

## Parent newsletter

### School Therapy Team Update December 2022

The school therapy team has been very busy since the academic year began in September 2022. Here are some updates and messages from our team:

#### Communication with School Therapy and Nursing Services

Please can we ask that you make direct contact with *both* the nursing and school therapy teams as soon as possible following any significant changes in your child's therapy or health care needs.

Both the therapy and nursing teams play a key role in supporting students back to school, ensuring any post illness or post operative care needs are well documented, understood and can be managed by staff.

As changes to care plans, treatment plans or school routines may be necessary, please notify *both* the nursing and school therapy teams in advance of your child's return.

Our contact details are

School Therapy Team: [stt@valence.kent.sch.uk](mailto:stt@valence.kent.sch.uk)

School Nursing: [nurses@valence.kent.sch.uk](mailto:nurses@valence.kent.sch.uk)

#### Physical Management and Independence

The school therapy team have continued to work in different ways to support the delivery of physical management activities to students. Our school physiotherapist, Aurelie, and our therapy assistants, now join students in some lessons in the sports hall and in the swimming pool area to help promote the importance of physical management; training and assisting staff and students to incorporate therapeutic activity within their learning routines.

Our occupational therapists, Alison and Juanita, have been busy assessing and prescribing new hoist slings and helping the school to purchase further specialist class seating where there is an assessed need. Provision of this equipment helps to ensure that students are comfortable and supported sufficiently to access different learning opportunities across the school.

Our therapy assistant, Enrica, is also working one evening a week within the residential bungalows, supporting students with meal preparation skills as part of their work towards independence goals.

### **Health days with Therapy staff from Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT)**

Over the last two terms, KCHFT therapists and school staff have come together with classes to provide a 'health day'. This involves each class, on an allocated day, being reassessed in equipment with further training and advice issued to class staff to maximise the use of any equipment prescribed. Feedback from staff and students has been positive and students have enjoyed helping to advise staff of their needs. The nursing team also supported these days, weighing students and completing routine health checks where this is requested or identified as a need.

### **Independent Therapists**

Occasionally we are asked to facilitate assessment or treatment programmes delivered by external therapists. Whilst the school seeks to work effectively and closely with all professionals involved with the care of a student, our aim is to provide an embedded therapy provision delivered by our therapists, class, and residential educational provision staff where possible, minimising the impact on class learning activity.

Before seeking to make any arrangements for alternative therapy provision, please discuss the proposal with Sally Casey (School Therapy Lead), your child's Pathway Lead or Zena Belton (Assistant Principal).

### **Introducing New Wheelchairs: Training and Handovers**

The use of wheelchairs both manual and powered, provide a very important means of mobility for many of our students. We have lots of different processes in school to promote the safe and independent use of wheelchairs, this includes driving training or reassessment of driving skills for some students. We have a wide variety of chairs in use. Some are from wheelchair services whilst others are obtained through independent providers.

If you are planning for an independent provider to supply a wheelchair in school, please let the school therapy team know *before* it is supplied to school.

Agreement for the use of independent wheelchairs within school is made on a case-by-case basis.

To ensure that the wheelchair can be safely used within the school environment, we need to complete a handover of the wheelchair with the family or provider (as size, speed, steering mechanisms, and anchor points vary). We also need to carry out an assessment of a student's aptitude, current health needs and driving skills within their wheelchair in order to determine risk. Where needed, safer driving sessions and support may be offered before full use can be agreed within school.

### **Speech and Language Therapy Services**

I am pleased to let you know we have appointed a new speech and language therapist for Valence School. Holli James will be joining us in January 2023 and, after completing her induction, our hope is that she will continue to support students and staff to further develop communication services at the school whilst working alongside visiting colleagues from Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust.

### **Valence School at the National Back Exchange Conference September 2022**



At Valence we do lots of work helping our students and staff to carry out safer moving and handling and to support students to be as independent as possible. With a wide range of equipment in use, training is an important part of our service provision. In September, Sally Casey, as Moving and Handling trainer, attended The National Back Exchange annual conference to give a presentation on how we deliver moving and handling services within our school. The conference, which was held in Harrogate, was attended by a wide

range of professionals including trainers working in hospitals, the community, other schools and healthcare settings. This was a wonderful opportunity, not just to share knowledge and good practice, but also to showcase the school. Feedback was positive, with further partnership links made with many other establishments.

### **Further Help and Advice**

Please remember we are here to support with therapy needs so please contact us with any queries.

You can contact the school therapy team via the group email address or myself as therapy lead.

Sally Casey

School Therapy Lead

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