



# Clay Hill School

Growing our roots by learning together

## Therapeutic Services at Clay Hill School

At Clay Hill School, we have a dedicated Therapeutic Team, led by our Therapy and Pastoral Team Leader. We provide a comprehensive Therapy provision to all of our young people who attend Clay Hill School, which ensures that a holistic package of education, care and therapeutic support is available as soon as their time starts with us.

This includes; a trained Pastoral Support team, Hypnotherapist, Full Time Occupational Therapist and Full time Speech and Language Therapist.

In addition to our internal team, we work regularly with external Educational and Clinical Psychologists and facilitate assessments for young people in order to identify and meet a wide range of Therapeutic need. Whilst we have our own internal team, if a specific form of therapy is identified as part of an assessment, we will facilitate this also.

## Therapeutic Provision



### Lead Therapist – Hypnotherapist with specialisms in Gestalt, Parts Therapy, IMR and NLP:

Hypnosis is guided meditation. It is a naturally occurring relaxed state, akin to daydreaming or meditation. In this relaxed state, the world around you takes a back seat, often eliciting a feeling of lightness and calm. In this state of mind, the therapist can work with the subconscious mind to find the most effective way of dealing with a challenge or problem.

The conscious mind operates anything that requires 'conscious' effort. It also operates analytical functions such as thinking, reasoning and questioning. The subconscious mind controls functions that are not the result of conscious thought, it operates the physical body, stores our skills and habits and holds onto our memories.

The mediator between the stimulus being received by an individual and the response that is made, is the mind; both conscious and subconscious.

Completed by a trained, professional Hypnotherapist, hypnosis can help problems be resolved effectively in a natural way and without the need for medication. The process leaves individuals with a feeling of wellbeing and relaxation.

**So how does Hypnosis work?** Whilst a child or adult is relaxed, the conscious mind quietens down and the subconscious mind is more aware. This is when beneficial changes can be made within the subconscious mind; changes to behaviours, feelings and thought processes.



When we learn, we naturally make a pathway within our minds, a skills pathway. For example, none of us are born with the natural ability to walk; we achieve this learnt skill through practice. This learnt behaviour becomes so strong within our minds that we no longer have to think consciously about lifting a foot or leaning in a specific way. It becomes a natural movement.

Behaviours that are limiting can also have strong pathways, however, if we can change the direction of the pathway by creating new behaviours, these old paths will disappear; like a pathway in a field, if no longer used, it eventually cannot be seen.

The techniques used within our therapy room are: IMR, Gestalt, Inner Child, NLP, Parts Therapy and CBT. Below is a summary of these approaches.

### **Ideomotor response (IMR):**

This is the skill which allows the therapist to bypass the conscious mind and communicate with the subconscious mind. Often, by using IMR, the cause to a problem may be found. Establishing the cause can be important as each person's experience is different; therefore each cause is unique. When the cause is established, we can help change responses to stimuli and establish new positive responses and behaviours. This is particularly beneficial for our young people struggling to identify effective strategies for reacting to negative or challenging sensory inputs.

### **Gestalt Technique:**

Gestalt is a German word. The closest translation is 'whole', 'pattern' or 'form'. It has the sense that meaning cannot be found from breaking things down into parts but rather from appreciation of the whole. In other words, Gestalt is a holistic process. It regards the individual as a totality of mind, body, emotions and spirit who experiences reality in a way unique to themselves.

In practice, Gestalt practitioners work with clients to help them focus on self-awareness: on what is happening from one moment to the next or, as we often say, in the here and now. Increased awareness and understanding of the present, of one's immediate thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and of patterns of relating can bring about powerful change and new perspectives.

### **Inner Child Therapy:**

**Inner Child therapy** is a deep and profound healing experience. It goes to the source of the problem and cuts through much of the intellectual chatter which prevents us from succeeding in our goals. It aims to connect and heal the **inner child**. It is important that the

inner child feel safe and has a sense of wholeness. This is extremely beneficial to our young people.

## Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP):

Everyone thinks, learns and communicates in different ways. NLP is a holistic, person centred and self-solution focused therapeutic approach. Within NLP the therapist will coach and support the young person to explore their sensory and neurological feedback and inputs and subsequently encouraging them to independently explore their problems from a bigger perspective. This relates to all neurological inputs; cognitive, emotional and instinctive.

Other beneficial ways of using NLP are to notice feelings in the body and consider: where they are, their colour and shape, moving them, making them brighter and duller, bigger and smaller, being in control of the feeling, making it palpable, manageable. All of which is giving the young person control and the skills to self soothe when experiencing negative inputs.

## Parts Therapy:

This technique works on the concept that our personalities are composed of various different parts and that each part is helping in some way. The goal is to have all the parts working together so the child can reach their goal and feel positive. However, sometimes a part will have a miscommunication, for example: Child A has an absolute fear of experiencing perceived humiliation and shame. They have a 'part' which subconsciously aims to protect them from experiencing this feeling by giving them anxiety when in a situation such as, giving an answer by putting up their hand in class. The anxiety prevents them from physically doing so and therefore has protected them from the potential of experiencing those feelings they are frightened of. However, in this situation for example, it is very possible that the child was absolutely right in the answer they would have given. Therefore the 'part' which is trying to be helpful, is actually causing a further problem. This treatment is particularly useful for individuals who have experienced unresolved trauma which has led to deliberate and, at times, unhelpful protective behaviours.

## Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT):

This therapy focuses on how your thoughts and beliefs and attitudes affect your feelings and behaviours. Hypnosis and the work done whilst in relaxation has an underlying base of CBT, teaching coping skills and creating new behaviours.

## Occupational Therapist:

Occupational Therapy takes a whole person approach to improving the physical and mental wellbeing of our young people, which removes barriers that allows them to reach their full potential. This has a significantly positive impact upon them being able to achieve independence and success within their lives.

In general, an Occupational Therapist will consider and work to improve and support with all of the young person's holistic needs including their social, psychological and physical environment. It develops skills and strategies that ensures everyday day tasks can be carried out without the barriers being presented to the young people due to a specific need.



With our young people, the need is quite often based upon sensory processing disorders. Many young people with ASC benefit hugely from sensory integration approaches to therapy and support.

Sensory modulation barriers or lack of capacity for sensory integration within an individual occurs when the nervous system incorrectly stores, organises and uses sensory information from the body.

For the majority of the young people within Clay Hill, this can be a very challenging barrier to overcome. Sensory processing in sensory systems such as: Somatosensory (Tactile and proprioceptive), Vestibular and Auditory - can lead to further challenges in emotional regulation, social performance and motor performance.

Somatosensory – Presents in challenges with food, variety of diet, irritated by unexpected touch or touch that is too light/heavy, dislike of crowds, sensitivities to clothing etc.

Vestibular – Presents in Nausea when moving, fearful of leaving the house or movement, disorientation or discomfort on things like escalators, difficulties with balance or walking on uneven surfaces etc.

Auditory – Presents in challenges to loud sounds, irritation of specific sounds etc.

Our in house OT supports our young people through:

- Remedial intervention, using a wide range of motor treatment equipment.
- Creating sensory diet programmes (shared with our staff to carry support into classroom)
- Advises and arranges adaptations such as wearing ear plugs/defenders, how to manage hyper sensitivities, household and environmental factors.
- Supports in environmental modification
- Informs and supports staff and parents/carers about the influence of sensory functions on occupational performance.

## Speech and Language Therapist:

The role of a Speech and language therapist is to assess speech, language and communication abilities within an individual and provide appropriate and highly effective therapy and intervention to support our young people in overcoming these communication and social interaction difficulties.

Many young people with ASC also require support in terms of how they communicate and engage with others. Our in house Speech and Language therapist will support in:

- Development of social skills - generally
- Being able to articulate their emotions for their own benefit as well as in informing others how they are feeling so they can help.
- Development of social and communication interaction – how to take turns, effective conversational skills
- Development of functional communication – how to communicate choices and make requests, how to comment on things that peak their interest.
- Developing use of language – using longer and more grammatical sound sentence in speech as well as being able to deliver narrative speech.



As many of our young people are identified as having barriers relating to social and communication difficulties, our SALT is an integral part of our Therapy Provision.

As well as working with the young people and providing the support above they will also:

- Advise staff on appropriate strategies
- Deliver specialist training to staff and parents
- Work with parents on an individual level to support Speech and Language development in the home environment.

## Pastoral Support Team:

Our Pastoral Support Team are a dedicated group of professionals who support our young people with a variety of social and emotional needs.

As full time staff, they are available to the pupils throughout the school day and in fact welcome the children in at the start of the day. This is an essential time to pick up any messages from parents/transport about any specific incident or challenge that may need addressing or supporting with during the day.

As an ASC provision, many of our young people find communicating their emotions a distinct challenge. Our Pastoral Team are tasked with learning about each child and their individual needs, not just anecdotally or from paperwork and reports, but also in building positive relationships with all of them. This enables them to pick up on the subtle non-verbal cues that they may need some support.

This is a highly effective way of pro-actively engaging with the children, in order to remove any potential barriers to engagement that day.

In addition to providing ad-hoc support as and when required, our Pastoral Team are trained in the delivery of key interventions to support their social, emotional and personal development.

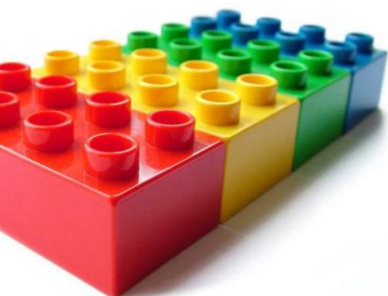
These include:

### Lego-based Therapy:

This is a social development programme for young people with ASC. The social interaction support comes from the problem solving element of building models and creating projects with the bricks in a collaborative way with their peers.

In doing so the young people must share their ideas, take turns, give advice and of course work together.

They are really flexible sessions and can be altered depending on need of the young people. For more structured intervention, children can be assigned specific roles to support the collaboration and social interaction. The Pastoral Support Worker is the facilitator for the collaborative play and is there to observe and support as well as modify the intervention where required to improve outcomes.





## Thrive Approach – Emotional Support for Young People and Support for families:

Thrive interventions are delivered by our Pastoral Team. The aim of Thrive is to provide to our young people, specialist trained interventions and support that optimises their social and personal development.

It develops young people into becoming more confident, happy and emotionally intelligent individuals. The 1:1 and small group interventions are targeted in supporting pupils who may have experienced interruptions in their development at an early stage. It has a basis in attachment and trauma theory and the practitioner delivering uses play, creativity and the arts and a positive relational stance in order to effect positive change.

Thrive is our preferred form of emotional and pastoral support as, in addition to the 1:1 interventions, it is a whole school approach centred around having a strongly positive and consistent relational interaction with the young people. This supports our Pastoral Support Workers in being able to support the young people across the school whenever they are experiencing any form of emotional need, including loss and bereavement and relationship difficulties.

The approach and associated programmes also encourage strong involvement from the parents/carers of our young people and can have a wider family approach to personal development.

This is crucial in the role that our Pastoral Team play in parental engagement and support.

## Growth Mindset:

Whilst not a specific intervention, the theme of having a 'Growth Mindset' is a driver within our curriculum as well as in our Pastoral Support.

Our Pastoral Support Workers use the language and ethos of a growth mindset throughout their engagement with our young people. As young people with ASC, many of our young people have a pre-disposition towards having a fixed mindset. This can be a particular barrier to attempting a variation of a task as well as attempting another one.

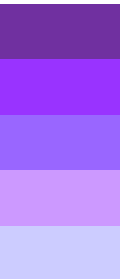
This of course is quite often linked to a sensory processing disorder or a social communication barrier. The subtle and consistent reinforcement of the importance of having a growth mindset aims to encourage our learners to be risk taking and try different challenges that they would otherwise not have attempted.

## Talkabout – Social Skills:

In addition to the work carried out by the SALT, our Pastoral Team also deliver the Talkabout Social Skills programme.

Included within the programme will be:

- Assessment of the young person using the specific toolkit.
- Bespoke intervention planned based on individual and group need.
- Delivery of interventions that includes activities which are focusing on body language, conversation and assertiveness.



This is a highly effective programme not only in supporting young people with what they say in social interaction but also in 'how' they say it and developing an understanding of non-verbal cues and non-verbal communication elements such as tone of voice, volume, intonation etc.

### **Family Forums and Family Group Networking:**

Our Pastoral Support team are led by our Therapy and Pastoral Team Leader. As a collaborative team and in conjunction with the senior leadership of the school, they identify ways in which to improve and support parental and family engagement. An essential element of this are family forums and group networking sessions ran by the Therapy Team Leader which allow for sharing of ideas and whole group training by our specialist staff.

The Therapy Leader also delivers 1:1 family support and therapeutic intervention where identified as a specific need.

Family engagement is critical to the level of progress our young people are able to make. We identify that providing support, guidance, advice and sometimes just a listening ear, is such a valuable resource for our families and parents. Our Pastoral Support Team are highly pro-active in building these relationships. They work as a key liaison point for our parents, in addition to class teachers, in order to create a collaborative approach to their child's academic and personal development and progress.

### **Relaxation and Mindfulness:**

In addition to our specialist therapy from our Team Leader, the Pastoral Support team also deliver mindfulness and relaxation sessions with individuals and groups.

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment, through a gentle nurturing process.

It encourages the young people to pay attention to their feelings, without judging or questioning if they are right or wrong, and tuning their thoughts into what they are sensing in the present moment. In doing so, it develops within our young people:

- Self-awareness
- Sense of calm and reduced stress
- Ability to cope with difficult or unhelpful thoughts
- Ability to be more positive about themselves.
- Ability to choose the most effective ways to respond to thoughts and feelings.

The relaxation we use in the therapy space is a relaxation of the mind and body. Using stories we are able to allow children a brain break. Life can be busy and fast paced, full of stimulation, noise and visual distractions which can be overwhelming for our young people. Relaxation is a time to switch off from these outside influences and have some down time.



## Clinical Psychologist:

In order to identify the most appropriate form of therapeutic intervention when the need is great, we have access to the specialist services of an external Clinical Psychologist.

The role of the Clinical Psychologist is to diagnose and offer advice on the appropriate form of therapeutic intervention of mental, behavioural and emotional illnesses where these are creating a significant barrier to a young person's daily ability to function.

The clinical psychologist will write a report which identifies the most appropriate next steps and alongside the placing authority, we can commission specific work to be completed either by the Clinical Psychologist or a professional who has expertise in the specific intervention required.



## Additional activities offered:

Depending on identified need, we can also arrange for a variety of specialist therapeutic interventions to take place.

An example of this would be equine/animal therapy.

The benefits of this are wide ranging as the young people are engaging in an activity which relies heavily on the emotional and non-verbal interaction with the animal.

It develops social skills, self-esteem and self-awareness and also brings a positive and enjoyable experience into the young person's life.

Other forms of activity to build resilience, self-esteem and confidence include visits to our local outdoor education environment where children engage in team building and problem solving activities as well as attempting challenging activities such as rock climbing, leap of faith, crate stacking etc. All of which develops their sense of achievement and highlights the benefits of social interaction and resilience through problem solving.



If you require further information regarding our Therapeutic/Pastoral services, please contact:

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