

Online Safety Policy – Music Therapy Services

1. Purpose

This Online Safety Policy sets out how the music therapy business ensures safe, appropriate, and professional use of digital communication when delivering therapy sessions or support remotely. The policy aims to safeguard children and young people, protect therapists, and maintain professional boundaries at all times.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all music therapists, staff, and contractors working on behalf of the business, and covers all online and digital communication with clients and their families, including phone-based messaging, virtual sessions, and email communication.

3. Principles

The business is committed to:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Maintaining clear professional boundaries in online communication
- Ensuring transparency with parents and carers
- Using digital communication safely, securely, and appropriately

4. Approved Methods of Communication

4.1 Preferred Method

Email is the preferred method of communication for sharing information, resources, and updates, as it provides a clearer audit trail and increased security.

4.2 Use of Phone-Based Chat

The business recognises that some children and young people struggle with verbal communication. In these circumstances, phone-based chat may be used as a supportive and therapeutic tool to enable interaction and engagement during sessions.

Phone-based chat may also be used to support children and parents following the Safe and Sound Protocol, which is delivered via a dedicated, secure application.

4.3 Use of the Safe and Sound Protocol App

- The Safe and Sound Protocol is delivered
- Therapists may use their work phone where authorised.
- All phones used for therapy-related communication must be password protected.
- Messages must remain saved on the device and must not be deleted for 3 years inline with GDPR. .
- Therapists must not use disappearing messages or auto-delete functions.
- Phones must be kept secure and not accessible to unauthorised individuals.

6. Parental Awareness and Consent

- Parents or carers must be fully informed of, and agree to, the use of phone-based or online communication before it begins.
- Written consent must be obtained and recorded.
- Parents must be informed of the platform or method being used.
- Parents must be physically close by and aware during all communication between the therapist and the child.

7. Boundaries of Communication

- Parents or carers must be contacted at the beginning and end of each virtual session.
- Therapists must not communicate with clients outside of scheduled appointments.
- Therapists must not send links to websites or other platforms.
- Voice messages can be exchanged with parental consent.
- Video calls can be made with parental consent and parental participation.
- Communication must relate solely to the therapy session or agreed therapeutic activities.

8. Images, Pictures, and Media Sharing

- Therapists may send images that support engagement in therapy activities (for example, instruments, symbols, or visual prompts).
- No images, pictures, or videos containing people are permitted to be sent or received by either the therapist or the client.
- Clients and parents must be informed that images of people must not be shared.
- Any images sent must not be saved to the phone's gallery.
- Images must remain visible only within the chat or messaging platform used.

9. Use of AI, online resources and social media, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories

Therapists should not use AI to make reports or find or make information.

Therapists need to understand the risks associated with AI and misinformation

Therapists need to be able to support young people to understand the risks of AI, social media and misinformation and conspiracy theories.

10. Recording and Storage

- Sessions must not be recorded unless explicit written consent has been obtained and this is part of an agreed therapeutic plan.
- Therapists must not take screenshots or save media from conversations.

- All communication records must be retained securely in line with data protection requirements.

11. Supervision and Safeguarding

- Therapists must follow the business safeguarding policy at all times.
- Any safeguarding concerns arising from online communication must be reported immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Concerns about inappropriate online contact must be escalated without delay.

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- All digital communication must comply with data protection legislation.
- Personal information must only be shared where necessary and appropriate.
- Devices used for communication must be secure and regularly updated.

13. Breaches of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, safeguarding or legal action.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect changes in legislation, technology, or best practice.

Approved by: Joanna Turner

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