

Orion College Therapy Department Information Booklet



Our aim:

All therapies are aimed at supporting academic learning in order for each child to achieve their full potential.

Introducing the Team

Orion College has a dedicated department of full-time therapists, working in a multidisciplinary team, who collaborate very closely with the academic staff to assess and monitor the progress of our learners and offer appropriate support interventions.

Our team consists of:

- 2 Educational Psychologists
- 2 Occupational Therapists
- 2 Speech Therapists
- 2 Learner Support Therapists/ Remedial Therapists



These therapies are provided on a **needs basis**, determined by formal assessment findings, classroom observations, referrals and clinical judgement. Therapies and re-assessments are included in the school fees.

Occupational Therapy (OT) and **Speech Therapy (ST)** services are rendered on a **needs only basis** and can take the form of the following:

- **Direct sessions** which include; individual sessions, small group sessions, or joint multidisciplinary sessions (OT and ST).
- Therapy can also be provided in an **indirect manner** in the form of classroom strategies, or push-in services in the classroom.
- Each learner can receive a maximum of one 35-minute OT and ST therapy session per week within the school fee structure. If a learner requires additional therapy than the maximum amount provided by the school, parents will be informed and would need to

arrange external therapies at their own cost. Our Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists carry out private work after school hours.

- What does 'needs basis' mean? Not all learners require both OT and ST. The need for therapeutic intervention in these areas is determined through initial and ongoing assessment. Most Foundation Phase learners receive both therapies but as they reach their goals (usually within the Intermediate Phase) direct therapy may no longer be recommended. Indirect therapy will then take over and classroom strategies will be implemented.

Overall, the combination of small classes and therapeutic intervention ensures Orion College offers a unique learning experience, whereby children are emotionally, academically and socially supported.

Occupational Therapy



Occupational Therapy (OT) is the use of therapeutic interventions that help a person achieve their highest level of independence in everyday activities. In a school setting therapists use their expertise to help children with physical, psychosocial developmentally related learning difficulties in order to achieve optimal learning and independence. OT for children focusses on the following developmental areas:

- Sensory processing and modulation
- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Visual perceptual skills and visual motor integration
- Play skills

Our Occupational Therapists, **Rizwana Paruk** and **Amy Anderson**, work within the **Primary School** setting. Occupational therapy services does not continue when learners enter high



school. Both Occupational Therapists are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and adhere to the ethical guidelines stipulated by them.

Speech Therapy



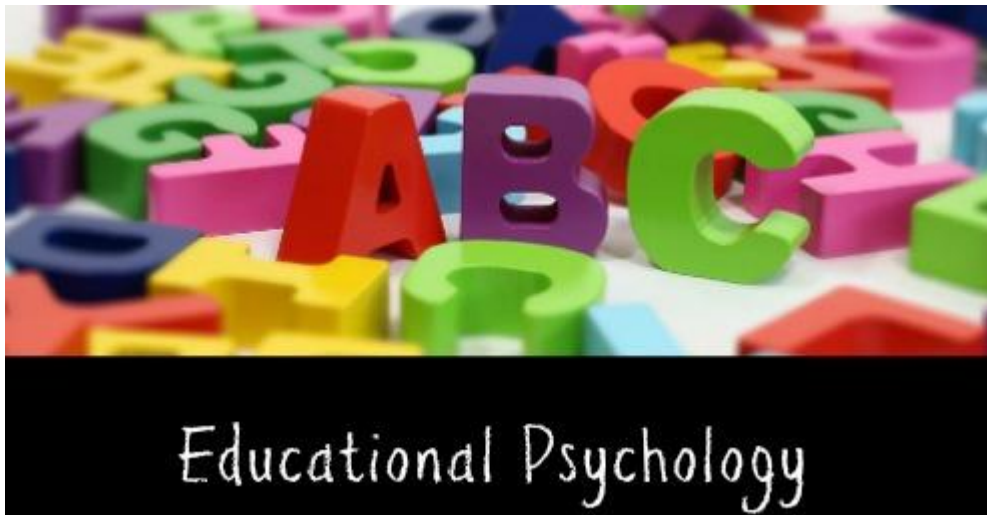
Our **Speech Therapists (ST's)** work with a full range of communication difficulties to support academic learning and facilitate effective communication. These include the following areas of need:

- Receptive and expressive language difficulties
- Auditory processing difficulties
- Phonological awareness
- Cognitive communication difficulties
- Articulation and Fluency therapies are provided when these aspects specifically impact academic learning

Our Speech Therapists, **Amanda Otto and Sadiya Mangerah**, work within the **Primary School** setting. Speech therapy services do not extend into the high school setting. Both Speech Therapists are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and adhere to the ethical guidelines stipulated by them.



Educational Psychology Support



In 2018, Orion College will have two dedicated educational psychologists to work across the Primary and High School. Both psychologists are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and adhere to the ethical guidelines stipulated by them.

They will work from predominantly a Systemic Framework and incorporate appropriate therapeutic techniques and interventions to cater for the diverse needs of the learners of Orion College.

There is a referral process involved for when intervention is required:

1. At the beginning of the year a blanket consent form is sent out to all parents for them to sign for them to grant permission for the psychologists to work with their child/ren.
2. Either the parent/guardian or the teacher can refer to the psychologist when a concern arises. An appointment can be made with the psychologist to discuss the concerns further or an email requesting therapy can be sent directly.
3. The learner can also request therapy.
4. If parental consent has been obtained and all parties are satisfied for therapy to commence, then the child will receive a regular slot which will be agreed upon with everyone.

PLAY THERAPY

Children express themselves through play, a natural activity for them. Emotional difficulties can often be symbolically represented through play, therefore, play therapy allows for the exploration of this. The aim of the psychologist would be to facilitate growth as the child works through his or her difficulties. A variety of techniques can be used during play therapy. The

psychologists at Orion College try to work with what the child brings to the therapeutic space and also incorporate his or her interests.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

As children get older, the time spent playing decreases. Therefore, play therapy will not be relevant anymore, particularly to adolescents. The aim with older children and adolescents is to offer guidance through difficulties that they may experience through an individual therapeutic process. This may involve talk therapy and other techniques, such as psycho-education.

GROUP THERAPY

Should a common issue or difficulty be identified among a group of similar learners, then group therapy may be used to address this. This process often fosters feelings of support, encouragement, and understanding.

PARENT GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Having a child with challenges can also take its toll on our parents and parent support and guidance is an important part of intervention. The focus of this is to support parents through the challenges that come with parenting and offer guidance in terms of effective strategies.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are an important aspect which assist us in understanding your child better and what his/her learning needs are. These also help us determine a learner's strengths, areas of development, and what support interventions may be beneficial. Consent is obtained for each assessment the learner is subjected too. Consent forms are sent home with the learner for parents to sign and send back.

Psycho-Educational Assessments are administered when a new learner visits the school and thereafter every two years or once during a phase of schooling. Encompassed in these assessments are measures of cognitive, scholastic, perceptual, and social-emotional functioning. The purpose of continuous reassessment is to track the learners' progress and whether they are benefitting from interventions and the placement offered to them. Assessments are also conducted to determine placement or if a child may change streams.

School-Readiness Assessments are generally recommended in Grade R during the last few months of the year to determine whether the learner is ready to cope with the formal demands

of Grade 1. This type of assessment helps to ascertain if the child has consolidated the necessary skills to thrive in school.

Career Assessments are administered in Grade 11/Level 3 to assist learners to make a more informed decision regarding their future career and vocational options.

Accommodations (concessions) Assessments are administered during the FET phase of schooling when a referral is made due to observed difficulties during tests and examinations. These assessments are used to determine whether a learner requires extra time, a reader, a scribe, a separate venue, spelling concession, or full amanuensis to have a fair opportunity to write examinations.

Educational Psychologists assist children and young people, within all domains of functioning, who are experiencing challenges that hinder their learning and development. The psychologists' roles include:

- Psychotherapeutic support for emotional, social, behavioural and learning difficulties.
- Administering psycho-educational assessments to determine placement, strengths, areas of development, and appropriate support interventions.
- Providing appropriate feedback to parents and teachers.
- Referral to appropriate specialists, if necessary.

Sneha Somla works with the **Grade 7 – 12** classes.

Linda Hage works with the classes in the **Vocational and Skills Streams** within the Primary School and High School.

Both Linda and Sneha work with the **Remedial Stream** classes from **Grade R - 6**



Learner Support



Learner Support is provided to learners who need support beyond that which is normally given in the classroom. Learner Support addresses difficulties in specific areas of learning and academic development and entails not only providing learners with strategies and skills to overcome their barriers, but it also helps them to fill gaps in their learning.

The **Learner Support Therapists** are responsible for administering base-line and scholastic Literacy and Numeracy assessments to specific learners, with the goal of establishing the areas and extent of their difficulties.

Learner Support in the Junior Primary Phase is given in paired or small groups and focuses on an intensive multi - sensory phonological programme, designed to improve the learner's skills in all areas of Literacy. The RAVE – O small group reading intervention programme is implemented with all Grade 2 and grade 3 learners. Support in Numeracy in this Phase focuses on all basic Numeracy concepts, at a concrete and representational level.

Learner Support in the Intermediate Phase is given in individual or paired groups and addresses accurate and fluent reading, listening and reading comprehension skills, knowledge and implementation of spelling rules and correct punctuation, grammar and syntax in written work. Support in Intermediate Phase Mathematics reinforces all the concepts taught in the classroom and incorporates additional and alternative strategies. Specific difficulties experienced by learners are also addressed when the need arises. Study skills for examinations in Mathematics are taught and practiced.

Our **Learner Supports Teachers** are **Sue Hill** (Foundation/Junior Phase) and **Rozanne Van Niekerk** (Intermediate Phase).

