



Therapy Policy

August 2026

Article 3 – Adults must do what’s best for me



Article 12 – I have the right to be listened to, and taken seriously



Article 19 - I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.



Article 28 – You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.



Key Contact Personnel in School

**Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:
Gemma Byrne and Madeline Simmons**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sarah Costain

Date written: December 2025

Date reviewed: August 2026

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: TBC

Date of next review: August 2027

**This policy will be reviewed following any concerns and/or updates to
national and local guidance or procedure**

INTRODUCTION

Five Acre Wood (FAW) is an all-age (4-19 years) District Foundation Special School for young people with Profound, Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties including ASD. This policy aims to set out the therapeutic provision in place for the pupils at Five Acre Wood School and the responsibilities of staff in the implementation.

The FAW Therapy Team is made up of a Lead Occupational Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Lead Speech and Language Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Lead Therapy Assistant and Therapy Assistants.

All staff at FAW are responsible for implementing the Universal Provision in this policy. The FAW Therapy Team are responsible for the implementation of the targeted and specialist areas as stated in this policy.

To be read in conjunction with:

- SENMOVE Trampoline/Rebound Therapy Policy
- Hydrotherapy Pool Policy
- Augmentative and Alternative Communications Policy.

IN-SCHOOL THERAPY PROVISION

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy (OT) aims to promote our pupils' participation and independence in everyday activities at school. We support pupils to do the things they want and have to do. OT considers all aspects of the person, the environment and the task that impact on a person's functioning.

What we offer:

- Strategies and support to help students dress independently
- Eating and drinking support
- Support and advice on fine motor skills such as writing, using scissors, grip strength, isolation of fingers and dexterity
- Support and advice for safe manual handling
- Sensory based interventions and equipment
- Staff training on specialist OT interventions see '*Staff Training Core Package*' on Page 6 for further information.

We can make recommendations and provide further guidance on skills for development as independence increases.

We provide support on the breakdown of tasks, enabling simple manageable steps to aid pupils to begin to develop the skills needed for furthering their independence.

Referrals can be placed via the Therapy referral form (appendix 1) to be completed by school staff and in liaison with parents/carers as required. Referrals are triaged weekly during term time and prioritisation is given based on presentation and current needs.

Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) provides support with communication and interaction skills.

We encourage a total communication approach using speech and/or using

alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) which includes using signing, objects, photos, symbols and sensory cues.

What we offer:

- Advice/support on selecting and implementing the most appropriate AAC system for each pupil.
- Support with maintaining and developing each AAC system to further a pupils' access to and use of language/vocabulary.
- Access to specialist equipment e.g., Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA), see *'Powered Forms of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)' on Page 3 for further information.*
- Support with referrals to the Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology (KM CAT) Team for access to personal VOCAs.

In addition to this, we also offer:

- Staff training on specialist SaLT interventions, see *'Staff Training Core Package' on Page 6 for further information.*
- Support with the set-up and maintenance of visual supports to be used in the classroom and at home, e.g., visual schedules, task breakdown boards, transitional cues.
- Specialist assessment and advice relating to the development of social communication/interaction, expressive and receptive language skills.
- Assessment of speech sound production and fluency.
- Support for class staff on the implementation of Universal Strategies e.g., Attention Autism, Lego Therapy and Intensive Interaction.

Referrals can be placed via the Therapy referral form (Appendix 1) to be completed by school staff and in liaison with parents/carers as required. Referrals are triaged weekly during term time, and prioritisation is given based on presentation and current needs.

FAW THERAPY PROVISION LEVELS

Pupils at Five Acre Wood School are on the Universal provision level. Class staff can request further support at any point via a referral process. If it is deemed the pupil requires more support by a therapist, pupils will be assigned either Targeted or Specialist in addition to the universal support they already receive.

However, where pupils have specific requirements stated in Section F of their EHCP this would be met alongside the input stated above by the in-school Therapy Team or funded and delivered by external agencies.

Universal

Pupils on this provision have their needs met through specialist teacher input within a need led learning approach. Therapy support is embedded into their routine to ensure the pupils' needs are best met continually throughout their day. A range of needs-led resources and equipment are available and accessible to all pupils of FAW.

Advice, regular training and support is available to all members of the school community. This is provided throughout the year as and when required. Essential training is provided as standard to relevant staff annually.

If a pupil is experiencing challenges that require further support from their specialist classroom team, a drop-in with a therapist can be attended by class staff. A referral to the therapy team can be made.

Following referral and information gathering, the pupil may be observed and/or assessed by a therapist.

Targeted

Following referral and observation/assessment, therapy targets and/or a therapy programme will be written by the therapist, and input will be sought from class staff and parents/carers as required. The implementation of therapy targets and/or therapy programme will be completed by the specialist class team.

The provision will be reviewed at the end of a set period of time and next steps are determined.

Pupils deemed to benefit from weighted jackets and Quickshifts regulation music will remain on the targeted provision level. This provision will be reviewed throughout the year to ensure continued suitability and fit.

Specialist

Direct intervention

Following referral and observation/assessment, therapy targets and/or a therapy programme will be written by the therapist and input will be sought from class staff and parents/carers as required.

The implementation of the therapy targets and/or therapy programme will be directly completed by a member of the Therapy Team, when they are experiencing challenges that cannot be fully met in class or by the specialist class team. This could be through 1:1 sessions or group sessions, for an identified period of time.

The provision will be reviewed at the end of a set period of time and next steps are determined.

Specialist seating

Historically, following referral and assessment, pupils were considered for specialist seating provided by the in-school OT team. However, due to recent updates in RCOT guidelines, the liquidation of NRS Healthcare, and changes to in-school OT ordering permissions, the provision of specialist seating by the in-school OT team will be gradually discontinued, with alternative strategies explored.

For postural specialist seating needs, provision and ongoing support will be managed by the NHS Occupational Therapy team.

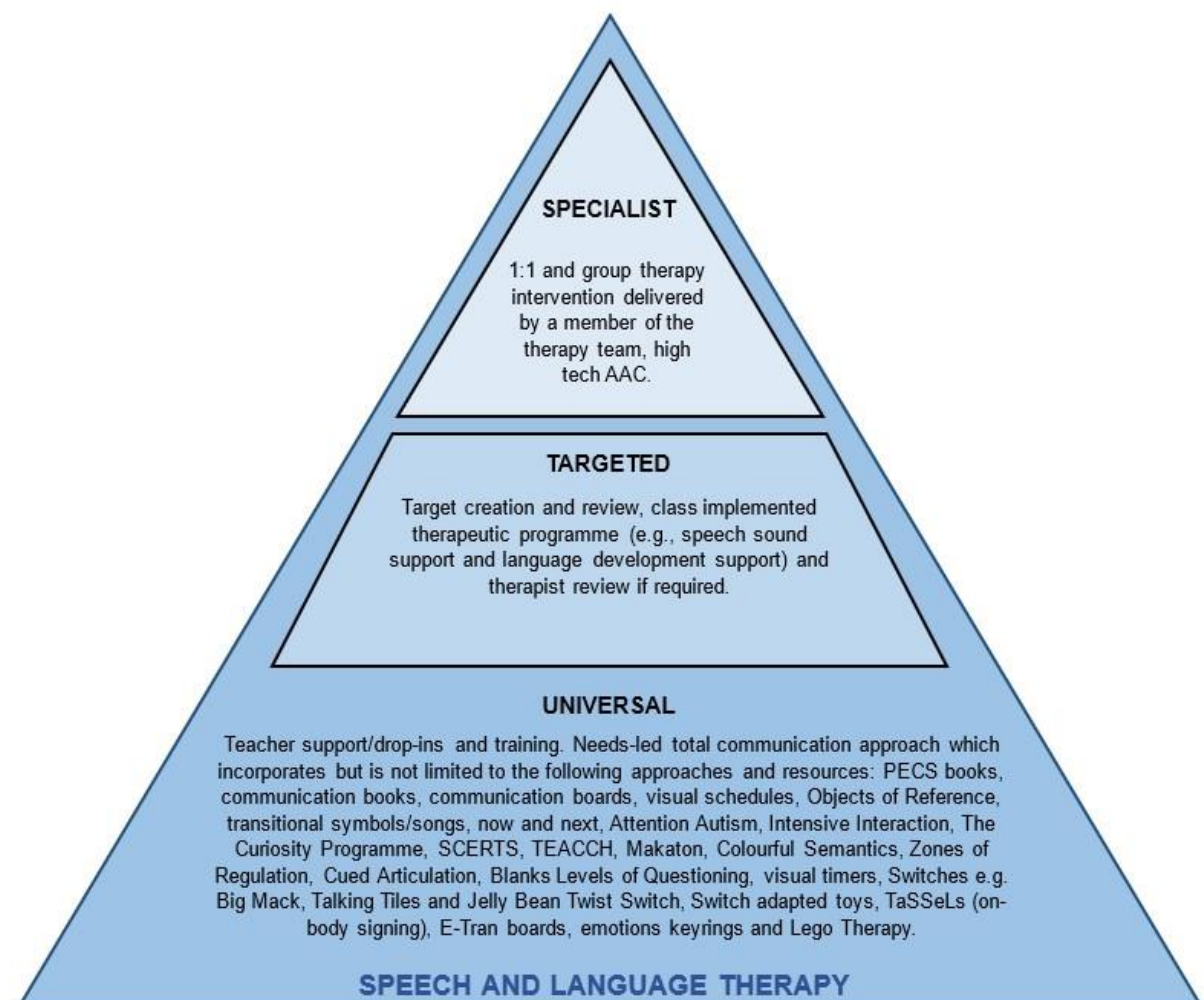
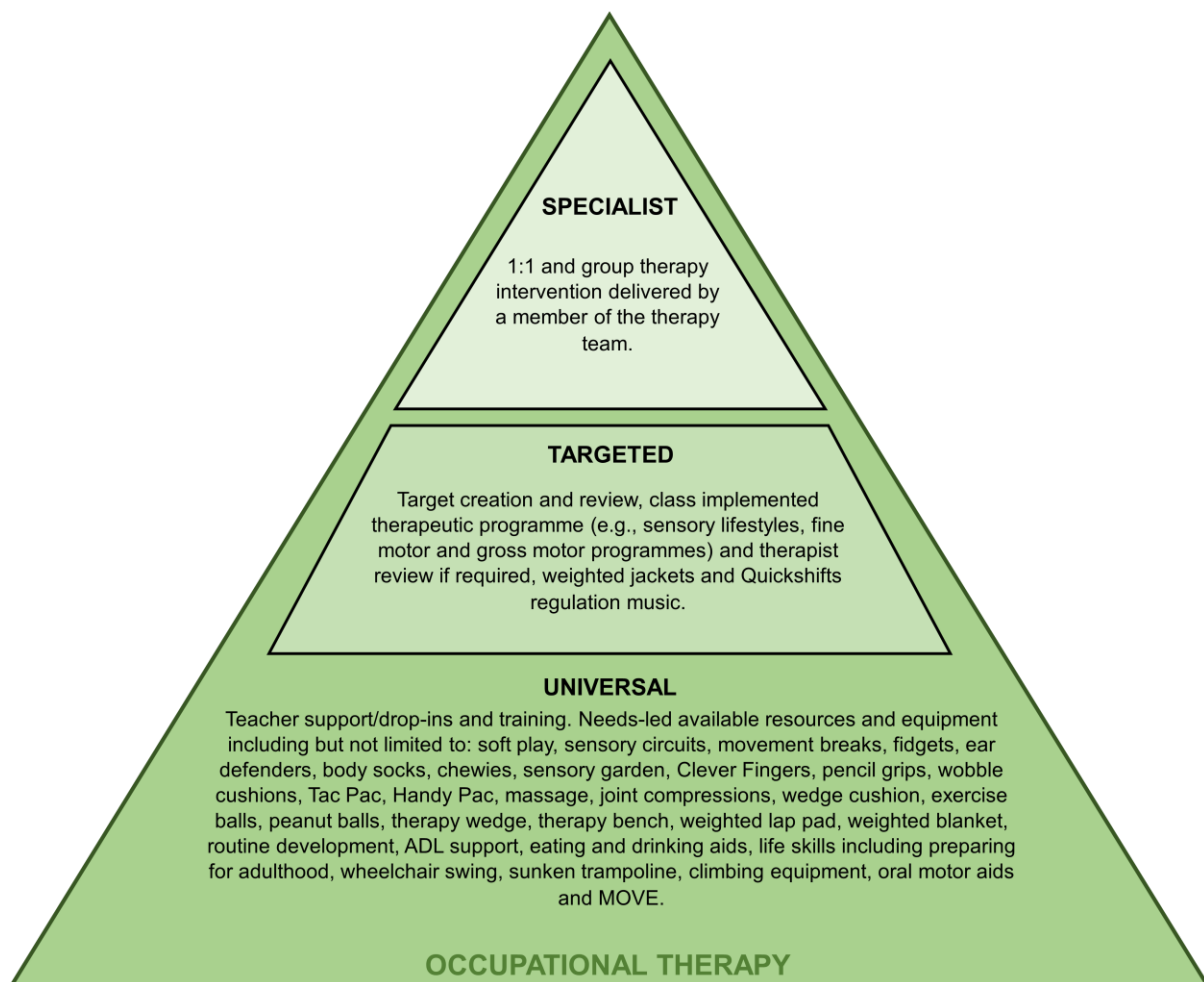
Powered Forms of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Following referral and assessment, pupil's that have been assessed to require a powered AAC device (e.g. iPad's with Grid Player and eye gaze devices) will continue to be supported on the specialist provision level.

The in-school SaLT Team will work in collaboration with the specialist class team and parents/carers to facilitate a referral to the Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology Team (KM CAT) to ensure a personal, permanent device is put in place. Once a pupil has a personal device, the in-school SaLT Team will continue to work closely with the KM CAT team should the need arise.

The devices will be loaned on a trial basis to determine success in meeting KMCAT's criteria. If this criterion is not met, then these devices will be returned to Five Acre Wood School and an alternative method of communication explored.

Examples of the specific provision in place on each of these provision levels can be seen on the pyramids for both OT and SaLT below. Which provision level your child is on will be available from their class teacher and will also be communicated through their EHCP annual review paperwork.



STAFF TRAINING CORE PACKAGE

The following training opportunities are available to all staff, based on the needs of the pupils they support. Sessions are delivered throughout the academic year as required.

Support for class teams and learning approaches may be identified following learning exploration walks, classroom observations, or internal reviews, in collaboration with learning approach leads and assistant headteachers.

In addition, all staff may request training from the therapy team at any point during the academic year should they feel it is necessary for their professional development and to support the pupils they work with.

Sensory Lifestyles	Sensory Processing	Sensory Circuits	Feeding differences	Joint Compressions	The importance of the universal provision
PECS	AAC	Intensive Interaction	Colourful Semantics	Cued Articulation	Attention Autism
Handwriting and Pencil Grip	Gross Motor and Coordination	Objects of Reference	Developing early communication	Stammering	Communicate in Print
Cues vs Prompts	Speech Sounds	Types of language processing	Toilet Learning	Functional Skill Acquisition	GLP

ADDITIONAL IN-SCHOOL PROVISION

Hydrotherapy – read in conjunction with Hydrotherapy Pool Policy

Hydrotherapy or Aquatic therapy refers to water-based movements, activities and exercises carried out in a specialised pool for physical rehabilitation, relaxation, fitness and other therapeutic benefit.

Access to the hydrotherapy pool at FAW will be allocated according to the category criteria set out below. The frequency of sessions will be determined termly through the timetabling process, taking into account the number of pupils meeting each category of need. Provision may vary depending on capacity and demand. A therapist-written programme must be in place for hydrotherapy pool sessions to proceed, unless otherwise determined by SLT.

Category A	Physiotherapist direct-led Aquatic Therapy based on health need.
Category B	Therapy directed water-based activities for pupils with identified physical needs who are not currently accessing a land-based therapy programme. These pupils will be prioritised for hydrotherapy pool access where clinically appropriate. Local Authority and/or health directed water-based activities.
Category C	Therapy directed water-based activities for pupils with identified physical needs who have limited access to a land-based therapy programme. Hydrotherapy pool access may be provided to supplement their therapy programme, subject to clinical need and capacity. Availability following prioritisation of categories A-B.
Category D1	Therapy directed finite blocks of water-based activities for pupils with identified physical needs who are following a physiotherapist-prescribed land-based therapy programme. Hydrotherapy pool access may be provided as an additional intervention, subject to clinical need and capacity. Availability following prioritisation of categories A-C.
Category D2	Therapy directed finite blocks of water-based activities for pupils whose needs are not primarily physical in nature, such as: • Significant communication needs • Significant sensory needs • Welfare-related needs Water-based activities should only be considered where alternative strategies and interventions have been trialled and evaluated by a therapist and found to be unsuitable or insufficient in meeting the pupil's needs. In exceptional circumstances, ongoing access may be recommended following MDT involvement, with agreement from the relevant therapists and/or approval from SLT. Availability following prioritisation of categories A-C.

Rebound Therapy – read in conjunction with SENMOVE Trampoline/Rebound Therapy policy

Rebound therapy is a specific model of use of trampolines in providing alternative opportunities for movement, therapeutic exercise and recreation for people with a wide range of additional needs.

Participants range from mild to severe physical disabilities and from mild to profound and multiple learning disabilities.

Referrals for Rebound Therapy is via a Therapist, KM CAT, MDT or SLT referral. These will be triaged on a case-by-case basis by the FAW Therapy Team. If a referral is accepted, a priority level will be given, and a suitable programme based on the pupils' needs and abilities will be decided.

Priority levels:

1 st	• For pupils with identified physical needs who are not currently accessing a land-based therapy programme. • Those pupils with identified physical needs that do not access the hydrotherapy pool. • Local Authority and/or health directed activities. • MOVE candidates.
2 nd	• As per recommendation by the KM CAT team to work on communication development
3 rd	• When other therapy strategies have been trialled and evaluated by a therapist and found to be unsuitable or insufficient in meeting the pupil's needs.

EXTERNAL THERAPY PROVISION

Independent Therapists/SEN Therapies

The FAW Therapy Team also liaise with the independent therapists that visit individual pupils at FAW. Class staff are the main link between school and the therapist, but the FAW Therapy Team will support where necessary.

KCHFT

We are supported externally by the KCHFT NHS Trust including OT, Physiotherapy (PT) and Eating and Drinking (Dysphagia). Therapists may visit pupils on their caseload while they are in school.

Referrals to the KCHFT NHS team can be placed via the pod referral:

<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/childrens-therapies-referral/>
(please note: OT and PT referrals can only be placed by a health, education or social care professional).

The in-school therapy team work closely with the NHS teams to support and may support with placing referrals should the need arise.

Occupational Therapy

The NHS Occupational Therapists predominantly support with moderate-complex postural seating and upper limb support at FAW. The team may also support with other concerns on a case-by-case basis in line with their criteria.

Physiotherapy

The NHS Physiotherapists support with all PT needs at FAW. They may provide equipment and/or write programmes (land and water-based) in line with their criteria.

Eating and Drinking (Dysphagia)

The NHS Eating and Drinking team provide all support for safe eating and drinking. Should any dysphagia concerns arise, a referral should be placed urgently via the pod referral.

Therapy Referral Form - 2026-2027

All referrals to School OT and SaLT

* Required

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.



Personal Details

1. Date of Referral *



2. Pupil Name *

3. Pupil Date of Birth *



4. Which site is the pupil based? *

- ☐ Loose
- ☐ Snodland
- ☐ Oxford Road
- ☐ St Katherine's

5. Class *

6. Class Teacher *

7. Referrer's Name *

Professionals

8. Which professional would you like to refer to? *

- ☐ Occupational Therapist
- ☐ Speech and Language Therapist

Occupational Therapy

For postural seating needs, refer via the POD to the NHS Team https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/childrens-therapies-referral/#gf_66

9. OT - Who is your allocated Occupational Therapist? *

- ☐ Gemma Byrne
- ☐ Charlotte Wenham

10. OT - What is the nature of your concern/s? *

- ☐ Sensory needs
- ☐ Handwriting
- ☐ Gross Motor Skills
- ☐ Fine Motor Skills
- ☐ Toileting
- ☐ Feeding
- ☐ Manual Handling
- ☐ Sensory and Low Level Seating
- ☐ Other

11. OT - Please expand on nature of concern, as above *

12. OT - How long has this been a concern? *

13. OT - What strategies have you already tried? *

14. OT - What would you like to be different following this referral? *

15. OT - How do the concerns stated above affect the individual's functional ability to take part in activities? *

Speech and Language Therapy

For dysphagia concerns, please refer via the
POD https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/childrens-therapies-referral/#gf_66

16. SaLT - Who is your allocated Speech and Language Therapist? *

☐ Maddie Simmons

17. SaLT - What is the nature of your concern/s? *

- ☐ Speech sound
- ☐ Attention/Engagement
- ☐ Use of AAC devices (PECS, Communication books etc.)
- ☐ Stammering
- ☐ Understanding of Language
- ☐ Selective Mutism
- ☐ Use of Language
- ☐ Other

18. SaLT - Please expand on nature of concern, as above *

E.g. have they got a diagnosis to support presentation

19. SaLT - How long has this been a concern? *

20. SaLT - Which communication system/s are they using? *

- ☐ Verbal Language
- ☐ PECS
- ☐ Communication Book
- ☐ Communication Board
- ☐ Room Call Points
- ☐ Makaton
- ☐ Objects of Reference
- ☐ Use of Visuals (timetable, now and next etc.)
- ☐ TaSSeLs (on body signing)
- ☐ Eye Gaze
- ☐ iPad with Grid Player
- ☐ Other

21. SaLT - What strategies have you already tried? *

22. SaLT - What would you like to be different following this referral? *

Professionals involved

23. Who is aware this referral has been placed? *

- ☐ Parents/Carers
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Pupil
- ☐ LAL
- ☐ Learning Approach AHT
- ☐ Learning Approach DHT
- ☐ DSL
- ☐ School Therapist - OT
- ☐ School Therapist - SALT
- ☐ School Counsellor
- ☐ School Play Therapist
- ☐ Independent Therapist
- ☐ Other

24. Are there any other professionals involved in supporting this pupil? *

Additional information

25. Is there any other information you feel would be beneficial to support this referral? *

26. Does the student require any emergency medication? *

If so, please can you detail what medication they take and what it is for.

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