**Mary Rose Academy**

**Music Training B: music session for students with PMLD**

**Core principles, framework and methods**

*Core principles*

In order to develop ways to support music-making for individuals with profound and multiple learning difficulties, it is important to bear in mind a few key aspects about the way we experience music:

* Music is a physical and social experience: we make and feel music with our bodies, and our enjoyment or rejection of it is often related to our relationships with other people or with our communities.
* Valuing music as a social and sensory experience entails appreciating music beyond standard ideas about value, skill, and beauty.

*A music delivery framework*

* Music learning is child-centred, our facilitation and teaching is not based on a prescribed set of practices or knowledge, but on exploring individual preferences, interests and unique capabilities.
* In order to adapt to individual forms of music-making, we need to be flexible in how we support children to make music.
* We plan and evaluate sessions on the basis of ongoing feedback loops from students. We establish or refine ways of music making on the basis of the levels of sensory and interactive engagement that we observe.
* Individual needs and preferences determine very different group dynamics. Balancing group unity and cohesion with individual preferences is a constant effort.

*Child-centred assessment*

* Sensory-motor:mobility, sensory habits and routines, triggers (positive and negative), sensitivity, access to objects, manual handling, familiar objects (trays, wheelchairs, straps, resonance boards), response patterns
* Social-interactive: shared attention, social awareness, reactions and responses, communication habits, expressing choices

*Flexible facilitation*

* Enhancing: use an instrument that suits any movement or input of a student.
* Restricting: only certain movements, or certain inputs, will activate the instrument, or trigger your response. You use this for students who have the potential to nuance and modify their movements or actions to achieve a desired effect.
* Amplifying: reinforce a student’s attempt to play an instrument, or exaggerate the sound it produces
* Grounding/supporting: a repetitive part that enhances or supports, but that can be nuanced by, the sounds that a student is making.
* Modelling (guiding): some students might need some temporary physical guidance to play an instrument that they are interested in. It should not be used to make students play instruments they might not want to play, and should be discontinued unless there are clear signs that the student wants us to keep guiding her.
* Modelling (following): any movement, vocal or instrumental sound made by the student, is used as the basis of our playing. Speed, volume, phrasing, melodic contour, or even the mood of what we play can be based on very subtle movements made by the students.
* Two-part playing: the student and the facilitator play the same instrument, doing similar or different things with it.
* Interactive improvisation: you use different sounds to respond freely to the students’ input. Eventually, you will develop a series of ‘contact moments’ or interactive loops with each student.

*Group dynamics*

* Sensory-motor: compatibility (some students might make sounds that others find unpleasant or distressing), positioning of students, finding the appropriate space for music sessions. It is good to be flexible, yet spaces that are noisy or used for other activities are fine for some activities or students, but not for others.
* Social-interactive: mediating (between the input of two students), amplifying (making the contribution of a student more audible or clear to the rest of the group), managing multiple feedback loops (responding to all students, taking time to pick up on all of their contributions).

*Feedback-based planning*

* Sensory-motor: structuring routines (develop a repertoire of activities for each student), awareness of change (how those activities vary, or become less appealing to the student), balancing adaptation and challenge
* Social-interactive: contact moments (specific interactive routines that settle over time), feedback loops (how those interactive moments mature and change over time).
* Cross-referencing frameworks and targets: understanding music as a form of social engagement and sensory exploration, evidence from music sessions will be relevant to the wider learning outcomes of the students.