

What is Art Therapy?

Art Therapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses art media as its primary mode of communication. Art therapy is a growing profession within all sectors of education and is statutorily regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

- Children and young people referred to an art therapist need not have previous experience or skill in art.
- The art therapist's role is to facilitate communication of children's thoughts and feelings through the use of art.
- Art therapy is not dependent on spoken language and can therefore be helpful to anyone who finds it difficult to express their thoughts and feelings verbally. It is therefore suitable for very young children, children with communication problems and with English as a second language.

Why Art Therapy in Education?

When pupils are experiencing emotional difficulties they find learning very hard and their inclusion in school life is affected. Art therapy as a form of intervention can assist with an individual's psychological, emotional,

educational, social and physical development.

The art therapist can help identify new strategies for managing feelings, thoughts and behaviours at home and school, build resilience in the child, and encourage and support the child, parents—and teachers— through the process of making positive changes.

Art therapists work as members of the school's team and contribute to reviews and multi-professional meetings. They also liaise with other professionals involved in any safeguarding issues and attend case conferences and review meetings.

How Does Art Therapy Help?

Art therapy can help improve behaviour, raise achievement, encourage attendance and help pupils take part more fully in school life.

The pupils who may benefit are those:

- In danger of exclusion
- Experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties
- With social and communication difficulties

- Struggling with particular life events such as bereavement, changes in family structure, and illness
- Who are refugees or are seeking asylum
- Who have suffered abuse, bullying or trauma
- With learning difficulties or physical disabilities
- With Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- With child protection concerns, including experience of abuse or exposure to domestic violence
- With physical disability or illness
- With social, peer, communication, speech and language difficulties

This list is not exhaustive and pupils who may present as withdrawn or anxious, angry, depressed, moody, violent or disaffected may also benefit from art therapy.

What is Needed?

- A self-contained room, consistently available and free from interruption
- A sink and running water
- Lockable storage space
- Art materials
- Liaison time with key staff and parents/carers
- Liaison time with other relevant professionals

What people say:

“It was good because it helped get things off my mind.” (Child)

“We are very pleased with this partnership; we envisage it being a long-term arrangement.” (Head teacher)

“It was very helpful in understanding my child; we are making a lot more effort to spend quality time with him.” (Parent)

“It has a knock-on effect in class; feedback helps teachers understand what they are dealing with.” (Teacher)

Who are Art Therapists?

Art Therapy is a State regulated profession and it is a legal requirement to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) in order to practise anywhere in the UK as an art therapist or art psychotherapist.

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Art Therapy In Schools

A Guide for Professionals in Education

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