

allyance

A thick, horizontal orange brushstroke underline that spans the width of the word 'allyance'.

**Information for
Parents/Carers**

What is play therapy?

Play is your child's natural medium of self-expression, essential for enabling them to develop physically, emotionally and socially. It helps to develop their imagination and encourages creativity.

Used therapeutically, play offers the opportunity for children to help themselves by 'playing out' feelings and problems. During the play therapy session, a trusting relationship develops with the therapist, in which children begin to feel safe enough to explore their difficulties and learn new ways of relating.

Many children encounter challenging events and experiences in their early lives, which may lead to feelings of stress and anxiety. Children do not yet have the vocabulary or emotional maturity to express their feelings or to make sense of them. In the play therapy session, they can play out some of these anxieties and even find the words for them, or sometimes the process can be non-verbal.

What happens in a play therapy session?

The play therapist will have a "tool kit" of equipment in the room. Sometimes your child will be guided towards a particular medium, whether it be clay, paint etc. Sometimes they will be able to play with what they choose. The play equipment may include:

Clay
Paints/drawing equipment
Games
Musical instruments
Puppets
Story books
Sand tray and miniatures

Whatever your child plays with, the therapist creates a safe, non-judgemental and confidential space for them during the session which will enable the child to explore their difficult or confusing feelings.

Why are the sessions confidential?

When a child begins play therapy, it is key to the effective treatment of the therapy that the child feels able to express their thoughts and feelings without feeling judged. A very important part of the therapy is the building of trust in the therapeutic relationship and the creation of a "safe space" which exists solely for the child and therapist. Your child must feel safe, comfortable and understood. This type of trusting environment makes it easier for your child to express his/her thoughts and feelings and to use the therapy in a useful way.

Experience shows that the creation of this trusting environment, can improve your child's relationships with others, including friends as well as family.

At the start of Play Therapy the therapist explains to the child in an age appropriate way the meaning of confidentiality. From this your child will understand that they are free to talk to their parents/carers and family about what they do in sessions, if they choose to do so. Parents/carers are encouraged to be curious and interested whilst being sensitive to how much the child may want to share from their sessions.

The play therapist will not disclose specific details of what your child has played. This is important in order to maintain your child's trust and feelings of safety with the therapist.

There are of course, exceptions to maintaining confidentiality. If your child were to disclose something which might put your child or any other child at risk, then the therapist would speak to the headteacher and parents/carers.

What can parents/carers do to help?

You are very important in supporting your child through the counselling process and it is crucial that your child knows that you are supporting this process.

Be consistent and encouraging to your child about attending the therapy sessions regularly.

Try to resist the urge to ask your child what they did in the session as this may make them feel pressurised to comment on something they may not yet understand themselves.

What can they expect in terms of feedback?

The therapist can talk to you about how well the child is engaging with the therapy and the sorts of activities your child is taking part in. You will have the opportunity to discuss any changes or developments that you have witnessed or experienced at home. The therapist may also be able to talk about some of the themes emerging from the sessions and any changes the therapist may have noticed as the therapy progresses.