



Attendance and Cancellation Policy

Independent Music Therapy Practice

Practice: Mid Cornwall Music Therapy

Therapist: Emma Packer

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1. Purpose of this policy

Music therapy works best when there is consistency, reliability and enough time for a therapeutic relationship to develop.

This policy explains the expectations around:

- attendance;
- cancellations;
- missed sessions;
- payment;
- planned endings;
- changes to therapy arrangements.

The aim is to provide clear and fair arrangements while recognising that children, young people, families and organisations sometimes experience unexpected circumstances and emergencies.

I will always try to approach attendance and cancellations with understanding, compassion and flexibility where this is appropriate.

2. Attendance and the therapeutic process

Regular attendance is an important part of music therapy.

When a specific number of sessions has been agreed, attending those sessions as consistently as possible is important to the success of the therapy.

Regular attendance helps to:

- build and maintain a safe therapeutic relationship;
- develop trust and familiarity;
- provide continuity;
- support therapeutic progress;
- give the child or young person a predictable space;
- allow therapeutic goals and outcomes to be explored;
- provide appropriate opportunities to review progress and outcomes;
- support a safe and therapeutically appropriate ending.

For this reason, families and funding organisations are asked to support attendance for the **agreed number of sessions** wherever possible.

Where attendance becomes difficult or there are repeated cancellations, this will be discussed openly so that any barriers can be understood and, where possible, addressed.

3. Agreeing the number of sessions

At the beginning of therapy, the therapist and the relevant family, professional or funding organisation will agree, where possible:

- the number of sessions;
- the frequency of sessions;
- the length of each session;
- the expected start and end dates;
- the person or organisation responsible for payment;
- how payment will be made;
- arrangements for reviewing the therapy.

The number of sessions may be reviewed if the therapeutic needs of the child or young person change.

Any significant change to the agreed number or frequency of sessions will be discussed with the relevant people before it takes place.

4. Cancellation policy

I operate a **24-hour cancellation policy**.

Where a session is cancelled with **less than 24 hours' notice**, the session will normally remain chargeable and should be expected to be paid for.

This is because the session time has been specifically reserved for the child or young person and it is usually not possible to offer that time to another client at short notice.

5. Emergencies and unexpected circumstances

I understand that emergencies happen.

I recognise that children, young people and families may sometimes need to cancel at short notice because of circumstances that could not reasonably have been anticipated.

Examples might include:

- sudden illness;
- an accident;
- a family emergency;
- an unexpected safeguarding concern;
- significant distress or crisis;
- an emergency affecting the child's or young person's ability to attend.

In these circumstances, I will use professional judgement and respond with compassion.

Although cancellations within 24 hours will normally be chargeable, **I reserve the discretion to waive or reduce the cancellation charge where there are exceptional circumstances or a genuine emergency.**

The purpose of the cancellation policy is not to penalise families for emergencies. It is to recognise that a regular therapy appointment represents reserved professional time.

6. How to cancel a session

Cancellations should be communicated as soon as possible.

I can be contacted by:

Email: emma@midcornwallmusictherapy.co.uk

Telephone: 07989 881248

If possible, please provide as much notice as you can.

If I am unable to answer the telephone, please leave a message or send an email.

The time at which the cancellation is received will be used when considering whether the 24-hour notice period has been met.

7. Missed sessions

If a child or young person does not attend a scheduled session and no cancellation has been received, the session will normally be treated as a late cancellation and charged accordingly.

Where a child or young person is unexpectedly absent from school or another setting where therapy is taking place, I will follow the relevant setting's procedures for contacting the responsible person.

Repeated missed sessions will be discussed with the family, school, professional or funding organisation as appropriate.

The purpose of this conversation will be to understand what is happening and consider whether the current therapy arrangements remain appropriate.

8. Illness

Children and young people should not attend music therapy when they are too unwell to participate safely or when attending would present a significant infection risk to others.

If a child or young person is unwell, please contact me as soon as possible.

I will use professional judgement regarding whether a session should go ahead.

If I am unwell and cannot safely provide the session, I will give as much notice as possible and will make appropriate arrangements for a replacement session where this is practical and therapeutically appropriate.

9. My cancellations

I recognise that the cancellation policy applies to the therapist as well as to the family or organisation.

If I need to cancel a session, I will provide as much notice as reasonably possible.

Where a session is cancelled by me, I will normally offer a replacement session where this is possible and appropriate.

If a replacement session cannot be offered, the session will not normally be charged.

10. Planned endings of therapy

An ending is an important part of the therapeutic process.

Therapy should not normally end simply because the final session in a block of funding has arrived, or because someone has cancelled an appointment.

Where therapy is coming to an end, I will aim to have a **therapeutically sound conversation** with the relevant people beforehand.

This conversation will consider:

- the original reasons for referral;
- progress towards therapeutic goals;
- outcomes achieved;
- what has changed for the child or young person;
- what remains unresolved;

- the child's or young person's experience of the therapy;
- their feelings about ending;
- the feelings of parents, carers or other professionals where appropriate;
- whether further therapeutic support is needed;
- whether another service or professional should be involved;
- how the ending can be managed safely;
- how the final sessions can be used therapeutically.

Where appropriate, the child or young person will have an opportunity to understand, prepare for and contribute to the ending.

11. Ending therapy early

If a family, child or young person, school or funding organisation wishes to end therapy before the agreed number of sessions has been completed, I ask that this is discussed with me before the therapy is ended wherever possible.

This is important because an unexpected ending can have a therapeutic impact.

A conversation about ending will consider:

- why therapy is ending;
- whether the therapeutic goals have been met;
- whether there are outstanding concerns;
- how the child or young person understands the ending;
- whether further support is needed;
- whether a planned ending would be more appropriate;
- any safeguarding concerns;
- any outstanding administrative or funding arrangements.

There may be circumstances where therapy needs to end immediately. Safeguarding and the wellbeing of the child or young person will always take priority.

12. Repeated cancellations or poor attendance

Where there are repeated cancellations or difficulties with attendance, I will seek to understand the reasons rather than making assumptions.

I may discuss:

- whether the session time is suitable;
- transport difficulties;
- family circumstances;
- illness;
- changes in school or care arrangements;
- whether the child or young person is finding therapy difficult;
- whether the current frequency of sessions is appropriate;
- whether the therapeutic goals need reviewing.

If attendance continues to be inconsistent and it becomes difficult to provide effective therapy, I may recommend a review of the therapy arrangements.

Any decision to end therapy will, where possible, be approached therapeutically rather than simply as an administrative decision.

13. Payment arrangements

Payment for music therapy is normally made **upfront**.

The frequency of payment will depend on how the therapy is funded.

Payment may be arranged:

- **weekly;**
- **monthly;**
- **termly;**

depending on the agreement with the family or funding organisation.

Where therapy is funded by a government organisation, local authority, NHS service, school, college or other organisation, payment arrangements may differ according to the agreement with the funder.

An alternative payment arrangement may be agreed between the therapist and the relevant funder where appropriate.

The agreed payment arrangement will be confirmed before therapy begins wherever possible.

14. Cancellation charges and funded therapy

Where a family is paying directly for therapy, cancellations within the 24-hour cancellation period should be expected to be charged.

Where therapy is funded by an organisation, the cancellation arrangements will follow the terms agreed between the therapist and the funder.

Where the funder's terms differ from this policy, the specific agreement with the funder will apply.

Families will be informed of any cancellation charges that apply to them before therapy begins wherever possible.

15. Changes to funding

If funding arrangements change, the therapist will discuss this with the relevant family, professional or funding organisation.

Therapy may need to be reviewed if:

- funding ends;
- funding is reduced;
- the number of funded sessions changes;
- the funding organisation changes;
- the funding criteria change.

Where possible, any change will be discussed in advance so that the therapeutic implications can be considered and an appropriate ending or transition can be planned.

16. Session time

Sessions begin and end at the agreed time.

If a child or young person arrives late, the session will normally still finish at the scheduled time.

This helps to maintain:

- predictable boundaries;
- fairness to other clients;
- appropriate working hours;

- the therapeutic structure of the session.

Where lateness is caused by circumstances outside the family's control, I will respond with understanding and use professional judgement.

17. Holidays and planned absences

Where possible, families and organisations should give as much notice as possible of planned absences, including:

- holidays;
- school trips;
- medical appointments;
- family events;
- other known commitments.

Planned absences will normally not be subject to the 24-hour cancellation charge where sufficient notice is given.

Where extended absence is expected, the therapeutic impact and funding arrangements may be reviewed.

Additional Section — Term-Time Working and School Holidays

18. Term-time working

Music therapy sessions are normally provided **during school term time only**.

The standard therapy schedule will therefore follow the term dates of the relevant school or educational setting, unless a different arrangement has been specifically agreed.

I recognise that some children and young people may have therapeutic needs that continue during school holidays. Where a specific therapeutic need is identified, additional sessions during school holidays may be considered.

Any additional holiday sessions will be arranged **on a case-by-case basis** and will depend on:

- the therapeutic needs of the child or young person;
- the clinical and therapeutic rationale for providing the session;

- availability;
- the availability of an appropriate setting;
- funding arrangements;
- agreement with the relevant family, professional or funding organisation.

Holiday sessions are not automatically included within the usual therapy arrangement and should be agreed in advance.

Where additional sessions are agreed, the arrangements for payment and cancellation will be confirmed with the relevant family or funding organisation.

19. School holidays and therapeutic continuity

Where therapy normally takes place during term time, planned breaks during school holidays will be considered as part of the therapeutic plan.

Where a break is likely to affect the child or young person significantly, this can be discussed as part of the therapeutic work.

In some circumstances, a planned holiday break may itself be therapeutically appropriate. In other circumstances, particularly where there are significant therapeutic or safeguarding concerns, additional contact during a holiday period may be considered.

Any decision to provide additional sessions will be based on the individual needs of the child or young person rather than being an automatic service provision.

20. Summary of term-time arrangements

Normal working pattern

Music therapy is provided **during school term time**.

School holidays

There are normally **no scheduled music therapy sessions during school holidays**.

Specific therapeutic need

If a specific therapeutic need is identified, additional sessions during school holidays may be arranged **on a case-by-case basis**.

Funding

Any additional holiday sessions will be subject to the relevant funding arrangements and prior agreement with the family, professional or funding organisation.

Planning

Where possible, holiday arrangements will be discussed in advance so that any planned break or additional support can be considered therapeutically.

18. Communication about attendance

Good communication is important.

If there are difficulties with attendance or cancellations, I encourage families and organisations to speak to me rather than allowing difficulties to continue without discussion.

Concerns about attendance may sometimes be connected to the therapeutic process itself.

For example, a child or young person may find:

- coming to therapy difficult;
- separating from a parent or carer difficult;
- the therapeutic relationship difficult;
- talking about feelings difficult;
- approaching an ending difficult.

These issues can be therapeutically important and should, where appropriate, be explored rather than interpreted simply as non-attendance.

19. Safeguarding

Attendance concerns may sometimes raise safeguarding concerns.

For example, repeated unexplained absences, sudden changes in attendance or difficulties contacting a family may form part of a wider pattern of concern.

Where I believe that attendance or non-attendance may indicate that a child or young person is at risk of harm, I will follow my **Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures**.

Safeguarding concerns will always take priority over financial or administrative considerations.

20. Respectful and flexible practice

I aim to apply this policy fairly while recognising that every child, young person and family has different circumstances.

I will use professional judgement and communicate openly when circumstances change.

The policy is intended to provide clear expectations, protect the therapeutic relationship and ensure that reserved therapy time is respected.

It is not intended to prevent reasonable flexibility when circumstances require it.

21. Contact details

For cancellations, attendance queries or changes to arrangements, please contact:

Emma – Mid Cornwall Music Therapy

Email: emma@midcornwallmusictherapy.co.uk

Telephone: 07989 881248

Please provide as much notice as possible if a session needs to be cancelled.

22. Summary of the cancellation policy

24-hour notice

Please provide at least **24 hours' notice** when cancelling a session.

Less than 24 hours' notice

The session will **normally be chargeable** and should be expected to be paid for.

Emergencies

I understand that emergencies happen. In genuine exceptional circumstances, I may use my professional discretion to waive or reduce the cancellation charge.

Planned endings

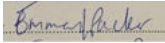
Ending therapy should, wherever possible, follow a **therapeutically sound conversation** so that the therapeutic outcomes and emotional impact of ending can be considered.

Attendance

Consistent attendance for the **agreed number of sessions** is important to the success and continuity of therapy.

Payment

Payment is normally made **upfront weekly, monthly or termly**, depending on the funding arrangement. Alternative arrangements may be agreed with the relevant funder.

Signed:  _____

Date: _____09/2026_____

Next review: _09/2027_____