

Occupational Therapy

What is occupational therapy?

'Occupation' refers to the practical activities that allow a person to be independent and develop a sense of identity. Paediatric occupational therapist work in a variety of settings supporting children.

At Karalius Foundation the occupational therapist is focused on developing skills that enable the student to handle day-to-day tasks such as self-care, work, play and leisure. Karalius Foundation have an experienced occupational therapist on-site who works in conjunction with staff, parents / carers, and outside services to support and optimise each student functioning within all areas of the school day. The support provided is also to aid the student to thrive at home and in the wider community.

What does the occupational therapy service offer at Karalius Foundation?

The occupational therapist aims to use a wide range of approaches to plan, deliver and monitor occupational therapy with students who will be attending the school. The occupational therapist addresses components of function using a sensory integration-based approach. The work which is holistic will consider the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and sensory needs and abilities of the student maximising their opportunities to participate as fully as possible. Therapeutic interventions and strategies that can be easily adapted by school staff, parent / carers, are aimed at helping the student to stay calm and focused whilst alert and engaged, ready to learn.

The occupational therapist aims to use a variety of standard and non-standardised assessments to support the therapeutic approaches implemented. Having a sensory integration-based approach can help to improve function for engagement in meaningful, health-promoting activities that support participation in life helping to improve sensory processing and integration. Sensory integration is important for everyday functions such as:

- Academic skills
- Attention
- Healthy relationships with others
- Auditory discrimination
- Balance
- Muscle tone
- Coordination
- Postural stability
- Body awareness
- Praxis, including motor planning
- Emotional security
- Self-esteem
- Eye-hand coordination
- Visual discrimination
- Self-regulation

- Fine motor skills
- Social skills
- Gross motor skills
- Tactile discrimination

The occupational therapist is available to support:

- Home visits
- Accompanying students, families and staff to meetings and liaise with colleagues regarding therapy programmes and transition plans
- With recommendations on activities and equipment that can support the student or signpost to appropriate services

Occupational therapy aims

Karalius Foundation's occupational therapy service aims to develop the student's functional and motor skills, such as fine and gross motor skills, postural stability, visuomotor (hand to eye) coordination and bilateral skills. Alongside this, the emphasis will be on sensory and emotional regulation and access to learning. This helps the student to achieve their potential and participate as independently as possible. It is the aim of the occupational therapy service to also support student's participation, social communication, and group skills.

Students at Karalius Foundation may have occupational therapy input which involves:

- 1:1 or small group sessions
- On-going assessments and observation
- Sensory profile and / or a devised sensory diet
- Advice on / or provision of equipment as required, including programmes of use and safety aspects.

Team working

Karalius Foundation thrives on a teamwork approach placing the student at the centre of the service. Occupational therapy input is shared with staff, families and where required outside agencies to support the student. Occupational therapy not only take part in therapy sessions but also engages in Thrive approach sessions, classroom support, and staff training.