

Nurturing School Policy

St Aidan's CE Academy



Updated: November 2025

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Nurturing School Policy

Purpose of this Document

- To outline the principles guiding St Aidan's CE Academy
- To identify what St Aidan's CE Academy offers with regard to nurturing activities at a whole school, group and individual level.
- To identify access criteria for focussed group and individual intervention.
- To support the identification of specific children who may benefit from focussed intervention, ensuring equality of access, and identifying any gaps in provision.
- To support the development of evidenced-based evaluation methods to measure outcomes when specific interventions take place. This process will feed back into the development of further interventions, and whole school practice.

1. Purpose/Aim of the Nurturing Academy

The six principles on which our nurturing Academy is built (taken from The Nurture Group Network):

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The Academy offers a safe place for learning.
3. Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem.
4. All behaviour is communication.
5. Language in all forms is a vital means of communication.
6. Transition is important in children's lives.

The Aims and Vision of St Aidan's CE Academy

- We will actively provide individual, high-quality opportunities for inclusion for our pupils.
- We will provide training, advice and support to teachers, staff and pupils to facilitate full access for all our pupils.
- We will work inclusively with the Shelley Pyramid to ensure optimum outcomes to all.
- We will provide an environment where pupils feel valued and have equality of opportunity.
- We will encourage lively and enquiring minds, where pupils are independent learners, who are able to argue, discuss and ask logical questions.

- We will encourage the development of moral values, respect for differing beliefs and tolerance of others.
- We will have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, achievement and progress.
- We will meet every pupil's individual needs through partnerships with parents, community and professionals.
- We will offer a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which is delivered through a variety of teaching and learning styles, accounting for the differing needs of our pupils so as to enhance their experience, knowledge and understanding and inspire them to fulfil their full potential.
- We will provide opportunities to develop understanding, knowledge and skills relevant to adult life, so as to encourage pupils to enter the world as active citizens in society, as contributors with effective skills of self-advocacy and decision making.

In particular we aim to:

- Provide a secure and reliable environment where children can learn by experiencing nurture from caring adults who actively work towards their successful participation in school life.
- Help children to improve their self-esteem and develop confidence through close and trusting relationships with adults and children.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to enable consistency of approach, both at home and school.

2. Description

Our nurturing school creates a positive and supportive approach, based on well documented psychological theory and research. The whole school operates practices and follows principles that are supportive in developing secure attachments, creativity in play, and emotional resilience.

Classes/Teaching Groups

All aspects of the structure of St Aidan's CE Academy aim to provide caring environments for each child to enable them to access the full national curriculum. We have a quiet room called The Library (see below) and intervention spaces set aside for individual/ small group work, and for dining in a quieter environment away from the Hall.

School Mealtimes

The school dining room has rectangular tables to enable groups of children to sit together. Children are encouraged to conduct calm and inclusive conversations around the table. On occasions it has been possible to serve some of the vegetables grown by pupils at St Aidan's CE Academy.

Nurture Room

The school has a dedicated Nurture Room (the rainbow room) as a sanctuary for all children. This has soft furnishings, restful lighting, music as required. The Nurture Room provides a space where the children can talk through issues as appropriate with staff, access work in a quieter, safe environment.

Emotional Wellbeing

The local authority allocated Educational Psychologist and Autism Communication Team (ACT) over see and advise on our provision for children with Autism and/or social/ emotional/ mental well-being & mental health issues (SEMH). St Aidan's CE Academy directly funds additional hours from the Educational Psychologist. There is active Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and That can be accessed for specific children when required. Teachers use questionnaires as a baseline for the child's needs and use it to assess progress during the year. The Boxall Profile is available to assess areas of developmental need. Other children may be identified by school staff as those who would benefit from extra support to raise their self-esteem, self-confidence, improve their self-control, attendance and or relationships with others. Techniques used are planned in advance and implemented carefully.

Outdoor Learning

Playtimes/break times are well staffed, and adults join in play with the children. Play leaders in year 5, support the younger children at lunchtimes. Children have the opportunity to play their own games with friends and tables are provided for quiet activities. St Aidan's CE Academy has an excellent outdoor provision enabling teaching staff to plan lessons to take place outdoors when this will enhance the children's learning provide opportunity for engagement with nature and environment and have the opportunity to feel the positive impact of being outdoors. It is also used for social groups and SEMH Interventions.

Enrichment Activities

We have had an Emotional Wellbeing Week in the Autumn Term which has included input on Emotional Health from local branches of MIND and Samaritans, as well as yoga sessions across the key stages.

- The school has garden areas and raised beds. Horticulture sessions are available throughout the year to give children the opportunity to plant, tender and harvest vegetables. When possible, the harvested food is used to make food that can be shared with the whole school or is taken home by the children to share with their families.
- We know that Bereavement and loss can have a major impact on the emotional wellbeing of all children. Therefore, at St Aidan's CE Academy we have trained all staff in dealing with children who this applies to.

- Cookery is offered in various areas during the year for special times, as part of curriculum areas or cooking clubs. Children may share their cooking with one another or take it home to share.
- St Aidan's CE Academy has an active programme of engagement in a range of sporting, dance and cultural activities. After school Clubs, such as Cookery, Dance, Sewing, Film, Art, Gym and Sports offer opportunities for engagement for our children.

Transitions

Transitions are a part of everyday life and children may require support to enable them to learn that they can make transitions successfully. We support children by having a timetable that is predictable and structured to provide a secure base. Changes to the timetable are planned whenever possible in advance so that children can be made fully aware of and are prepared in advance of the change.

To support Reception children's transition into school they have the opportunity to visit school at 'Play ins' where they get to meet the class teacher and experience the classroom. They also have a home visit where the class teacher and support staff get to know the child and family. All children have a transition week at the end of the school year where they have an opportunity to visit their new class and get used to new routines and classrooms. Changes such as an offsite visit are planned in detail and children are briefed to ensure that they learn to experience change as a positive event.

3. Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

The nurturing school is an ethos which supports the special efforts required to ensure that all groups of children participate and prosper as reflected in the Single Equality Policy.

4. Assessment

St Aidan's CE Academy has access to and uses assessment tools as appropriate to measure specific aspects of children's attitudes towards themselves as learners and their attitudes towards school. It will allow preventative early identification of any pupils "at-risk" and inform timely and strategic intervention to reduce the negative impact of disaffection, low self-regard and related attitudes on attainment, attendance and other key educational performance indicators.

The Boxall Profile is available to assess levels and progress before and after Interventions and to support the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) target setting and review process. This will be completed as appropriate during the Autumn Term and within the 1st half term for new children to the school, as recommended by the Educational Psychologist. It will be used alongside other school assessments to inform about overall progress and achievement as appropriate.

5. Staff Wellbeing

- St Aidan's CE Academy recognises the crucial role of staff wellbeing in the ability to 'nurture' our children. As such we are committed to ensuring staff:
 - have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way.
 - have recognition of their work-life balance and are able to access proactive strategies and systems to support them at times of emotional needs in both the short term and the long term.
 - have their mental health and well-being reviewed regularly.
 - feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision making processes and celebrate and recognise success.
 - are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively and are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development.
 - have time to reflect.
 - have the opportunity to work with a 'learning mentors' in school.

6. Family Wellbeing

St Aidan's CE Academy recognises the crucial role of wellbeing in a family's ability to 'nurture' our pupils in partnership with school. As such we are committed to ensuring parents/ carers:

- are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health.
- are welcomed, included and work in partnership with school and agencies.
- are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed.
- are signposted to appropriate agencies for support.
- are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with school.
- have their opinions sought, valued and responded to.
- have their strengths and difficulties recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately.
- Have the opportunity to discuss any Boxall findings to help them with understanding their child's developmental needs if appropriate.

7. Monitoring and review of provision

The Nurturing ethos will be evaluated through the schools internal monitoring systems and through OFSTED inspections. This will include evaluations of individual activities by pupils, staff formal and informal observations, and feedback from parents/ carers about the emotional wellbeing of their children.