CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Nurture Education Trust

Date reviewed : 18/03/2026

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Policy Owner: Mark Anderson

Nurture Education Trust seeks to promote a rich curriculum which is accessible to all our learners in a safe and nurturing environment and to enable all learners to experience both personal and academic success. The curriculum is the whole learning experience offered by the school and the way children learn is as important as what they learn. We aim to optimise learning opportunities throughout the day whilst maintaining a focus on developing emotional development and confidence in our learners.

Curriculum Aims:

All children have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences into account. Many of our learners have experienced significant time out of learning due to anxiety, poor metal health or trauma which has led to persistent absence prior to attending Nurture Education Trust. Ensuring learners feel safe enough to learn and confident to attend school is our initial priority. Learners at Nurture Education Trust will have access to a highly personalised curriculum which takes account of the National Curriculum but is focussed around individual needs and strengths.

Nurture Education Trust focuses on the core challenges that lie in developmental trauma, attachment and sensory processing difficulties which all of our learners have experienced. These include problems with managing uncertainty and change, social interaction and understanding and managing emotions. At Nurture Education Trust our curriculum involves academic learning but our first priority is to work on these core difficulties rather than just compensating for, or working around them. We achieve this using a relational narrative storytelling approach, promoting connection and co-regulation which is strongly influenced by

the principles, thinking and research behind the PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) and DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy) models.

We take the view, supported by research that academic achievement without appropriate social and emotional development leaves learners with a poor quality of life, as well as poor life chances. We therefore focus our work on the difficulties associated with developmental trauma. At Nurture Education Trust we group learners in the following "Phases" rather than classes determined by chronological age. These are not rigid and learners can move between phases and when their emotional or academic needs require it.

Transition phase: In this phase learners are gradually integrated into the school or with outreach based 1-1 Teacher/Tutor support provision and the main aim is to enable them to feel safe and secure in a learning environment. Teaching and intervention support staff work closely with learners to establish emotional needs and gain a sense of where the learner is academically using the BKSB assessment tool and Reading Plus Assessment. Typically, learners can access a reduced timetable (but this is always last resort) with a set timeframe and build up gradually.

Phase 1: PSHE, immersive play, spontaneous learning opportunities and other developmentally appropriate activities occur alongside modified learning activities which encourage physical and sensory regulation development. Themes and therapeutic activities are the primary focus, rather than academic outcomes and learning is proportioned with regular sensory breaks.

Phase 2: Learners are met where they are developmentally and engage in a variety of activities with PSHE and relationships at the core. More formal highly scaffolded learning opportunities are delivered depending on the academic and emotional needs of the learners. Learning is discrete in Maths, English and PSHE and the remainder of the learning is typically centred around themes using AQA Awards to recognise achievement quickly and build confidence.

Phase 3: Learners will access the Nurture Education Trust Curriculum as appropriate, typically modified and accessed at the academic level of the learner rather than chronological age. PSHE and emotional development remain the pivotal approach. Learners may access more formal qualifications such as GCSEs, ASDAN/AQA Award Qualifications and Functional Skills as appropriate to their needs and ability.

We aim to deliver outcomes that demonstrate, over time:

- Improved self-regulation (managing own emotions and behaviour)
- Improvement in coping with uncertainty and change (decreasing anxiety)
- Increased ability to make and sustain meaningful reciprocal relationships
- Increased independence
- Improved quality of life with reduced stress for learners and their families.

In planning and delivering our broad and balanced curriculum, the school will endeavour to:

- Cater for the needs of individual learners from all ethnic and social groups including the more able and those who experience learning difficulties.
- Facilitate learner's acquisition of knowledge, skills, qualifications and qualities which will help them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically and morally, so that they may become independent, responsible, confident and considerate members of the community.
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- Create and maintain an exciting and stimulating learning environment in which learners feel valued, safe and able to learn.
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- Enable all learners to experience a sense of personal achievement by encouraging them to fulfil their potential in different areas relevant to their abilities skills and interests.
- Engage and involve parents in the educational and emotional development of their child.
- Ensure that each learner's education has continuity and progression which enables them to progress with confidence to the next stage of their lifelong learning in preparation for adult life.

Learners should:

- Learn to be adaptable, how to deal with and solve problems in different situations, how to work independently and as a team member.
- Begin to acquire a set of moral values such as honesty, sincerity, personal responsibility, on which to base and improve their character.
- Be expected to behave in a dignified and acceptable way and learn to become responsible for their own actions.
- Care for, respect and take pride in their school, themselves, others and the wider world and environment.
- Learn to communicate their knowledge, feelings and thoughts in appropriate ways.
- Know how to keep themselves safe.
- Develop tolerance and understanding of the diverse world we live in, understanding what British Values are.

How our Curriculum works

All learners at Nurture Education Trust have a personalised timetable to support their individual needs, focussing on academic as well as social and emotional development. Learners are taught on a 1-1, 1-5 or very small group basis depending on the activity and considering pupils' needs as directed by their EHCP.

The school curriculum follows a topic based/thematic approach which ensures that the 7 broad areas of learning (linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative) are experienced throughout the academic year. English, Maths, Science and PSHE are taught to all pupils in a timetabled structured way.

The school day starts with a whole school registration which allows learners to adjust to the environment and to remove barriers to learning. Core subjects Maths, English, Science, Art and Creative iMedia take place across the school day which also includes further vocational/recreation sessions, which are highly personalised and in which a variety of teaching strategies and programmes are used to maximise engagement and progress.

Learners have the opportunity to engage in many practical learning tasks and will also engage in life skills such as food preparation, cooking, creative skills Travel Independence and all have access to impartial career guidance. Some students are also able to actively take part in our young apprenticeship scheme which utilises a students vocational interest by simulating a full apprenticeship and facilitating a transition to their actual future employer post 16.

Topic based learning typically includes a range of subject areas such as history, geography, art, health and social care and science. PE is often delivered in small groups or on a therapeutic one to one intervention (internal Active Choices project) to enable learners to engage fully and to deliver a bespoke offer to suit the needs of the learners.

All staff plan and set out their own schemes of learning, which can take account of National Curriculum materials. Planned schemes may use documents or commercial schemes / websites, adapted for use with individual pupils. The schemes of work set out the range of topics taught over the year and how they are incorporated into individual subjects. EHCP Outcomes and BKSB Baseline Assessments, external Dyslexia assessments etc. for each learner are used to inform planning.

Staff meet on a regular basis to review curriculum areas and develop and adapt planning in order to ensure good progress. The appointed Teaching and Learning lead monitors the annotated staff plans in conjunction with book looks following delivery of the learning, which ensures learning is adaptable and flexible and that gaps identified are being addressed. This also ensures consistency in marking and feedback and alongside learning works, professional observations and open classrooms informs leaders of the efficacy of the teaching and learning taking place.

Alongside the traditional curriculum the school has a range of counselling/wellbeing/therapeutic input which supports our learners to access learning. These include the schools counselling listening service, wellbeing mentoring interventions, ADHD Norfolk Coaching and group therapeutic work. Horse and connection therapy at Ecotherapy Farm alongside inhouse Drawing and Talking Therapy is also used to enable learners to develop their self-regulatory strategies.

Due to developmental delay and in most cases, time out of school during their previous placements, most learners have not acquired the academic standards expected of their chronological age when they start at Nurture Education Trust and therefore their rate of progress is measured against the learner's starting point, rather than age related expectations.

Qualifications

We aim to give learners opportunities to gain qualifications or accreditations where this is felt to be both appropriate and relevant to the learner's future pathway. It is of the utmost importance to us that our pupils do not have experiences of failure as these are usually what have led them to withdraw from learning and have contributed significantly to poor emotional wellbeing in their previous educational settings.

Staff make use of the AQA Awards/ASDAN awards programmes (www.asdan.org.uk) with phase 2 and 3 learners in as many areas as possible to assist pupils to gain certification. Currently learners are engaging in the following courses/qualifications: Hair and Beauty, Games Development, Animal Care and AQA Unit Award Sports. This enables all pupils to gain accreditation which is nationally recognised and appropriate to their own individual needs. Self-esteem and confidence through the offer of vocational AQA Unit Awards also improves momentum and engagement. Learners through access to vocational subjects Hair and Beauty, Games Development and Animal Care will access simulated work experience opportunities adapted to meet their needs and prepare for career progression. Further work experience, including the young apprenticeship scheme, will be set up in areas of interest that have been identified by learners, as and when appropriate and available.

Some of our students are academically able and a few will complete a very restricted number of GCSEs, but their difficulties managing their anxiety often mean that the pressure of taking exams of any kind is counter-productive for them as it would be detrimental to their emotional wellbeing.

The use of Functional Skills/AQA Awards programmes helps to prepare learners through practical skills in English and Maths, whilst providing individuals with essential knowledge, skills and understanding as well as practical experience that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in taking their next steps for life after school. Students will be entered into Functional skills exams at levels determined by staff through their own assessments to ensure that they leave school at the end of Year 11 with a qualification relevant to their ability and which will enable them to engage in a post 16 course of their own choice. We are an approved ASDAN centre and are registered with OCR, AQA and Pearson Edexcel exam boards Learners are carefully supported through the qualifications process to ensure that they are able to celebrate their successes and access their future further education and/or career path.

Appendix A: Curriculum Coverage

Linguistic	Mathematical	Scientific	Technological	Human and Social	Physical	Aesthetic/ Creative

-English Language and Literature GCSE - Reading -Functional Skills -AQA Awards	-Maths GCSE -Functional Skills -AQA Awards -PSHE -Creative iMedia -Combined Science	-Science - Creative iMedia -Animal Care ASDAN -Hair and Beauty ASDAN -AQA Awards -PSHE/SMSC	-Cooking - IT -Word Processing (all subjects) -Recreation	-Geography -History -Career Management -PSHE/SMSC	-PE (AQA Awards) -Walks -Park Supported play/ active time -Occupational Therapy (where appropriate) -PSHE/SMSC -TITAN (Bi-Weekly)	-Art/Arts Awards -Cooking -English Language -Creative Skills/Textiles GCSE

Qualifications and Accreditation	PSHE	Therapy/Wellbeing Intervention	Careers/Vocational/Young Apprenticeship Scheme
-GCSEs where appropriate -AQA Unit Awards -Functional Skills (Maths, English, IT) -ASDAN Hair and Beauty and Animal Care, Careers and Experiencing, Gardening) -Arts Award Bronze/Silver	- PSHE lessons - Careers and Experiencing -Beliefs and Values -off site visits for cultural capital	-Key Adult assigned -Listening Service -Intervention Support Tutor -Horse connection therapy	-Work experience- organised as and when appropriate and accessible. Long term work experience two days per week is maintained as part of the weekly curriculum as the young apprenticeship scheme. - Careers and Experiencing (ASDAN) – Bi-Weekly - Simulated work related/vocational learning – ASDAN, Hair and Beauty, Animal Care, Gardening.