

# Guide to partnership working in mainstream schools



Children and young people receiving occupational therapy,  
physiotherapy and/or speech and language therapy



The following guidance has been developed in conjunction with parents and staff from a range of different schools and key stages, and members of the therapy team.

Many thanks to all those who contributed:

- Lincoln Gardens Primary School
- Frodingham Infants School
- Althorpe and Keadby Primary School
- Westwoodside CE Primary School
- Scunthorpe CE Primary School
- St Augustine Webster Catholic Primary School
- The St Lawrence Academy
- Oakfield Primary School
- Parents and members of the 'PIP' group
- Therapists from the Children's Therapy Team

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## Foreword

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*'As commissioners of services for children and young people, we welcome this guide to partnership working. We know that effective joint working relies on good communication, clear expectations of each other and a shared commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.'*

*Across North Lincolnshire there are already many examples of good partnership working. This document makes explicit what has helped make this possible, so that it can be replicated elsewhere. It is by spreading good practice that we will make the best use of our collective resources, and ensure that our children and young people get the best possible support, whatever their needs.*

*We hope that school staff, families and therapists make effective use of this guidance so that through our joint efforts, we can ensure North Lincolnshire is a place with:*

### **'SAFE children, SUPPORTED families, TRANSFORMED lives' (Children and Young People's Plan 2013-16)**

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# Support and training

Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
Provide basic information for all staff and parents about what to expect from the children's therapy team	<p>Provide information and support for parents when they feel their child needs a referral</p> <p>Ensure therapy staff and parents are made to feel welcome in school, given relevant information including about policies and procedures, and introduced to key staff</p>	Provide information about their child and show staff the best ways of helping based on knowledge and experience from home
Provide training for key staff in school when a child has an unusual or complex medical condition which staff are unlikely to have come across before	Free up staff to attend relevant training	Attend any useful training if at all possible
Provide courses and 'buy in' packages which will enable existing school staff to develop their skills, and will help train up new staff	Request whole school packages, where these meet staff needs	
Offer accredited courses for school staff with key areas of responsibility		
Liaise with the Local Authority to ensure a co-ordinated approach to training provision		
Keep up to date with relevant changes in Education	Consider training 'swaps' with the children's therapy team, to help keep therapists informed about the latest thinking in Education	
Provide information and support for staff and parents, and workshops as appropriate e.g. Makaton		

# Goals and programmes

Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
Feedback assessment results and discuss abilities, needs and priorities with the child, their family and school staff	Provide information on how the child is doing in school, highlight priority areas, and explain what support is available	Share knowledge and expertise on the child – their interests and personality, their needs, what has helped in the past, their day to day experiences and challenges
Agree which outcomes to focus on - with a timescale for achieving them	Agree which outcomes to focus on (with timescale). Link these into the child's overall learning plan	Explain what is important from a family perspective. Agree which outcomes to focus on
Agree a clear action plan and deliver what has been set out	Agree a clear action plan and deliver what has been set out	Agree a clear action plan and support this at home
Take into account the views of the child or young person, and their parents	Take into account the views of the child or young person, and their parents	Take into account the views of the child or young person, and the professionals involved
Write a summary of what has been agreed and any advice or activity suggestions (usually within 3 weeks)	Use the advice and activity suggestions as agreed  Let the therapist know if anything on the summary is wrong or confusing	Use the advice and activity suggestions provided as agreed  Let the therapist know if anything on the summary is wrong or confusing
With complex cases, work alongside school staff and parents to demonstrate strategies and activities	Make staff available to work alongside the therapist / or parent)	Show school staff and therapists how you help your child at home, if this is working well
Indicate what progress to expect and when to ask for more help  Respond to queries and provide additional or amended advice when needed (and in a timely way)	Monitor children's progress and ask for more help if needed	Ask for more help if needed

# Visits and meetings in school

Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
Arrange all visits through the key point of contact, giving reasonable notice (usually 2 weeks or more)	Let the child know about the visit	Let the child know about the visit
Agree a suitable day and time, which will cause as little disruption for the child as possible	Agree a suitable day and time, which will cause as little disruption for the child as possible	Attend if at all possible (it is recognised that work and other commitments may make this difficult for some parents)
Confirm visits in writing and invite parents to attend	Ensure all the relevant staff in school know about the visit, and will be available to take part if this has been agreed	Let the therapist know if they will not be able to attend so an alternative way of communicating with each other can be arranged
When going to a school for the first time, provide a current CRB certificate, or official NHS letter confirming DBS clearance		
When booking the visit, make the purpose of the session clear, and request a suitable room or space to work in e.g. a quiet room for assessment, mats for floor work	Provide a suitable space for the therapist and child to work in	
If the therapist is off work at short notice, get a message to the school and parents as soon as possible	Inform the therapist as soon as possible if the child is absent on the day of the visit	If possible, inform the therapist if the child is absent on the day of the visit
If the therapist has to cancel or re-arrange a visit or meeting, let the school, parents and anyone else involved know as soon as possible	If school has to cancel or re-arrange a visit or meeting, to let the therapist, parents and anyone else involved know as soon as possible	
Follow NHS guidance on avoiding the spread of germs from one child to another e.g. wiping down table tops		

# Compliments and complaints

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Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
Give constructive feedback to school staff and highlight good work	Give constructive feedback to therapy staff and highlight good work	Let therapists and school staff know when something is working well
Highlight as soon as possible when school staff need additional training or support to deliver a programme successfully (usually with the SENCO)	Give constructive feedback to therapy staff about how things could be improved or work better	
If there is a problem or incident, address this directly, and in a sensitive and constructive way, with the member of school staff concerned	If there is a problem or incident, address this directly, and in a sensitive and constructive way, with the member of therapy staff concerned	Let therapists and school staff know if something is not working well
If this is not possible, or the problem or incident is serious, contact the SENCO or head teacher	If this is not possible, or the problem or incident is serious, contact the children's therapy manager	Report any serious concerns or problems to the therapy manager or head teacher

# Sharing information and confidentiality

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Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
With consent from parents, share any information with relevant school staff that supports the child's wellbeing and helps others to understand their abilities and needs	With consent from parents, share any information with relevant therapy staff that supports the child's wellbeing and helps others to understand their abilities and needs	Share any information which is relevant to the child's well being and helps others to understand their abilities and needs
Make sure that any sensitive information is shared on a 'need to know' basis, and that specific permission from parents, or the child if appropriate, is obtained	Make sure that any sensitive information is shared on a 'need to know' basis, and that specific permission from parents, or the child if appropriate, is obtained	Let school staff, or the therapist, know if there is information which should not be passed on to anyone else
Pass on any information linked to child protection issues, even if parental consent has not been given	Pass on any information linked to child protection issues, even if parental consent has not been given	
Do not send reports or letters which name individual children by email, unless to a secure site	Do not send reports or letters which name individual children by email, unless to a secure site	

# Keeping in touch

Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
Liaise with the staff member who is the key point of contact about visits, training, referrals, programmes and meetings	Provide a named point of contact in school for speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. In some schools this may be the same person, e.g. the SENCO, in other schools this may be delegated to different members of staff	
Request termly 'keeping in touch' meetings if there are a number of children on the caseload in school to discuss how school / therapy team are working together (Communication team meetings with the speech and language therapists are already running)	Organise 'keeping in touch' meetings and enable the relevant staff to attend (the SENCO should always be there)	
Offer follow up advice and ideas when needed, and help if things are not going to plan	Let the therapist know if more help is required for a specific child	Let the therapist know if more help is required
	Stay in contact with parents about how the programme is going, sharing successes and solving problems together	Stay in contact with school about how the programme is going, sharing successes and solving problems together
Provide contact information for parents and school staff, including a work mobile number		Make sure that school and the therapist have up to date contact information
Contact parents by phone if they have not been able to come in to school to meet the therapist		Let the therapist and school know if there is anything which is relevant to the child's wellbeing and progress

# Annual reviews of statements of SEN

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Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
Provide a report if enough notice is given	Give at least 6 weeks' notice of an annual review	
Get the report to the SENCO at least 2 weeks before the meeting if enough notice has been given	Send a copy of all the reports to everyone who has been invited, including the therapist	Give feedback to the therapist and school about how things are going
Attend the meeting if needed	Send a copy of the notes from the meeting to the therapist	Attend the annual review meeting
Discuss the report with parents (and the child if appropriate) and send them a copy		Share any ideas on priorities for the coming year

# Transitions and changes of staff

Children's therapy team	Schools	Parent or carer
Wherever possible, provide information about a child's needs and abilities before they arrive in school		Wherever possible, provide information about a child's needs and abilities, and any professionals involved, before s/he arrives in school
Whenever there has to be a handover to another therapist, arrange the timing of this around the needs of the child and family as much as possible	If the child is moving into a new class or key stage, pass on therapy advice and strategies to the appropriate school staff. Ideally, this should involve a joint session	
If there is to be a change of therapist, let the school, child and parent know in good time and give the name and contact details of the new therapist	If there is to be a change of TA or teacher, let the family and therapist know in good time	If the child will be moving schools, let the therapist and school know as soon as possible
	Request therapy help and support with the transition if this would be helpful	Request therapy help and support with the transition if this would be helpful

