

Our therapists work collaboratively with teachers and education staff to embed therapy strategies in classroom routines and school-based activities.

At Therapy Focus, we offer comprehensive therapy services for children with disability and developmental delay as they progress through school. Each child we work with has an individual therapy plan that has been developed by their therapy team in close consultation with the child's parents and/or carers at the start of their therapy journey.

It's very common for families to identify goals that can enhance a child's progress at school. In these instances our therapists might work with the child at school. We work in schools by invitation only and will contact the school for permission to attend.

The aim of a school-based therapy session is to work with teachers and education staff to embed therapy strategies into daily classroom routines and ensure we're all working together to help the child achieve their goals. Providing therapy in this way will ultimately help the child access the curriculum and enhance learning within the school environment. This not only enhances the student's learning experiences – it also benefits their educators.

Where do we start?

After a family has identified goals that are best supported at school or in an educational setting, we offer what's called a School Interface Meeting (SIM).

A SIM is an opportunity for a school representative to meet with the local therapy team to develop a partnership and shared understandings. This ensures that therapy and educational goals complement each other. The SIM provides a chance to learn about the local therapy team and the services we offer, as well as discuss how the therapy team can work within the school setting effectively.

We can also discuss supporting your school with any additional training or workshops that may benefit staff. We see this meeting as an investment in the communities we work within.

What does therapy at school look like?

Where possible, a therapist will work shoulder-to-shoulder in a classroom setting, supporting both the student and teaching staff. This might include:

- Helping the student with social and communication skills so they can express themselves in class, or socialise with friends at lunch time
- Working on emotional regulation skills so the student can manage their emotions during the school day and be able to actively participate in classroom activities
- Working on mobility skills so the student can move around the classroom or between classes more independently

What does therapy at school look like? (continued)

Our work also extends to supporting and upskilling teaching staff. For example, a therapist may spend time with a teacher to identify the challenges that a student may be experiencing. The therapist can support the teacher with strategies around how to best support the student in different classroom activities. These strategies may also be beneficial to other students in the class. This type of support can be provided during the teacher's DOTT time, over the phone, face-to-face or via email.

In some instances it may be most beneficial for 1:1 work outside the classroom. This allows the student to focus on skill development separately, in preparation for using those skills within the classroom and other school settings. The therapist will then support the student to generalise these skills in more meaningful activities with their peers, or in the classroom. We are committed to ensuring that our therapy doesn't impact on educational outcomes and only enhances the student's ability to achieve.

As part of our service we ensure that all stakeholders are kept up-to-date regarding therapy sessions. One of our Guiding Principles is 'Learning Everywhere', which means we encourage the implementation of therapy strategies at home, as well as in school and other everyday settings .

How are school-based therapy sessions coordinated?

Once permission has been granted for the student to receive therapy during school hours, the student's Key Worker will contact their teacher or nominated school representative to discuss appropriate times for therapy to take place. We understand that some schools have specific preferences for how external therapists work with them and we always work to accommodate these preferences, where possible.

At the end of each term we touch base with both the student's parent/carer and their teacher to discuss progress and outcomes, and to make plans for the following term. We encourage your feedback throughout the term to ensure we are meeting your expectations and can act on any changes that may be required.

Together, we can achieve amazing outcomes.

Our aim is always to help, not hinder your teaching. We do not want to cause disruption and strive to adopt a consistent approach that works for everyone. By working closely with students and education staff in school settings we can enhance learning, participation and overall quality of life.

We look forward to working with you.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact us on 1300 135 373 or email enquiries@therapyfocus.org.au.

