

Child Therapist

Dominique Hawksley and Laura Robson Brown are child psychotherapists employed by the school. A child may be referred to a therapist for assessment and for subsequent therapeutic work, with the consent of the parents, when he or she is experiencing a problem and might benefit from their intervention.

Referral to a therapist may only be made by Althea Pipe (Senior Deputy Head) or by Lisa Bedford (Assistant Head Pastoral at Senior House), with the therapist's agreement and with the prior approval of the parents.

The role is at all times to advocate the needs of the child and, as such, although they work closely with home and school, their position is an independent one.

To ensure that parents are fully engaged in discussion, review and decision-making, the following 'cycle' typically operates:

- Parents initially agree to meet with the therapist, in school, usually for a 90-minute session, to provide any relevant background, to raise any questions and to decide whether they wish to proceed with assessment.
- With parental approval, up to four assessment sessions (of approximately one hour each) will then be arranged, which may be one-to-one sessions with a child and/or may involve assessment in e.g. a classroom setting. The nature of the assessment will be discussed with parents prior to its commencement. It is usual that one, or both, parents are present the first time that the child therapist meets a child though not always the case.
- Additional parent meetings may take place during this assessment period to explore the possible impact of current family dynamics.
- Thereafter, the therapist will meet with parents to discuss the findings and to determine whether further sessions should follow. Recommendations may include: individual therapy for the child; parent-child work or parental support all of which can be provided by the therapist in school. In some situations other kinds of support may be considered more appropriate such as: family therapy, individual adult therapy, or parenting courses. If so the parents will receive advice of where such support can be found.
- Subsequent to such further sessions, a review meeting will take place with parents (and staff, if appropriate) and further sessions may, as necessary, be agreed at this point.

The above process will not be followed in all cases and will be adjusted as appropriate to each child's circumstances. Assessment and treatment sessions will occur at intervals appropriate to the particular case, as determined by the therapist.

Therapy is most effective if fully supported by the family. Parents are welcome to contact the therapist by e-mail with updates and concerns. The regular review meetings will be a time for them to share their views about a child's progress.

All information shared with the therapist is confidential. A child may trust that the therapist will keep their confidence and parents are kindly requested to respect this. A child may, of course, share any/all details of their therapy as they wish. Should any safeguarding concerns arise the therapist will discuss these with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) so that school can take any necessary action. Parents will be advised in the first place, if appropriate.

Althea Pipe and Lisa Bedford will act as the point of liaison between therapist and the staff of the school and will be responsible for internal communication within the school. The therapist will provide general feedback to school on a regular basis as well as more specific advice when helpful to do so.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, formal reports will not be written, the therapist will focus her time on the assessment and treatment of a child and on face to face communication with parents, as set out above.

All sessions will take place within the school, in a room set aside at Whitfield House for that purpose. Children will, with parental consent, be allowed to be absent from lessons for such sessions, as necessary.

The above outlined provision is subsidised by the school. The charges to parents, invoiced half-termly directly from the therapist, are based on an annually adjusted hourly rate (see below).

The time given by the therapist to discussion with appropriate staff to gain relevant background information will be at the school's expense.

In cases of financial need, the school may consider further subsidising the above costs, as determined by the Head.

Dominique Hawksley (Integrative Child Psychotherapist) £70/hr

Laura Robson Brown (Senior Trainee Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapeutic Counsellor) £45/hr

January 2023