

# Elysian Therapeutic and Intervention Policy



# Elysian

**Providing Animal Assisted Therapy & Learning**

**Date Agreed: February 2023**

**Date of next review: February 2024**

*This policy is an ongoing document and subject to regular reviews as the therapeutic provision expands and develops*

***Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.***

For the purposes of this policy, where the term Elysian is used, it refers to Elysian Animal Assisted Interventions Ltd including Elysian School and Elysian Assisted Therapy & Learning.

This policy is applicable across all sites on which Elysian operates.

## **Vision**

At Elysian we believe that all young people have the right to receive an education that allows them to thrive and reach their potential regardless of their past experiences or additional needs. To learn, young people need to feel safe and able to develop positive and healthy relationships.

We recognise the significant role animals can play in helping young people create new experiences that allow the brain and body to build more positive ways of communicating. Animals offer an alternative way to connect that is less threatening or demanding, they take their time and do not judge or ask too many questions! Through repetitive practice the brain can re-organise neural pathways and young people can learn new ways to relate to others. Most importantly the work with animals can then be transferred into how they relate and connect with other humans and in daily life experiences.

Alongside the animals the positive impact on mental health of being outside, connecting with nature and engaging in practical tasks is well documented. Using the farm environment to learn can feel less demanding and a welcome relief away from the frenetic life of a mainstream school, a release from noisy, large classrooms and busy corridors; common triggers for many young people particularly those diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Pathological Demand Disorder and Generalised Anxiety.

Our animals and the farm environment provide a **unique**, therapeutic space to help young people reframe their experiences of learning so they can **enjoy, believe and achieve**.

## **Therapeutic Intervention Statement**

### ***Introduction***

In accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) green paper Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools 2018 and the Equality Act 2010. Elysian recognises the central role that schools provide in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children by developing a whole school approach.

A mentally healthy school is one that adopts a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing underpinned by a trauma informed developmental model.

Young people are individuals and have their own 'lived in' experiences and personal stories that have shaped them. At Elysian many of our young people have behavioural or mental health diagnoses and significant trauma histories. We recognise that these are important aspects of their story and must aid and inform the way we work with them. However, we also feel strongly that these diagnoses should not be used as labels or barriers to achievement, personal development, and good emotional health.

Most of our young people will arrive with negative perceptions of themselves and the world around them. They present with elevated levels of anxiety and an inability to regulate. Due to past experiences, they may feel that school or education are not places where they belong and are out of reach for them.

### ***Aims***

Our vision is to try and change this perception by developing and maintaining trusting relationships so that young people feel safe to challenge these learned beliefs and behaviours. We want them to feel proud of who they are and what they can achieve. We want them to develop an understanding of their internal world and learn strategies that will equip them to manage their emotional health. We believe we can do this by using the therapeutic power of animals, nature and therapeutically trained staff.

### ***Content***

Working therapeutically means non-judgemental relationship building. Using the **PACE** model will help young people to build trusting and respectful relationships with their peers and adults.

To develop a trusting relationship, young people need to feel safe. We will facilitate this by providing consistency of staff and not employing bank or temporary workers. Young people will be greeted each morning by a trusted member of staff who can check in with them and they will be allocated a keyworker who they can talk to when they need one to one support or someone to hold a safe space for them.

We will promote their self-esteem and let them know that their wishes and feelings are important by listening and validating. We will reinforce that their voice is important and provide a supportive environment for them to feel heard and able to be involved in decision making. The implementation of a young peoples' council will provide a supportive forum for debate and a sharing of ideas to contribute to decision making.

We will challenge disruptive behaviours and negative thinking, but in a reflective and empathic way, helping young people to understand and recognise alternative and more positive ways of being with themselves and others. We will do this by using a **collaborative** model. All plans will be young person focused and offer flexibility and choice to encourage collaborative problem solving, flexibility and distress tolerance. The teaching and learning approach will provide opportunity to build on these skills.

### ***Delivery of therapeutic intervention***

All young people at Elysian have an EHCP, this will set the parameters and requirements of the therapeutic intervention and will feed into their individualised placement and learning plan. Upon entry existing assessments and reports from other agencies such as Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language will inform care planning with regards to therapeutic intervention.

Upon entry each young person will receive a therapeutic screening which will be completed through a range of formal (Occupational Therapist and Integrative Therapist Lead) and informal methods. If appropriate each young person will spend time with an Occupational Therapist and together, they will create **a sensory profile** which will be integral to their daily timetable to help them maximise achievement and engagement. Therapy staff will work closely with teaching and support staff to ensure the appropriate use of therapeutic resources to maximise learning.

Each young person will have access to **Specialist, Targeted or Universal support** which may include individual or group sessions with an integrative therapist, occupational therapist, and their key worker. These sessions will provide either goal-based work working on specific challenges or psychoeducation around emotional and sensory health and awareness. Goals will be fed back into their EHCP.

Young people will be supported to collaborate with their peers in small groups to develop their **social and communication skills** and will eat together at lunch time. Staff will role model positive social behaviours and actively acknowledge and praise young people who engage in these behaviours and support their peers.

We will encourage young people to feel proud and celebrate their social, emotional, and academic achievements by hosting celebration days and award ceremonies. We will help them to recognise that failure and making mistakes is okay and that this can only help them to develop and grow.

### ***Co-ordination and Communication***

The Head of Therapy and Intervention is responsible for overall co-ordination of the therapeutic provision.

Infrastructure is in place to review a young person's needs via informal discussions and debrief at the end of each day, weekly case reviews, monthly staff line management and through operational leadership meetings held weekly. Externally, plans will be reviewed through information gathering and holistic working with other agencies such as SEND, social care, CAMHS teams and families. Elysian will prioritise attending professional meetings such as annual reviews or social care/CAMHS meetings.

Staff will receive regular training opportunities and CPD development sessions as part of our performance management process to ensure ongoing practice development in relation to developmental theories and approaches such as Attachment Theory (Bowlby), Developmental trauma (Dr Bruce Perry) and the PACE model (Dr Dan Hughes).

Small monthly **reflective practice groups** facilitated by a therapist will provide a safe space for staff to talk through and reflect on their practice with young people.

**Daily debrief** will provide a forum for staff to share achievements and concerns with regards to the young people and work in a holistic multi-disciplinary way.

Young people will be reviewed in **Weekly Case Review Briefings** applying a strengths-based approach and learning to be implemented into practice. Facilitated by a therapist to review social and emotional goals and strategies being used to support the young person so that staff can discuss together in more detail the needs and progress of the young person using the different skillsets and experiences of the staff team.

Therapists will offer **consultation sessions** where staff can have a one to one to talk through plans and strategies and reflect on areas where they may need extra support.

Young people will be asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the term to measure efficacy of the service. Me and My Feelings will be used, this is a brief 16 item school-based measure of child mental health covering broad domains: emotional difficulties and behavioural difficulties and has been designed and evaluated by the Anna Freud Organisation. The data collected from these questionnaires will be used to implement service improvement.

Termly audits will take place to ensure that needs are regularly assessed, reviewed, and met.

The therapy team will meet weekly to discuss allocations, planning and to review research and practice and feed into **strategic development of the provision**. Therapy team to include a multi-disciplinary team of Occupational Therapist and Integrative Therapist.

**Monthly line management supervision** will be provided to support staff wellbeing and monitor outcomes. Therapists will be provided with external reflective supervision if required funded by the service.

### **Involvement with Parents and Carers**

Best practice is achieved by a co-ordinated and **multi-agency response** with regular communication with parents and carers. Regular updates will be provided via telephone, email and newsletter. Elysian will work hard to develop positive relationships with the young person's community. Evidence identifies that joined up working improves outcomes for young people.

### **Other Relevant Documents**

This policy sits alongside the Curriculum, Safeguarding, and Behaviour Policies and Therapy Process Document.

### **External Agencies**

If there are concerns regarding a young person's mental health referrals or advice can be sought from CAMHS using the following links

<https://childrensreferrals.sabp.nhs.uk/>

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/referral/>

Mindsight Surrey CAMHS: <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/mindsightsurreycamhs/about-us/parents-carers> Provide help and support to children and young people when they begin to feel emotionally or mentally unwell to build wellbeing and resilience to reduce the chances of their condition becoming more serious.

Hope Guildford - 01483 517190 – [hope.guildford@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:hope.guildford@surreycc.gov.uk)

Hope Epsom – 01372 203404 – [hope.epsom@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:hope.epsom@surreycc.gov.uk)

CAMHS Single point of access (SPA) 0300 222 5755 Mon – Fri 8am – 8pm, Sat 9am – 12pm.

CAMHS Crisis Intervention Worker or Duty Worker

SW CAMHS CT Guildford 01483 443777, Frimley 01276 454000

NW CAMHS CT St Peters 01932 722561, Ashford 01784 884359

NE CAMHS CT Epsom 0300 222 5850

SE CAMHS CT Redhill 288700

<https://www.surreyscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Surrey-Safeguarding-Partnership-Toolbox-V12-15th-December-2020.pdf>: this is a useful link to advice and guidance with lots of helpful apps for parents and young people.

### **Useful helplines and Websites for out of hours support**

24-hour support for people in Surrey and North East Hampshire experiencing a mental health crisis Helpline: 0800 915 4644 or 0300 456 8342

#### **Local to Surrey:**

Extended Hope via the Emergency Duty Team - 01483 517898 - 5pm - 11pm every 7 days a week

Children and young people between 10-19 years old can also drop into a CYP Havens.

Guildford 07881 011527

Epsom 07771 231553

Staines 07377 551744

Redhill 07846 083539

Website: [www.cyphaven.net](http://www.cyphaven.net).

- Kooth: Online support Weekdays 12noon – 10pm Weekends and Bank Holidays 6pm – 10pm
- National Self Harm Network: [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)
- Samaritans: Available 24/7 116 123  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
- Childline: 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)