

Therapy Policy

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Introduction

BeyondAutism Schools offer teaching based on the principles of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), using Skinner's Analysis of Behaviour (VB). Pupils at the schools have a primary Autism Spectrum Disorder impacting on their language, learning and functional performance.

BeyondAutism Schools have a Therapies Department with x3 Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) and x3 Occupational Therapists (OT) who work in conjunction with ABA/VB approaches to promote pupils' skills and abilities by providing opportunities and strategies for optimal learning and participation.

The goal of Therapies at BeyondAutism Schools is to provide person-centred and individualised intervention for skill acquisition, maintenance and generalisation. This is done in liaison with school staff, parents and other professionals working with each pupil, to address challenges in communication, social interaction, engagement, play, occupational performance and sensory processing.

OT's and SaLT's use Applied Behavioural Analysis principles and Positive Behavioural Support strategies as part of to support their sessions. These may include pairing, i.e. building therapeutic rapport and positive reinforcement.

Interventions used are evidence based and are formulated from assessment results. Targets are prioritised based on need and this guides IEP target setting. Therapists then devise a therapeutic programme of activities or recommend strategies which are personalised to each pupil so that they can maximise their potential as well as have the best experience at school. Therapy programmes consist of activities that the pupil completes with the therapists directly as well as indirectly with their one to one tutor at the school in association with their ABA programme.

All the pupils at the school are assigned a named therapist to complete their assessment, intervention and evaluation. Therapists may work across the two schools and across all ages and classes or they may be assigned to one school. Therapy staff at BeyondAutism Schools fulfil the assessment and therapy needs for each pupil as specified in their Statement of Educational Needs (SEN) or Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). They conduct regular reviews to update targets and formally report on the pupil's progress, annually through annual reviews and upon the school's or parents' request.

Both OT's and SaLT's adopt a multi-disciplinary team approach and foster inter-disciplinary working focusing on pupil outcomes.

SaLT Role

The role of the Speech and Language Therapist at BeyondAutism Schools is to assess, support and develop the pupil's functional interaction, communication, speech and language skills. A Total Communication approach is used in order to maximise each pupils

opportunity to communicate in the way that best suits them. This may be verbally, through Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems, such as Makaton sign, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), or using high tech AAC such as Proloquo2go. Pupils may also use a mixture of these communication methods.

OT Role

Occupational therapists work with the children 1:1 and/or in groups to help them promote and develop school skills, such as handwriting and cutting; play and positive engagement through understanding sensory preferences and needs. OT's use a holistic approach in planning programmes, this means they take into account the child's preferences, social, emotional, sensory as well as physical and cognitive abilities. OT's regularly liaise with staff to find out about the pupil's occupational performance at school and in a variety of environments with the aim to remove barriers to learning. By understanding each individual pupil as a person, their unique characteristics can be then nurtured to help pupils achieve their aspirations for the future. OT's will often make recommendations with regards to approaches used, strategies or the environment verbally or through annual review reports.

Therapy Staff

The therapy team at BeyondAutism Schools currently consists of:

- 2 full time SaLTs
- 1 full time Senior SaLT
- 2 full time OTs
- 1 part time Senior OT (4 days)

The SaLT and OT Therapies department have representation on the senior leadership team of the school which makes them an integral part to the BeyondAutism Schools team. Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists are Allied Health Professionals who are regulated by their own respective professional bodies and the Health and Care Professions Council. This means that they adhere to professional and ethical standards of their professional one of which is to remain informed of recent evidence and research relating to their clinical practice.

Assessment and Delivery of therapy input

Assessment is completed through a range of formal and informal methods to identify the specific needs of each pupil. These findings are then used to design a functional and individualised OT or SaLT programme for the pupil. Yearly targets are set at the pupils' annual/EHCP review (or after the assessment period when a pupil starts at Park House or Tram House Schools). Termly targets are set and reviewed through each pupils IEP and shorter-term targets are set and reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the term.

Therapy sessions occur in individual and group settings, in order to meet each pupil's needs and maximise their learning and engagement. Tutors then practise targets on a daily basis

and adhere to recommendations if/when these are agreed by the ABA supervisor. Sessions take place in class and across other settings ranging from soft play, gym and sensory rooms, playground or therapy room.

Therapy staff work closely with school staff to ensure an integrated approach to the pupils' needs. This includes regular discussions with senior school staff and the pupil's 1:1 tutors.

Therapy staff provide training to staff as and when required.

While every attempt is made to ensure that pupils receive their allocated therapy sessions throughout the school day it is not possible for catch up sessions to be completed if the therapist or the pupil misses a session due to illness or due to required attendance at another event.

Reports, EHCPs and Annual Reviews

A yearly therapy re-assessment will be completed with pupils receiving direct therapy input and a therapy specific report will be completed following this re-assessment. This will contribute to the pupils Annual Review of their SEN or EHCP. An EHCP report will be completed by both OT and SaLT in preparation for pupils who are transitioning to this Care Plan. All reports will include therapy goals and will be sent out to parents and local authorities prior to the Annual Review meetings. Wherever possible the OT or SaLT working with a pupil will attend their first Annual Review meeting on joining the school. If attendance is not possible the therapists will liaise closely with those chairing the meeting to ensure that the key messages can be conveyed. Due to time constraints any additional reports will have to be completed during the pupil's direct contact time.

Communication with parents and carers

The therapy service aims to facilitate a close relationship with the home setting to ensure that goals are relevant to both home and school and to allow parents to communicate with their child's therapist. Therapists may attend parents' evenings in order to discuss IEP targets and current progress as well as the parents' priorities or pupil challenges when they are at home.

Parents are also offered training opportunities through therapy coffee mornings, held at the school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with BeyondAutism's other policies including, but not limited to, the BeyondAutism's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Last review: November 2018

Date of next review: November 2021

Review group: Full Governing Body