

Woolgrove School Arts Therapies Policy



*Revised May 2013
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Woolgrove School

Arts Therapies Policy

Woolgrove School employs an Art Therapist and a Music Therapist for one day each a week. The Music Therapist is employed through the Hertfordshire Music Therapy Service.

The Therapists are State Registered (Health Professions Council), and are members of professional bodies: BAAT (British Association of Art Therapists) and the BAMT (British Association of Music Therapists).

Definitions of Art and Music Therapy

Art and music therapy are used to help children with special needs to communicate, interact, understand their feelings and express themselves. In therapy sessions, art or music is used to act as a bridge to relate to another person. Art or music therapy contribute to a child's overall development, helping him or her to reach their full potential in other settings. (Resources for Autism definition)

Art Therapy

'Art therapy is the use of art materials for self-expression and reflection in the presence of a trained art therapist.' (BAAT definition)

'No special ability or disability is needed, just the willingness to use art materials in an exploratory way.' (Leibmann, 1990)

In art therapy sessions, art materials are available to be used. The art therapist supports the art-making process without necessarily directing what the child does, but helps the individual gain insight into feelings through observing and reflecting.

Music Therapy

'Music is a powerful emotional medium, which can affect us all deeply. In music therapy sessions, interactive music is spontaneously created by the child and therapist together. The therapist seeks to establish contact with the child through the shared use of sound. Any form of communication from the child is responded to and supported with music and/or words. This communication could include the child's music, vocal sounds, movement, words or facial expression' (BAMT definition). Music therapy is a co-active process, in that both the therapist and the child take an active part in making music together.

Who do the therapists work with?

The Arts Therapists at Woolgrove School generally work with children who have difficulties which are hampering their development and learning, and which cannot be fully addressed in the classroom setting.

Art or music therapy may benefit children who:

- have severe communication difficulties
- are withdrawn or anxious
- have poor self-esteem and/or self-awareness
- are volatile and have mood swings
- whose behaviour is causing concern to staff or parents
- have experienced family difficulties or bereavement
- have physical difficulties
- are on the autistic spectrum
- have difficulty accessing the curriculum, e.g. because of emotional difficulties

It is not possible for all the children at Woolgrove School to have art, music or dramatherapy, so the therapists liaise with school staff to determine which children would benefit most and from which kind of therapy. Interventions may be on a long-term, short-term or assessment basis. Children can receive therapy individually or in small groups.

Aims of Art and Music Therapy

The aims of art and music and therapy are determined by the need of each child, as identified through the referral and assessment procedure. Typically they might include:

- increasing communication, interaction and self-expression
- developing an awareness of self and other
- providing emotional support
- developing skills such as listening, sharing and turn-taking
- nurturing creativity, imagination, play and sensory exploration
- helping a child to try new ways of relating, particularly where this has become 'stuck'
- developing co-ordination and motor control
- increasing self-confidence

Referral to the Arts Therapists

Any child can be referred to the Arts Therapists by a member of staff who knows them well. The following process is used:

1. joint referral form completed by staff member (see appendix)
2. discussion between the therapists to decide if the referral is appropriate, and which type of therapy would be most beneficial
3. discussion between therapist and staff member
4. meeting between therapist and parent carer (where possible)
5. written consent given by parent carer (see appendix)
6. observation of pupil in class by the therapist (where appropriate)
7. assessment sessions (4-6 sessions, depending upon need and responses)
8. assessment report written by therapist
9. ongoing therapy starts if appropriate
10. sessions are reviewed each term and the end of therapy is carefully planned

Liaison

Liaison between the therapist and other people who know the pupil well is important throughout the time that a pupil is receiving therapy. The therapist will liaise with each child's teacher (and other professionals as appropriate) to share information about the general progress of therapy, and the child's progress in other settings.

Parental involvement is beneficial to the therapeutic process. Regular meetings are arranged, and parents can contact therapists via home-school books or through the office.

Monitoring and assessment

Progress and change are carefully monitored by the Art and Music Therapists in the following ways:

- detailed written notes are made directly after each therapy session
- some sessions may be videoed or audio-taped
- discussion with staff and parents/carers
- written reports after assessment, and for annual reviews
- questionnaires completed by staff, parents/carers and therapist to monitor changes (see appendix)

Materials and equipment

Therapy sessions take place at the same time and in the same place each week, in a dedicated room which is carefully prepared and free from interruptions. The therapist is responsible for providing a safe and predictable setting, with art materials or musical instruments available for the child to make use of. In art therapy, the art work is put in a folder and kept in a secure place for the duration of the therapy. Similarly, if tape recordings or videos of music therapy sessions are kept, these are stored securely. Both art work and musical recordings/videos are confidential, and are stored after the end of therapy in line with BAAT and BAMT guidelines.

Child Protection

Therapy sessions are confidential, and the arts therapists adhere to the school's Child Protection policy and procedures.

Updated May 2013, by Sue Ginsberg (Art Therapist), Jennie Small (Music Therapist).