

**CITY OF ROCHESTER SCHOOL
THERAPY POLICY**

This policy, which applies to the whole school, and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

In the City of Rochester School, the term 'staff' is inclusive of all staff and it also applies to students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, the Trustees and Board of Trustees.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay.

Signed:

Date Reviewed: March 2024

Date of Next Review: March 2025

Version No. 2



Alicja Emmett
Headteacher

This policy will be reviewed no later than March 2025, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Introduction

Pupils at City of Rochester school have a diagnosis of ASD. Some learners have learning difficulties associated with this diagnosis. This impacts on their language, learning, sensory need and functional performance. Therapies are headed up by the SENCo and the team is comprised of a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT), Occupational Therapists (OT), Play therapist (PT) and counsellor.

The Therapies Team sits in the Welfare Team working alongside teachers and phase leaders and senior management team to promote pupil's skills and abilities by providing opportunities and strategies for optimal learning and participation. The Therapists at City of Rochester school fulfil the assessment and therapy needs for each pupil as specified in their Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The goal of Therapies at City of Rochester school is to provide person-centred and individualised intervention for skill acquisition, maintenance, and generalisation. This is done in liaison with staff, parents and other professionals working with each pupil, to address challenges in communication, social interaction, engagement, play, occupational performance, and sensory processing.

Interventions used are evidence-based and are formulated from assessment results. Targets are prioritised based on need and this guides IEP target setting. Therapists devise a therapeutic programme of activities or recommend strategies which are personalised to each learner so that they can maximise their potential as well as have the best educational experience. Therapy programmes consist of activities that the learner completes with the Therapist directly or indirectly as appropriate. These programmes are integrated into the learner's IEP and are integral to their day-to-day learning opportunities.

Targets are updated on a termly basis in line with the City of Rochester review cycle and the Therapists formally report on the learner's progress annually through Annual Reviews.

Therapy at City of Rochester school plays a major part in the social, emotional, mental health, behavioural and physical wellbeing of our students. Between them, the young people who attend City of Rochester school experience a wide variety of challenges that may have impacted negatively on their capacity to engage with education. In order to give them the best chance of being happy and successful in life we therefore provide a range of therapeutic support, both within and outside the classroom.

Our whole approach is underpinned by a 'soft' therapeutic approach which permeates everything from our curriculum to our behaviour management. Whilst many of our students have a specified therapeutic requirement on their Education, Health and Care Plans, most of our students will access our therapeutic department at some time or other during their time with us, whether it be for in-depth counselling, a safe place to off-load, support to manage anxieties, help with social skills, difficulties with sensory issues, or just to learn some relaxation techniques before assessments.

Therapies available to students include:

- Speech and Language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Integrative Counselling
- Play therapy
- Creative arts therapy
- Draw and talk

Therapy management

The overall management of the therapeutic department is the responsibility of the SENCo, whose task is to lead and coordinate the work of the therapists as a whole, supporting and guiding the work of its component parts to ensure a consistently high quality, specialist therapeutic service. By acting as a liaison between therapists, SLT, other members of staff, and external agencies (e.g., CAMHS, Local Authorities) this ensures that therapeutic insights can be more widely understood and applied consistently for the benefit of the individual student.

As well as ongoing informal meetings and formal supervision, the therapists meet with the SENCo every week to discuss concerns, provide feedback, and share information on individual student's therapeutic needs. Therapists keep records, including attendance and engagement, and basic details of sessions; they also contribute to Annual Reviews if appropriate by submitting a written report. The SENCo always attends parents evening and can feed back any information to/from therapists; however, parents/carers are able to make appointments to see therapists or to have telephone/email contact if they so wish.

All referrals for therapy are channelled through the SENCo who will then allocate the student to the most appropriate therapist depending on their needs and availability of therapists. However, therapists reserve the right to make a clinical judgement as to whether a student is capable of engaging in therapy at any time; they also reserve the right to terminate therapy when they feel appropriate. Whilst therapists will endeavour to see a student soon after referral, there may be a waiting list at times; because of this, it should be noted that therapists cannot keep slots open if the student consistently refuses to engage for 6 weeks, and a re-referral will need to be made if required. However, before this, every effort will be made to engage with the young person, and therapists will be in ongoing communication with Pastoral Leads/tutors/boarding staff and parents/carers if appropriate to discuss strategies and alternative ways of trying to engage with the young person. It will also be discussed at the student's annual review, so the local authority is aware. Therapy is not open-ended, and provision and progress is reviewed at the end of each term.

Confidentiality

In line with all counselling/therapy provision, a confidentiality statement applies which students are made aware of before commencing their sessions. This states that whilst counselling/therapy is a confidential process, and therefore parents/carers cannot be told specific details of sessions by the therapist, there are certain limitations:

- 1) If a student tells a therapist, or a therapist becomes aware that the student is involved in or planning to commit a crime then the therapist has a duty to inform the relevant authorities
- 2) Therapists may provide information to certain people and professionals involved with the student regarding attendance
- 3) If a therapist is worried about a student's safety or the safety of others then he/she will share this information with the relevant people. Normal safeguarding procedures will be followed if the student is in immediate danger of self-harm/suicidal ideation.
- 4) The therapy staff works as a team. Therapists may consult with other members of the team to provide the best possible care. These consultations are for professional and training purposes.

Speech and Language Therapy

The role of the Speech and Language Therapist at City of Rochester school is to assess, support and develop the learners' communication, speech and language skills alongside their functional play and social interaction skills. Our approach is based on the principle that children's communication skills are best developed through interaction with people who are most familiar to them and in everyday situations. We aim to achieve this by working with the child and advising teachers and parents. The balance between direct work with the child and advice to others will depend upon the needs of the individual child.

The Speech and Language Therapist will:

- Develop an environment in which a total communication approach is facilitated. This implies use of a range of additional strategies to support the development of communication for a range of different functions.
- Provide an assessment and intervention programme for the pupils attending City of Rochester school who have communication difficulties.
- Work within a collaborative framework in which Teachers and Therapists work together towards establishing aims for the development of pupil's communication skills in order for work on communication to occur throughout the school day.
- Liaise closely with Parents/ carers through provision of parent workshops and specific liaison regarding particular children.
- Provide ongoing INSET training for school staff regarding all aspects of communication and the relationship between children's communication and their behaviour.
- Liaise with other professionals as appropriate.
- Work with staff teams regarding the functional analysis of a child's behaviour and support the design/implementation of Individual Behaviour Management Plan as and when appropriate.
- Liaise with the Speech and Language Assistant in the roll out of programmes and interventions.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy (OT) at City of Rochester School offers an assessment and advisory service to identifying appropriate strategies, support and equipment to help the pupil access all areas of the curriculum.

Our Occupational Therapists work with all students in a range of school activities including lessons in the classroom, lunchtimes, playtimes and outreach activities. Intervention includes:

- Observation and assessment of how individual students' difficulties linked to their diagnosis impact on their participation in activities.
- Trailing strategies, adapting the environment and providing equipment.
- Creating, implementing and monitoring programmes for development of specific skills.
- Delivering individual and group therapy sessions, in collaboration with classroom staff
- Providing support, advice and training to City of Rochester staff and parents
- Joint working and target setting with teaching staff and other professionals (Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologist)
- Liaison with and referrals to other professionals and services (Disabled Children's Team, Housing, specialist transport, dietitians, consultants, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services))

Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists are Allied Health Professionals regulated by their own professional bodies – the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy (RCSLT) and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) respectively, and both by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This means that they adhere to professional and ethical standards, one of which is to remain informed of recent evidence and research relating to their clinical practice. A requirement of these Professional Standards is to maintain confidential clinical notes. Case notes at City of Rochester school and are stored securely in line with professional standards and are only accessible by the Therapists.

City of Rochester School 360° approach

We follow the graduated approach and the four-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review.

Referrals

Children attending City of Rochester school are automatically referred to the Speech and Language therapy and Occupational therapy service on entry. Children new to the school participate in initial assessment which is completed within the first half term of them being in school. The findings of the assessment are shared with Parents/ carers / classroom staff as part of their baseline review.

Assessment

The process of assessment of a child's needs may involve the following:

- Detailed discussion with Parents/ carers
- Individual sessions for formal and informal assessment
- Observation of the child in a number of contexts
- Discussion with school staff
- Production of a report

Each of our pupils are assessed and then placed into a tier system depending on the amount of specialist input needed. This is reviewed on a bespoke basis according to individual need and can range from termly, every 6 months or each year in line with PCAR's. Any professional working with a pupil or parent can request a review at any stage of the academic year.

Intervention

The Speech and Language Therapists are available to give advice and input on the following areas.

- Attention and listening
- Play skills
- Understanding of language

- Expressive language
- Use of communication for interaction
- Social skills
- Augmentative and alternative communication – including the use of objects of reference, photographs, symbols and signing systems.
- Use of behaviour as a means of communication

The Occupational Therapists are available to give advice and input on the following areas.

- Self-care and independent living skills
- Gross motor and movement ability
- Fine motor skills and ability to use hands to manipulate objects (handwriting, using scissors, knife/fork etc)
- Sensory processing skills
- Assistive and adaptive equipment
- Specialist seating equipment
- Increasing engagement in learning activities (for example using self-regulation and mutual regulation strategies to achieve a 'calm-alert' state for learning)
- Taking part in a wider range of school activities (for example providing anxiety management strategies, increasing tolerance of sensory input, providing graded supports)
- Increasing independence in school routines (for example developing skills in organising belongings, transitioning, planning for activities, mobility around school)
- Eating and drinking (for example by increasing tolerance of new foods, participating in mealtime routines, developing independence using cutlery and cups)
- Self-care skills (such as washing, brushing teeth, hair and nail care, dressing)
- Growing up and puberty (such as understanding of body changes, public and private behaviour, female sanitary care)
- Accessing the community (for example providing safety equipment and strategies, travel training)
- Developing handwriting (for example by improving fine and perceptual motor skills, developing core stability and shoulder strength)
- Widening repertoire of play activities (for example by addressing sensory seeking/avoiding behaviours, providing graded support for participation, developing motor planning skills)
- Improving participation in P.E., leisure, and break time activities (for example through gross motor skill development and developing motor planning skills).

Delivery

Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational therapy varies according to the individual needs of the children. Therapy may take the form of any of the following:

- Participation in whole class groups
- Liaison and planning with classroom staff
- Individual therapy
- Small group therapy

Following assessment all children receive personalised aims which list the targets the child will be working on in terms of their development for that review cycle. At the end of the review cycle progress will be evaluated and a review report distributed. The therapists' targets are designed to link into the child's personalised learning plan and inform classroom staff of targets to work on across the school day.

Liaison and joint planning are seen as a vital part of the role and for this purpose Therapists hold regular “clinic” sessions with class teams to discuss arising issues which may include specific children, adaptation of specific activities and behaviour programmes.

Progress Reporting

At the end of each individual review cycle a summary of the child’s progress on his/ her aims will be produced and circulated. A full review report is provided for the Annual Review and where there are issues pertinent to communication the Therapists will attend the review meetings where possible. At the end of the academic year a summary sheet of basic information is provided in order to ensure staff new to the children at the start of the academic year are provided with some fundamental information about the child’s communication and sensory needs. Information is taken from the therapy team to pupil progress meetings. Actions from these meetings are taken forward by Phase Leaders and Teaching Staff supported by the SENCo.

Liaison

Liaison and communication are considered vital in running an effective service. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact therapists directly on and arrangements can be made for meetings / home visits where appropriate.

The therapists aim to attend Parents’ evenings and where Parents/carers are not able to attend these meeting but would like to meet with the Therapist alternative arrangements are made.

Counselling and Play therapy

Any pupil may attend counselling or play therapy, at any time, during their time at City of Rochester school. Pupils can be referred to the school counsellor or play therapist by a parent, member of staff, or can self-refer.

Counselling and Play therapy are confidential and an important part of the therapeutic process. The school counsellor/ play therapist will inform the parents of their child’s progress but will not discuss the pupil’s counselling/therapy process, i.e., their personal thoughts and feelings.

After in initial assessment session the counsellor/play therapist will, in most situations that do not raise a safeguarding concern, contact the pupil’s parents with a recommendation for a number of ongoing sessions. Sessions normally take place weekly, or fortnightly, depending on the level of need, as assessed by the counsellor. Sessions run in line with the school timetable and normally last 50 minutes. Pupils may withdraw from counselling at any time, and this is made clear throughout the process, however they are encouraged to discuss this at their counselling session, or with another adult, rather than by non-attendance.

Records of pupils who have attended sessions, and notes from those sessions, are kept securely. Only the School counsellor has access to these files. Pupils who access the Counselling Service have the right to see information recorded about them by the school counsellor. Where students wish to see their file, they should ask the counsellor and the counsellor should be present to explain what the file contains and the reasons why.

Play Therapist

Is responsible for:

- Assessing the child's needs
- Running therapy sessions at a regular time and place
- Making use of toys (such as puppets, cars and dolls) and creative arts, including drawing, clay, sand, movement, music and therapeutic story telling
- Developing symbolic communication with children, which involves making a connection between the signs, symbols and actions the child creates through play and how these reflect their experiences

- Creating an in-depth therapeutic relationship, this promotes positive change in the child by helping them to help themselves
- Providing support, advice and training to City of Rochester staff and parents
- Contributing to Annual reviews and personalised target setting for individual pupils.

Counsellor

Counselling within the school environment is an opportunity for the counsellor to provide a safe and supportive environment where pupils and staff can communicate their thoughts and their feelings primarily through the process of talking and listening. This is done without judgement in an atmosphere of respect and empathy and within a secure and trusting relationship. It is necessary that the counsellor is flexible in her approach and able to incorporate the use of non-traditional interventions and other therapeutic activities to support pupil communication and self-expression. It is well-known and documented that it is the quality of the client's relationship with the therapist that is the greatest predictor of a successful therapeutic outcome rather than the use of any specific technique or approach.

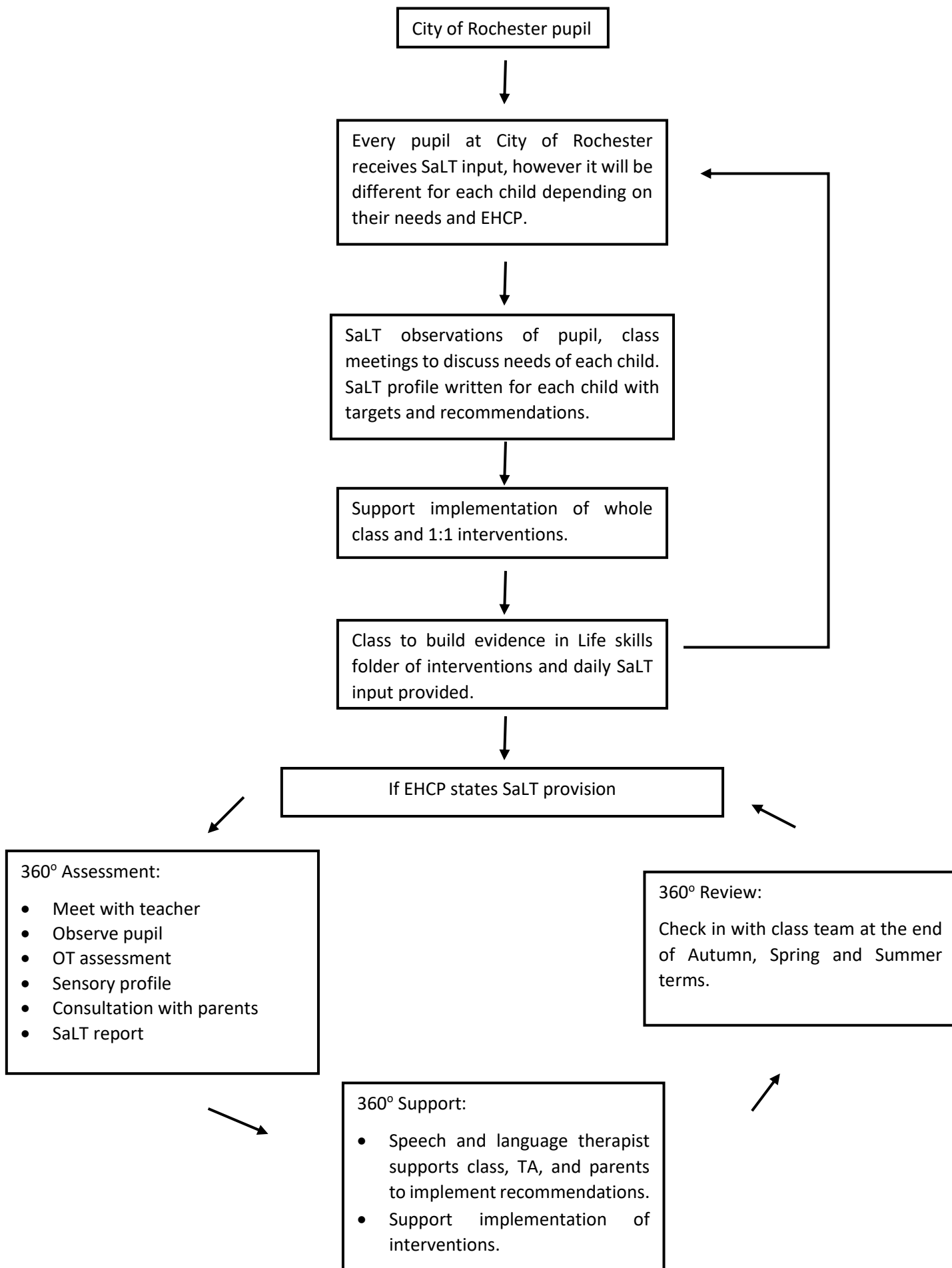
The school counsellor can help pupils by addressing the emotional and behavioural difficulties they might experience, help them work through feelings of sadness, frustration, anger and conflict, cope with periods of crises, improve the relationships they have with others, develop coping strategies, and gain a better understanding of themselves.

The counsellor should endeavour to organise and administer the counselling service in conjunction with the school staff and communicate with the school staff in the best interests of the young person and within the limits of client confidentiality. The counsellor should also encourage the involvement of the young person's family, but only when this is beneficial and appropriate. The counsellor must act as a resource port of call for all staff members by providing information about what counselling involves and at the same time promote the service where possible and when appropriate. The counsellor must maintain adequate and appropriate records that are confidential and are kept safe in a lockable filing cabinet on the school premises at all times. It is an ethical responsibility for the counsellor to maintain regular, on-going clinical supervision with a qualified professional to maintain and monitor standards and to comply with the BACP ethical code of conduct. The supervisory relationship is an essential and important opportunity to anonymously consider the case work that is being done, which contributes to the provision of the highest standards of ethical practice to all clients.

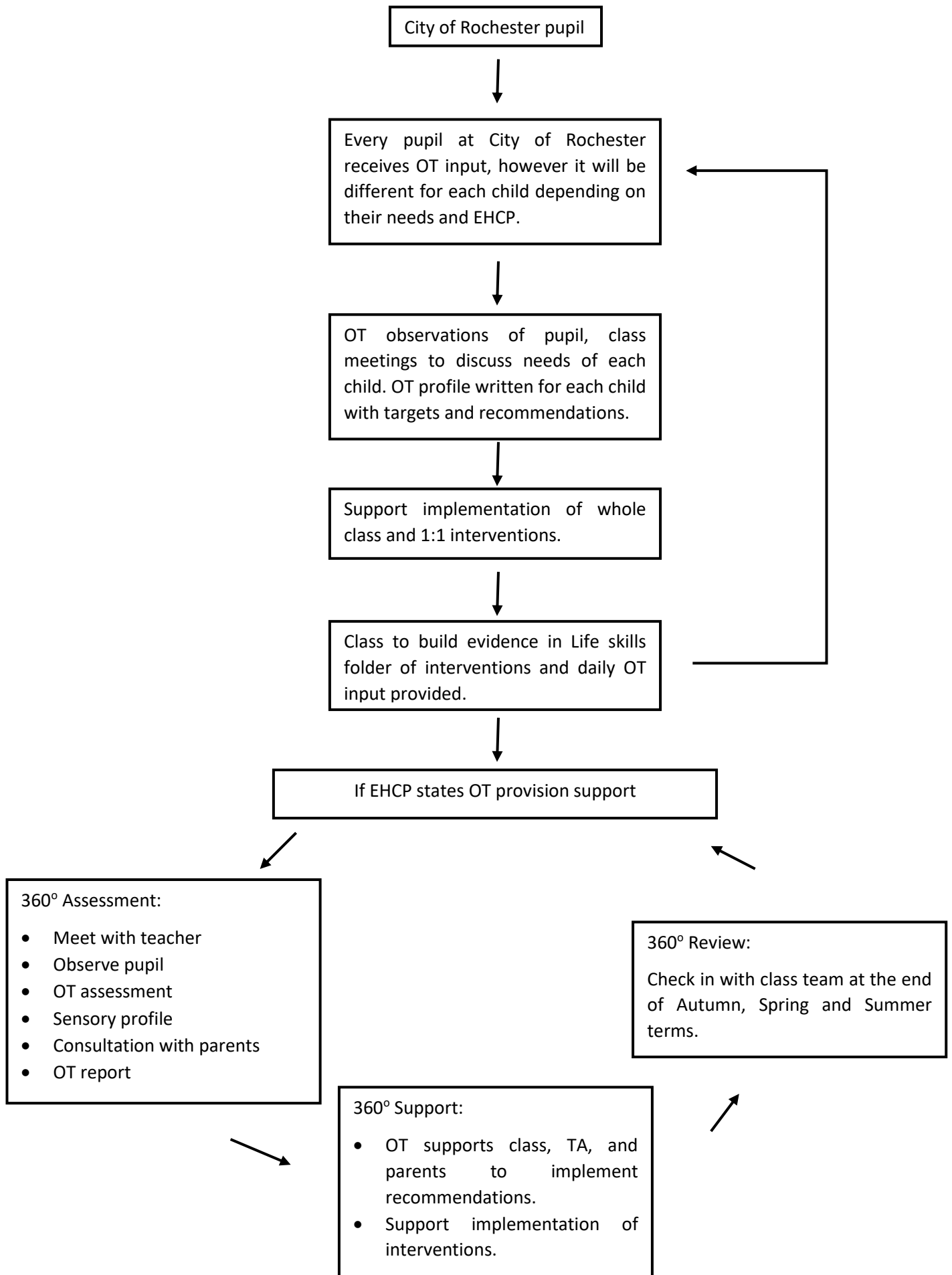
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- Assessing the child's needs
- Running sessions at a regular time and place
- Creating an in-depth therapeutic relationship, this promotes positive change in the child by helping them to help themselves
- Providing support, advice and training to City of Rochester staff and parents
- Contributing to Annual reviews and personalised target setting for individual pupils.
- Providing Supervision for staff in school

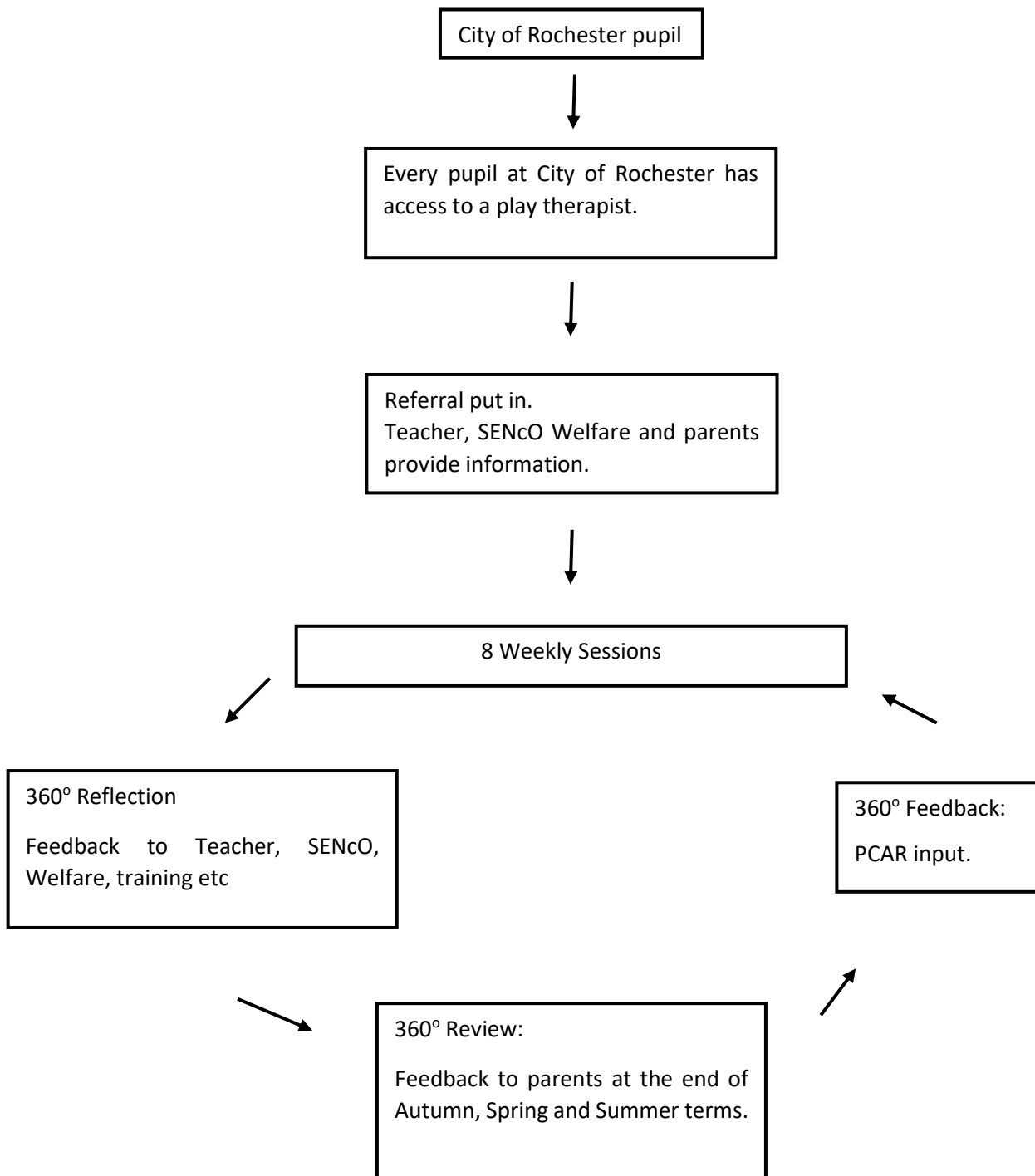
SaLT 360° review cycle



OT 360° review cycle



Play Therapy 360° review cycle



Counselling 360° review cycle

