

We are a Nurture School

Nurture at Southgate:

You need to be aware that if you send your child to Southgate, or you apply for a job here, we approach learning and behaviour management in a different way. We are a nurture school.

When a child's development is delayed and impaired for whatever reason (and often a mixture of reasons) they can live in a state of high anxiety. They struggle to make sense of information and to read other people. Often they may misinterpret other people's reactions as a threat. When this happens they will shut down and react by flight, fight or freeze.

It is pointless punishing a child for this. At the time, they will be overwhelmed by emotion and will be beyond reason. They will often be unable to hear or respond to what you say. We find that staff have to be very calm and reduce language at times like this. Visitors sometimes interpret this as staff doing nothing to challenge behaviour when they see pupils swearing or hitting. The staff will keep the pupil safe, often moving to another space, while waiting for the child to reach a point where they can work with them. The work goes on behind the scenes and is very personalised.

Long Term Development:

Punishment can quell a child's behaviour in the short-term but this doesn't help them develop in the long-term. We play the long-game and see amazing personal transformations over time. This can be a slow change, with the child beginning to regulate themselves with our support.

We also know that when a child is in a state of emotional arousal their ability to learn shuts down. We reduce demands at this time and work on their emotional well-being. When they are calm we seize those opportunities for learning. Again, they usually make wonderful progress because they want to learn.

Background:

Nurture was developed by Marjorie Boxall in the 1970s in London. She saw the impact that emotional needs had on the ability of a child to access learning. Since then it has been explored and developed in the light of many recent discoveries about brain function.

The Six Principles of Nurture:

Nurture recognises children's needs in six principles. These are all based around making a child feel safe and able to manage overwhelming emotions:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem/ well being
4. Language is understood as a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. Transitions are significant in the lives of children

We strongly believe that these nurture approaches improve outcomes and help prepare our pupils for adulthood.