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. 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 managed carefully with preparation and support.

<u>Our aims are to provide:</u>
- A small scale setting in which children can experience focused nurturing care from an adult.
- A flexible and holistic approach to education and care in response to the particular needs of the children attending our school.
- An environment that is safe, secure and with a home like atmosphere.
- An environment that aids the child's development emotionally and academically.
- The opportunity to help children learn to make decisions and appropriate choices through understanding the consequences of certain ways of behaving.
- Ongoing assessment and support for children exhibiting behaviours linked to emotional stress and attachment issues.
- An environment which will develop the child's self-esteem and confidence through planned activities.

<u>The Nurture Group will:</u>
- Strive to have a positive effect on children's attitude toward the school community, giving them strategies to cope with conflict and challenges.
- Help children to focus concentration levels, which will in turn impact on standards of attainment across the school.
- To support children who have emotional difficulties which prevent them from learning and making relationships.
- Help children learn to regulate their emotions so they can make relationships and access learning opportunities.

<u>The Rainbow Room</u>
Our Nurture Group takes place in The Rainbow Room. The Rainbow Room is organised into the following areas to replicate home life:

1) Learning Area
2) Play Area
3) Living Room/Comfy Area
4) Kitchen Area/Eating
5) Quiet Area

In the Rainbow Room there is equipment and materials that help to provide learning opportunities for emotional and behavioural growth set in a curriculum working area:

• a work table
• soft seating in an area of the room where informal activities can take place
• food preparation and sharing area
• an age appropriate role-playing area
• play resources
• a mirror
• access to age and developmentally appropriate curriculum resources.

Teaching and Learning

The Nurture Group has a themed curriculum which has a large emphasis on Personal, Social, Emotional and Mental Health. Activities are planned around a termly theme to provide a stimulating environment for the children. Weekly planning incorporates developmental and age appropriate skills informed by the pupils individual Boxall Profiles.

The Nurture Group always begins with Circle Time, allowing the children to share news, talk about their feelings and develop speaking and listening skills. This is usually followed by a themes task or activity, individual target work and a shared snack time, providing the opportunity to socialise with peers and adults as well as take responsibility for preparing food and clearing away.

Example of the Nurture Experience Format:

• Greetings ritual;
• Circle time activity;
• Designated activity of the day;
• Social time – usually a table based snack and a drink, children help to set up and clear up.
• Ending ritual.