



Dream Catcher Play & Creative Arts Therapy

School Information Sheet

What is Play & Creative Arts Therapy?

When children are experiencing big emotions they are finding hard to manage, they are often unable to explain with words exactly how they are feeling. This can lead to further frustration and distress for both the child and the adults around them. Using creative mediums such as: play, art, storytelling, music and movement; children are able to play out past or current events in a way that developmentally makes sense to them. They are able to see their concerns more clearly, which offers relief in the same way adults can when 'talking through' their issues. The therapist provides a warm and non-judgemental relationship and is able to 'hold' challenging feelings and thoughts so the child feels accepted and can safely explore these to find strategies to move forward.

Why have Play & Creative Arts Therapy in schools?

Teaching staff are fully aware that all behaviour is a form of communication - so they are well placed to notice when children are experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. By helping children and families to access early intervention support, children are then in a better position to thrive at school and reach their academic potential. Schools also offer a familiar, consistent and safe environment that is accessible to all children. By investing in a Play Therapist in the school, the teaching staff also have access to advice and tools to use in the classroom, which in turn supports their mental wellbeing. Both of which are highlighted as focus

Ofsted's 2019 framework highlights the need for schools to become less data orientated and more focused on the [holistic 'personal development' of each pupil](#). By offering Play Therapy in your school – you are positively embracing this approach for your SEMH pupils. It is also consistent with the [Hertfordshire Steps](#) therapeutic approach to learning and supports schools wanting to achieve their [Emotional and Mental Health and Well-being award](#) by Herts for Learning.

Who is Play & Creative Arts therapy for?

This effective therapy supports a wide variety of issues. It can support children and young people from 4 -14 years who are struggling with any of the following issues:

Emotional

Anxiety
Low self esteem
Difficulties with regulation
Peer difficulties
Low resilience

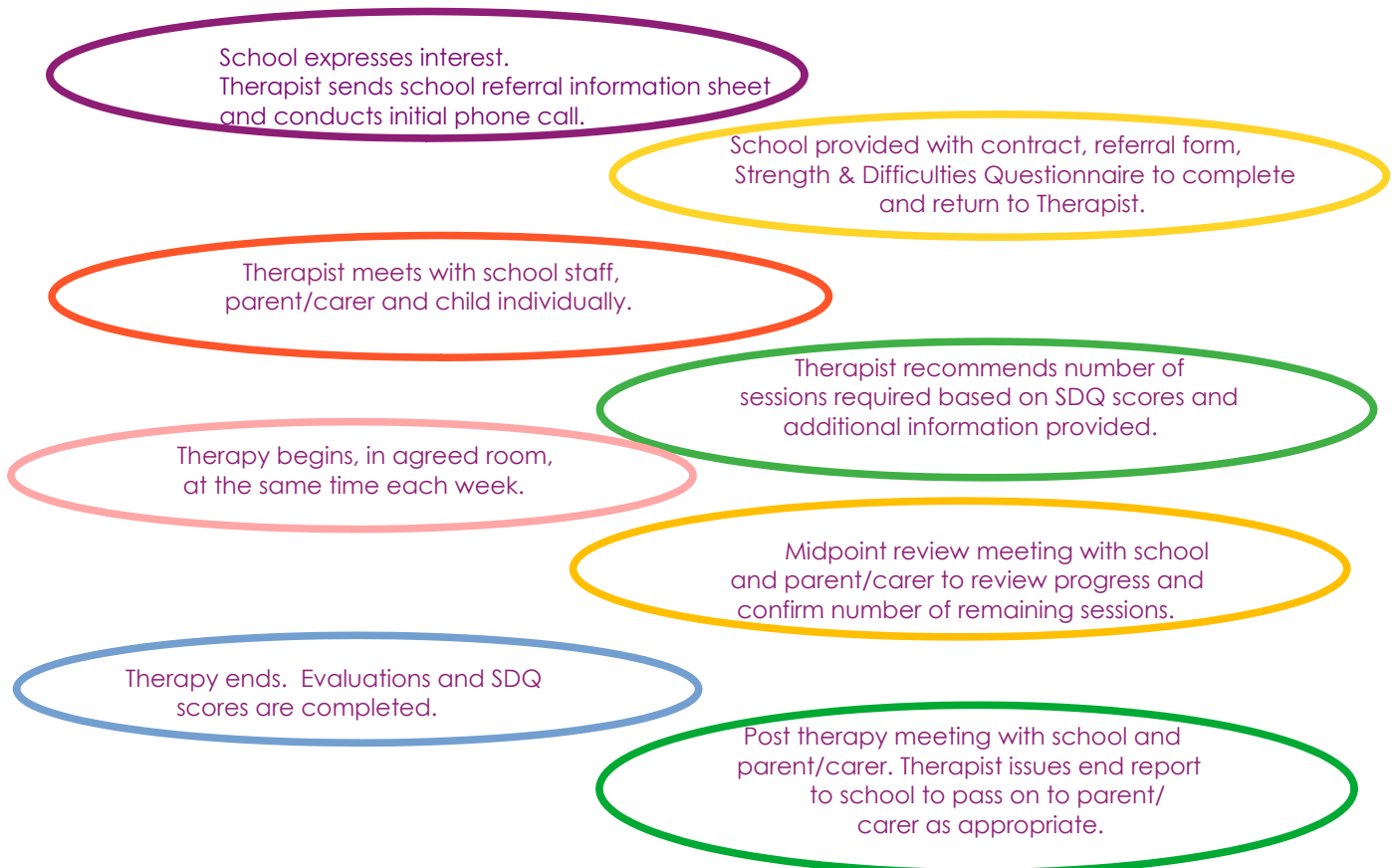
Behavioural

Aggression
Withdrawn
Inattentive
Antisocial behaviour

Environmental

Family breakdown
Bullying
Bereavement
Abuse
Trauma

What is the referral process?



How many sessions are required?

Play & Creative Arts Therapy sessions are conducted one to one, once a week, at the same time and place and last between 30 - 45 minutes depending on the child's age and developmental level. At the time of referral, an SDQ Assessment Tool will be used to understand the difficulties the child is experiencing and to advise a suitable length of intervention. For mild to moderate concerns, the minimum number of sessions is 12. For problems that have persisted for a long time or are complex, a longer length such as 20+ sessions may be recommended.

What can the therapist tell us about a session?

The therapist is able to feedback to parents and school staff about a child's 'progress' in Play & Creative Arts Therapy, but not their 'process'. This means that they are able to tell you in general terms the themes that might be occurring in therapy, but they will not tell you specific things that have happened in the session. In order to engage in the process freely, children need to be able to trust the therapist and believe that they will provide a safe and secure space.

Confidentiality ensures this trust remains intact and so the therapist will uphold the child's right to privacy. The therapist will only break confidentiality if they believe there is a safeguarding issue and the child will be made aware of this. This can be frustrating for school staff and parents but it is an essential part of the therapeutic process.

What happens in the case of a disclosure or safeguarding issue?

If the child makes a disclosure of a serious nature to the therapist the session will be stopped immediately. Before therapy begins agreement between the school and the therapist about the procedure in these circumstances will be confirmed. The therapist will always follow the safeguarding policy of the school they are working at as outlined in Dream Catcher's Safeguarding Policy.

What will Play & Creative Arts Therapy cost?

The packages below enable schools to offer therapy at reduced costs if offered to greater number of pupils. Pupil Premium funding can be used for this intervention.

Number of pupils	Cost per session *
1 - 2	£50 per session
3	Two pupils pay £50 each, the third pays reduced rate of £45**
4 +	All pupils pay reduced rate of £45**

* For each new client a one off payment of £100 is required to cover all parental/school meetings (approx 3 per client), supervision costs (all therapists/counsellors must regularly attend supervision with a recognised supervisor to ensure ethical principles and procedures are adhered to for all clients) and end report.

** If more than two pupils – all sessions must be held consecutively to benefit from reduced costings.

What is the evidence that Play & Creative Arts Therapy works?

Recognised assessment tools are used to monitor progress such as SDQs, in addition to the requested goals from parents/carers/school. Play Therapy UK data* shows that between 74% and 83% of children receiving play therapy, delivered to PTUK standards, show a positive change. To date**, Claire Twomey's results shows that between 85% and 93% of children show a positive change. * 2011 data **2016 - 2019 data

School testimonial:

"Our school has hugely benefited from Claire's Play therapy sessions. Claire is highly committed to improving the lives of young children and her passion shines through. Claire ensures she works closely with parents and conducts the sessions in a private and confidential way so that pupils feel safe in the sessions. The improvements in the pupil's well-being that have received Play therapy is testament in itself; fully demonstrating how it supports both the child and the family. We are continuing to have Claire support our pupils for this financial year and would highly recommend this service for other schools. We were recently accredited an award for Emotional and Mental Health and Well-being award in which this support was identified. 'The school has successful strategies to support the more vulnerable pupils with their mental well-being. There is, for example, access to a learning mentor and a play therapist' (Kate Stockdale, Herts for Learning Well-being Adviser – WQM Adviser, July 2019)"

Miss. Leah Wren Co- Headteacher, South Hill Primary School, Hemel Hempstead