

The Engagement Service

What is The Engagement Service?

The Engagement Service is an innovative service designed to support the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs of children and young people through evidence based tailored interventions, including Positive Play, Nurture and Outdoor learning.



The Service is led by experienced practitioners trained in child development, SEMH strategies and therapeutic interventions. This ensures:

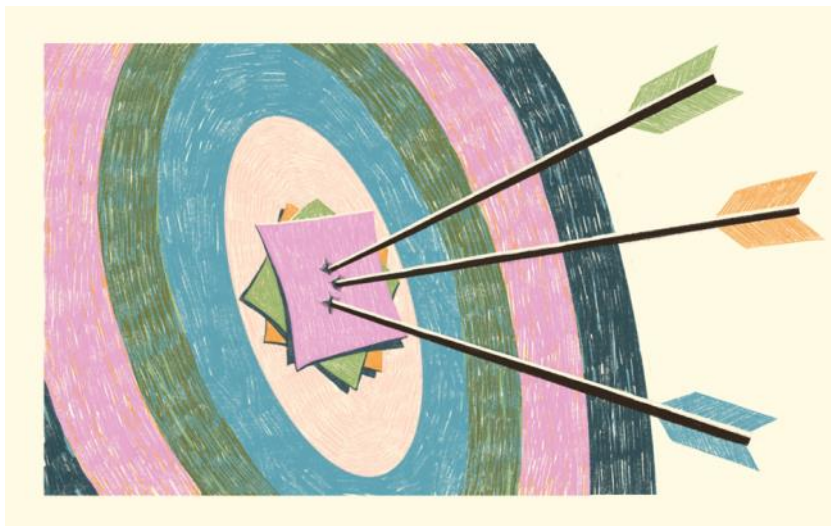
- Evidence-based practices are used.
- Support is delivered in a compassionate, professional manner.

Children and young people who will benefit from the service:-

- Those who struggle with anxiety, lack of self-worth and confidence.
- Those who present as withdrawn and timid, non-verbal children and young people.
- Those who find engagement in the classroom environment challenging.
- Those who struggle with emotional regulation.
- Those who experience difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships with peers and adults.
- Those who require additional support due to trauma, change in family circumstances, and transition.
- Those who are at risk of disengagement from education.

Our Vision

Our aim is to ensure every child in Derbyshire will be impactfully supported to meet their full educational potential, access life opportunities and thrive in society. This service will aim to play a crucial role in increasing attendance and engagement for children and young people at risk of disengagement and/or exclusion from school.



This will be achieved by establishing a trusted and authentic partnership with Derbyshire's young people, families and schools, offering **direct support** as well as helping to build capacity within schools through **advice and training**. This will enable schools to offer excellent graduated inclusion support and to broaden the range of quality assured positive interventions.

The service provides a holistic, child-centred, approach that empowers children and young people to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. It focuses on equipping children and young people with the tools they need for long-term emotional and social success and engagement.

Positive Play/Support



The Positive Play Intervention Programme was developed in Derbyshire in 1997 providing targeted support for children through creative, sensory, and play-based methods. Ofsted defined the Positive Play Support Programme as "an early intervention tool, reducing disaffection and encouraging inclusive education."

The Positive Play team comprises of a group of highly skilled positive play coordinators that work directly with pupils, staff and parents to set up and run Positive Play Programmes and Family Support Programmes. The programme is delivered in a sensory area with a trained Positive Play coordinator through a series of structured activities and play. Play is a natural medium which helps children and young people make sense of their world.

In 2009, a Centre of Excellence was established to enhance and expand the programme. This facility includes the 'Magic Room' – a multi-sensory environment, tailored to help children to explore, express themselves and promote relaxation. A Rainbow Room and Enchanted Forest providing a calm, interactive space designed to promote emotional well-being, imaginative play and inspire creativity and curiosity.

One-to-one sessions are tailored to meet the individual needs of the child or young person, providing activities that foster self-awareness and emotional literacy, build essential skills such as teamwork, turn taking and effective communication. Challenges and tasks are designed to instil a sense of achievement and self-worth, and activities that stimulate the imagination and encourage to think independently and explore their strengths.





Key Benefits

Emotional Regulation: Learn the tools and strategies to assist in calming themselves when overwhelmed or anxious. Express emotions in a healthy way by developing coping mechanisms for frustration.

Resilience: Confidence and problem-solving abilities are fostered, helping to adapt to challenges.

Relationship Building: Through guided play, children and young people enhance their ability to form positive relationships with peers and adults. Promoting interaction, fostering communication, teamwork, empathy and conflict resolution, which are vital for forming positive relationships.

Engagement in Learning: Assists to re-engage with their learning and fostering a sense of curiosity and focus. Celebrating achievements during play reinforces a sense of capability and self-worth.

Boosts Self-Esteem and Confidence: Celebrating achievements during play reinforces a sense of capability and self-worth.

'The Positive Play Support Programme is a great 1-1 initiative. It helps to spark each child's imagination and builds their social confidence and develops their ability to play positively and co-operatively and the children are making progress, We have had great continual support from the Team. All the resources are relevant and specifically tailored to suit each child's emotional, social and behavioural needs. I can not fault this service!'



Nurture

Originally established by Nurture UK in 1969, the approach was introduced to Derbyshire in 1999, where it continues to support children with a variety of needs. Nurture UK celebrated 50 years of Nurture in 2019, demonstrating the continuing impact of this provision and has been positively recognised by Ofsted, and more recently mentioned in the Timpson Report 2019 and the Recovery Curriculum in 2020.



Derbyshire Nurture Team

The Derbyshire Nurture is part of the Engagement Service. The team comprises of specialist Nurture trained teachers and teaching assistants with extensive skills and experience of working in Derbyshire schools and academies to promote positive behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

The Nurture team provide an opportunity for children to experience a structured, supportive programme that helps develop early learning skills. The Nurture team works in schools directly with pupils, staff and parents to set up and run Nurture Groups.

A Nurture group is a small group of 6 to 10 children or young people usually based in a mainstream setting and staffed by a Nurture teacher and teaching assistant. The intervention is delivered in a Nurture room, providing a home-like atmosphere that fosters warmth, comfort, and security.

Children who would benefit from being in a Nurture group are identified jointly by school and Nurture staff and present a range of needs that limit their progress in school. The identified pupils may have needs that range from those who struggle with classroom engagement, experience anxiety, lack of confidence or find it difficult to maintain friendships.





SIX PRINCIPLES OF NURTURE

Children's learning is understood

developmentally: recognising that children develop at different paces.

Nurture is important in the development of

well-being: a nurturing environment is essential for fostering emotional security.

Language is a vital means of

communication: encouraging children to express their feelings.

All behaviour is communication: children's actions reflect their emotional state and underlying needs require compassionate interpretation.

The importance of transition in children's

lives: helping children to adapt to changes building resilience.

The nurture room offers a safe base:

ensuring a stable, predictable environment, children feel secure enough to explore, learn and develop.

Key Benefits:

Increased Emotional Regulation/Security:

Learn strategies to manage their feelings and emotions. Feel safe, valued and understood.

Enhanced Confidence: With consistent support, children feel more capable and secure in their abilities. Empowers children to overcome challenges and develop a growth mindset.

Engagement in Learning: Addressing emotional barriers, assist in increased focus, participation, and success in the classroom.

Encourages Attachment and Trust: Positive interactions with adults foster trust, which can reduce anxiety and support children who may have experienced trauma or instability.

Improved Social Skills: Develop their ability to form and sustain positive relationships with peers and adults

Promotes Resilience: By addressing emotional needs and modelling healthy behaviours, nurture sessions empower children to overcome challenges and develop a growth mindset.

"The pupils who have attended the Nurture Groups have all talked about how much they have enjoyed the experience. Some highly structured and appropriately attentive support has impacted very positively on their self-esteem and helped them develop social, emotional and learning skills that have enabled them to enjoy great success in the afternoon."

Outdoor Provision

Outdoor activities provide unique benefits that differ from those experienced in a traditional classroom setting. Nature provides a dynamic, sensory-rich environment that stimulates the brain and encourages engagement in ways that indoor spaces cannot. Fresh air and natural light are associated with improved energy levels, mood, and concentration, while the open space allows for greater freedom of movement, which can enhance physical health and reduce feelings of restlessness. Likewise, the more adventurous activities, including climbing, caving, and canoeing, provide children and young people with a safe environment for positive risk-taking. These experiences encourage them to trust others, enhancing their social skills, self-control, emotional regulation, and ability to manage fear. They also help develop key skills for handling high demand or stress situations. Moreover, collaborative outdoor tasks strengthen bonds between peers and enhance teamwork abilities.



The ever-changing outdoor setting also promotes creativity and problem-solving, as students are often faced with real-world challenges. These experiences foster adaptability and critical thinking, providing children and young people with practical life skills that prepare them for challenges outside the classroom. The calming effects of nature, combined with opportunities for physical activity and social interaction, create a balanced and supportive environment that directly addresses students' social, emotional, and mental health needs.

OFSTED has found in learning outside the classroom that it helps children to build skills for life. The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) recognises that time spent learning outdoors can benefit children's mental and physical health through their 25-year environment plan (DEFRA, Citation2018).

As part of the Engagement Service our highly qualified and experienced Outdoor Instructors work with groups of young people, as well as individuals, delivering experiential learning through a variety of activities. We have a range of activities that can be delivered within the school grounds, as well as activities that are run at various outdoor settings across Derbyshire. We also have the opportunity to arrange activities at one of Derbyshire's outdoor centres White Hall or Lea Green.



Key Benefits

Physical/Mental Health: Activities encourage active participation, enhancing overall physical fitness. Lower cortisol levels and improved mood, reducing stress and blood pressure, creating an overall calming effect.

Supports the National Curriculum: Outdoor learning complements classroom education by reinforcing skills and knowledge in a practical, hands-on environment.

Sensory Engagement: Exposure to diverse natural settings engages the senses, improving focus, creativity, and emotional regulation.

Inspires a Love of Learning: The outdoor environment fosters curiosity, exploration, and a lifelong enthusiasm for learning. Children and young people are encouraged to take manageable risks, fostering resilience and decision-making skills.

Encourages Appreciation for Nature: Activities help develop respect and gratitude for the environment, promoting sustainability.

Encourages Risk-Taking and Problem Solving: Outdoor activities allow children and young people to take manageable risks, fostering resilience and decision-making skills.

“Children gave verbal feedback on the last day about how taking part in the activities had given them a sense of achievement, taken them out of their comfort zone and encouraged them to work as a team and to keep trying. As a staff member at the school, I saw some children who are the least confident, grow in confidence and be more open to trying new activities and also to help each other through the activities.”



Training, Consultation and Mentoring

The aim of the Engagement Service is to create inclusive environments in schools. While some of the work we do is directly with children and young people, we also aim to enable schools to support the needs of these children within their own settings. To do this we have developed training and mentoring programmes.

Outdoor

Training - Our outdoor instructors offer a training programme that can be delivered in one day, or across 4 shorter sessions. The aim is to enable school staff to plan, risk assess, and run sessions designed to be targeted interventions.

Mentoring - support and mentoring the trained staff in their planning of programmes.

Consultation - how best to use the school grounds. How to integrate outdoor activities with the curriculum.

Positive Play/Support

The Positive Play team can offer consultation, advice and support to schools as part of the graduated response, this may include:

A loaning library - a comprehensive resource library including books, games and activities.

Training - a bespoke 8 module training programme for school staff.

Mentoring - support in planning and tailoring sessions with advice and resources.

Family Fun Time Clubs - support in planning and facilitating sessions.

Nurture

The Nurture team can offer consultation, advice and support to schools as part of the graduated response to identify, assess and meet the underlying Social, Emotion and Mental Health (SEMH) and behavioural needs of children and young people. Specific resources and training can also be offered to support the development of practice, including Boxall Profile which is a widely used assessment tool specially developed for Nurture Groups.



How to contact us

If you have any further questions about our service, or need some advice, please contact us via:

Cs.engagementenquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk

You can also find information on the Derbyshire Local Offer website:

www.localoffer.derbyshire.gov.uk

Or on the Derbyshire Services for Schools website:

www.services.derbyshire.gov.uk



DERBYSHIRE LOCAL OFFER

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