

What is music therapy?

A music therapy session is very different from a music lesson because the music therapist uses a child-centred approach. This means they follow your child's lead. Your child will be free to play the wide variety of musical instruments in the therapy room. There is no right or wrong way of playing and the therapist will encourage your child to explore the instruments as they wish. In a music *lesson* the teacher aims to develop musical skills, whereas the music therapist works on communication, social and emotional development.

What happens in a music therapy session?

The therapist usually collects the child and walks with them to the music therapy room where instruments and furniture have been set out. Your child will then be free to explore the instruments with the support of the therapist.



Sessions take place once a week and last up to 40 minutes. Musical conversations and improvisations give each child an opportunity to express their feelings and emotions. The therapist will keep a close eye on your child's responses and will deal sensitively with any difficulties that may arise. A course of therapy usually lasts between one and three school terms, but can be a longer term intervention.

What if my child doesn't like music or loud sounds?

Many children don't like loud sounds or music which they cannot control. During a music therapy session your child will be free to choose which sounds and instruments to use. There is a wide variety to choose from, ranging from large drums and cymbals to mini-bells. A keyboard or piano and a guitar are also available for your child to explore. Often children who are normally afraid of loud sounds really enjoy making them when

they are in control. Music therapists take a special interest in the effect of different sounds on each individual.

What if my child won't sit still?

This will not be a problem. There are no expectations regarding your child's behavior in an individual session. It is important that they feel comfortable enough to move around or to be still as they wish. Group music therapy sessions will include some activities where it is appropriate to sit and others where your child can be more active. We will design activities to meet your child's needs.

Will I notice any changes when my child starts music therapy?

The opportunity to play spontaneously on the instruments with the therapist may enable your child to channel their emotional energy safely. This may reduce stress, frustration or tension. The therapist is skilled at identifying and supporting small changes in these areas.

How will it help my child in the longer term?

Benefits of music therapy may include raised levels of confidence and self-esteem. Your child may be more relaxed

with greater self-control and their communication, social and interactive skills may be enhanced.



Will my child enjoy music therapy?

Children are usually keen to attend music therapy and really enjoy the sessions. As with any therapy there may be certain aspects which your child finds challenging. The therapist and child can work through these issues together.

Can parents come and watch?

Music therapy works best when the therapist and child can work in an uninterrupted environment. It is not usually appropriate for parents, carers or school staff to watch as it changes the dynamics of the session. Regular feedback is available and we will send you a detailed report when the series of sessions end or at the time of an annual SEN review



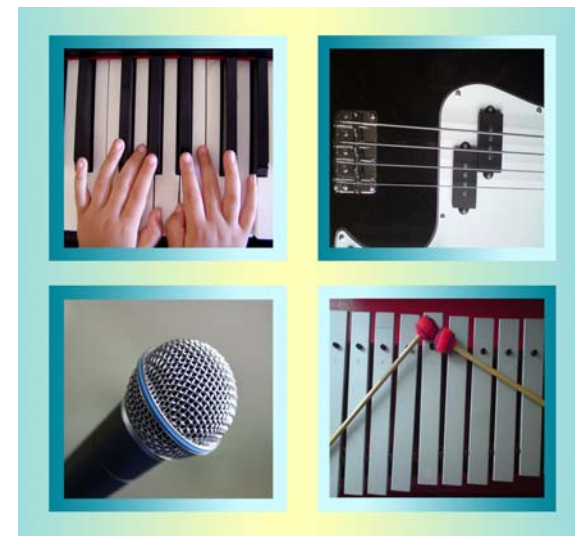
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Guide for Parents, Carers and Staff



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