



MAGGIE DAGGE
THERAPY

Shillelagh, Co. Wicklow

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Updated: 01 March 2024

Review date: 01 March 2025



Child Safeguarding Policy

It is the policy of M Dagge Therapy to make sure that Children and Young People are protected and kept safe from harm and abuse (definitions below) while they are with our therapists, residents and student therapists on placement. In line with the Children First Act 2015 and our statutory obligation to provide a safe environment with regards the services we deliver to children -

We do this by:

- Being child centered.
- Showing respect and understanding for children’s rights, safety and welfare.
- Giving parents/guardians, children, organisations and staff information about what we do.
- Making sure that our personnel are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Letting parents and children know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy about.

“harm” means, in relation to a child —

- (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or
- (b) sexual abuse of the child, -- Children First Act (page 6)

Definitions of Abuse: Neglect, Emotional, Physical and Sexual

Neglect: An omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and medical care.

Emotional: When a child’s need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a caregiver and a child.

Physical: A form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from willful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Sexual: When a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

In accordance with this policy, M Dagge Therapy will continue to implement the guidelines contained therein, and will ensure that personnel contracted by us to work with children and young people in our service abide by the policy guidelines hereunder including:

- code of behaviour for personnel working with children and young people;
- code of behaviour for children and young people;
- reporting procedures in cases of suspected or disclosed abuse;
- confidentiality policy;
- involvement of primary careers;
- recruitment procedures;
- managing and supervising successful applicants and personnel;
- staff allegations procedure;
- complaints procedure;
- accidents procedure.

The Mandated and Designated person for child protection is Maggie Dagge, the deputy designed person will be a contracted employee as per service requirement.

This policy will be reviewed on 1st March 2025 and in that month annually.

I have read and agree to abide by M Dagge Therapy's Child safeguarding Statement.

Signed: Maggie Dagge Dated: 01/03/2024

Owner and senior therapist - M Dagge Therapy



Code of Behaviour - Adults

For therapists, residents and student therapists on work placement working with children and young people in M Dagge Therapy.

- All adults working with children and young people under the auspices of M Dagge Therapy must have read, understood and signed a copy of our safeguarding Policy.
- Be child centered: create an environment in which children are listened to, valued, encouraged and affirmed, have their rights respected and are treated as individuals.
- Involve children in decision-making, as appropriate.
- Always seek the child’s permission before engaging in work that requires touch. Be open and governed by the age and developmental stage of the child.
- Adopt the safest possible practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect yourself from the risk of accusations of abuse or neglect.
- All accidents must be recorded in the Incident Book, provided by M Dagge Therapy or the organisation where the therapist is working.
- All concerns, disclosures and complaints must be recorded in the Incident Book and a confidential report given to the designated/Mandated person immediately.
- Be open with parents in consulting with them about everything that concerns their children.
- Don’t spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Don’t take children alone in a car journey, however short, or alone to your home.
- Never engage in sexually provocative games, allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Never tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
- Never do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Never let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please tick: Therapist Resident Student Therapist other _____

Witnessed by: _____ Dated: _____
(M Dagge Therapy Senior Staff)



Code of Behaviour - Children and Young People

For children and young people attending group services at M Dagge Therapy

- Therapists, residents and student therapists on placement are treated with dignity and respect.
- The venue property both inside and out is treated with respect. Any damage to property will be brought to the attention of a member of staff or adult.
- Children will value, encourage and respect the rights of other children taking part in group therapy.
- Everyone will respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.
- All participants will be sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs.
- Report cases of bullying to either the therapist or a staff member of their choice.
- Avoid prejudice and encourage respect for difference in relation to religion, race, class, gender or ability.
- Avoid using inappropriate language and swear words.
- Respect another child's body as their own property.

I have read and agree with the above, and have discussed this document with my child who is attending, with my permission, therapy at M Dagge Therapy.

Signed by parent/guardian: _____ Dated: _____

Signed by client: _____ Dated: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Dated: _____
(M Dagge Therapy Senior Staff)



REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any person who suspects that a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to Tusla – The Child and Family Agency.

The Mandated and Designated Person for Child Protection in M Dagge Therapy is **Maggie Dagge**. The Deputy Designated Person is **assigned per service requirement**.

Contact Maggie at: 087 4137608.

M Dagge Therapy's Designated Person for Child Protection (DP), and the Deputy (DDP), are to be contacted should you have an issue or concern about any aspect of a child's or young person's safety and welfare while participating in services governed by M Dagge Therapy.

It is the responsibility of the DP and DDP to support and advise all our therapists, interns residents and students on placements about our policy in regard to child protection.

It is the DP and DDP's responsibility to ensure that procedures are followed as outlined in our Child Safeguarding Policy document and Child Safeguarding Statement.

It is the DP and DDP's responsibility to liaise with Tusla – The Child and Family Agency and/or an Garda Siochana where appropriate.

Any reasonable grounds for concern should be immediately reported to the Mandated/Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person; it is their role to contact Tusla – The Child and Family Agency or an Garda Siochana.

REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN include:

1. Evidence, for example an injury or behavior, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
2. Any concern about possible sexual abuse
3. Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
4. A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
5. Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
6. An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

REPORTING PROCEDURE: The initial response to a disclosure is crucial.
It is important to be aware of your own emotional reaction.
Hearing a disclosure is likely to be distressing.

Dealing with a Disclosure:

THE ONE THING YOU MUST NOT DO IS NOTHING.

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret

Explain the difference between keeping something a secret and keeping something confidential. Giving information to others for the protection of a child does not constitute a breach of confidentiality. The requirement to report to the designated person, and through them to the authorities, must be explained in a supportive manner to the child.

- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of this policy and legislation.

Don't start to investigate - that is only the role of Tusla and An Garth Siochana. You have a supportive not investigative role. Judgment about abuse must be left to the professionals.

Need to know basis - any information provided to Tusla and An Garda Siochana will remain confidential. The official policy is that those receiving such information will only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate "need to know basis".

How to Report Your Concerns or a Disclosure:

To help Tusla staff assess your reasonable concern they need as much information as possible about the child and his/her home circumstances and the grounds for concern. A confidential report should be given to the DP/DDP and could include:

- The child's name, address and age
- Names and addresses of parents or guardians
- Names, if known, of who is allegedly harming the child or not caring for them appropriately
- A detailed account of your grounds for concern (e.g details of the allegation, dates of incidents, and descriptions of injuries)
- Names of other children in the household
- Name of school the child attends
- Your name, contact details and relationship to the child

While it is possible to report a concern without giving your name, it may make it difficult for Tusla to access your concern. If you are a mandated person you cannot submit a report anonymously.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report abuse 'reasonably and in good faith to Tusla or An Garda Siochana'. This means that, even if the reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.



Who to report to at M Dagge Therapy

- Inform the Mandated/designated person (DP – Maggie Dagge) of all details including the date, time and people involved and the facts. Ensure that details recorded are as you have outlined them to the DP. Any opinions should be supported by facts.
- The Mandated/DP will discuss the concerns with the primary caregivers of the child or young person involved. Parents, caregivers or responsible adults should be made aware of a report to Tusla unless it is likely to put the child or young person at further risk.
- The Mandated/DP may contact Tusla’s social worker for an informal consultation prior to making a report.
- Information shared will be strictly on a "need to know" basis (see our confidentiality policy).
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern, the Mandated/DP will contact the duty social worker for the area using the standard reporting Tusla form without delay.
- If the DP or DDP is not available, contact the local duty social worker of Tusla directly. Contact information is included with this policy.
- In case of emergencies outside of Tusla’s social work department hours, contact the Gardai. In situations where the immediate safety of a child or young person is threatened, it may be necessary for the DP, DDP or the person reporting concerns to immediately contact the Gardai.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Dept of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017) recommend that the following procedure is followed where reasonable grounds exist for the reporting of suspected or actual child abuse. This forms the basis of M Dagge Therapy's policy for reporting:

- A report can be made to Tusla in person, by telephone or in writing. Reports must be made **using the Tusla reporting form**. Each region has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child protection concerns.
- The mandated/DP/DDP who has been approached with concerns or allegations of child abuse, or who has concerns regarding a child, will make personal contact with the duty social worker. They will facilitate the social worker in gathering as much information as possible about the child and his or her situation. It is likely that the social worker will wish to speak to the person who first witnessed the incident, received the disclosure, or felt the concern. The mandated/DP/DDP will assist with making contact as required.
- In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of Tusla staff; the report will be made to An Garda Síochána.
- Under no circumstances will a young person be left in a dangerous situation pending the intervention of the authorities.
- According to guidelines any professional who suspects child abuse should inform the family if a report is likely to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child. Co-operation with the family is essential in order to ensure the safety of the child. Mandated/DP/DDP will strike a balance between showing respect for families and using authority appropriately.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Designated Person for Child Protection (DP): Maggie Dagge 087 4137608

Wicklow is located in the Tusla Area comprising Dublin South East and Wicklow. The duty social work office covering Wicklow is located in Churchtown.

Child and Family Agency , Unit 9, Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14
01 9213400

An Garda Síochána:

Baltinglass, District HQ: tel. 059-6482610.

Co. Wicklow District HQ: (24-hours) tel. 0404-67107



Confidentiality Statement

We at M Dagge Therapy recognize the need for confidentiality in all matters regarding child safeguarding and will at all times adhere to the guidelines laid out in both our own Child Safeguarding Policy and that of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Confidentiality Policy for therapists, residents and student therapists on placement:

- "Need to know" basis - any information provided to Tusla and An Garda Siochana will remain confidential. The official policy is that those receiving such information will only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate "need to know" basis.
- Primary careers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared with Tusla, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.
- Images/video of any child or young person participating in therapy at M Dagge Therapy will not be used for any reason without the written consent of the parent/caregiver.
- Records and information are kept in a safe and confidential manner. Access to M Dagge Therapy's Incident Book is through senior staff only, under the authorisation of the DP and DDP, and is not accessible to the general public. Information about health issues and special needs of children participating in therapy are also confidential. Personnel have access to these records under the authorisation of Maggie Dagge only. All personnel abide by the Child safeguarding Policy guidelines of M Dagge Therapy including this confidentiality policy.

Recruitment Procedures

Safe practice starts with safe recruitment procedures and involves:

- Always applying thorough selection procedures, no matter who the applicant happens to be;
- Judging the suitability of applicants in relation to a broad range of matters;
- Taking all reasonable steps to eliminate people who are not suitable for working with children; and
- Providing training.

Process to follow when recruiting therapists, residents and student therapists on placement:

- Clear definition of the role of personnel - clarify and agree expectations regarding the role, identify the minimum level of personal qualities and skills required to fill the post.
- Application form: will have a clear job description and information about the organisation. The form will collect all relevant information about the applicant, including past experience of working with children.
- Declaration: all applicants will be required to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with children and young people, and declaring any past criminal convictions or cases pending against them. It is M Dagge Therapy's policy to exclude applicants who would be deemed "a risk" to children. Some reasons for exclusion could include any child-related convictions, a refusal to comply with recruitment procedures and paperwork requirements, insufficient documentation or references, or concealing any information regarding the applicant's suitability to working with children.
- Interview: all applicants will be interviewed by Maggie Dagge and one other therapist. Interviewers will



explore the information stated on the application form and assess the applicant's suitability for the post. The information supplied by the applicant and any other information supplied on their behalf will only be seen by persons directly involved in the recruitment procedure.

- **References:** an applicant will be expected to supply the names of two referees (not family members) who will testify as to their character, suitability to the role of employee, or any other issues which may affect their ability to perform the tasks required of them. At least one referee should have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. All references will be received in writing and later confirmed by telephone, letter or personal visit.
- **Identification:** the identity of the applicant must be confirmed against documentation (ID card, driving license, passport or long birth certificate) which gives his/her full name and address together with a signature and photograph. This will be compared with the written application.
- **Garda Clearance:** candidates must consent to Garda vetting, and Garda Clearance will be verified by M Dagge Therapy before employment is confirmed.

Successful Applicants/ Managing and Supervising Personnel

When a new therapist, resident or student therapist on placement is recruited by M Dagge Therapy to work with children or young people the following procedures shall be followed:

Induction: When an applicant is accepted they will be required to undertake an induction course. Induction will be a planned programme that enables personnel to get to know the organisation, their colleagues and their job. It will also cover expectations, conditions and procedures for dealing with discipline, grievances and allegations, and will include a detailed discussion of the Child Safeguarding Policy including the role of the Designated Person and Deputy for Child Safeguarding, reporting procedures, and codes of behaviour.

Child Safeguarding Policy: Maggie Dagge will discuss with new personnel their role(s) in terms of children and young people, and any aspects of the policy that are unclear will be explained during induction sessions. All personnel will be provided with a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy during induction, and will be expected to confirm in writing that they have read and understood, and agree to abide by, this policy in all areas.

Child Safeguarding Training: DP/DDP will undertake to participate in training in Child Safeguarding provided by an outside organisation, as required to ensure best practice and procedures are maintained and updated on an ongoing basis. All staff will be updated on any changes to the child safeguarding policies and procedures, and kept informed of important information and reporting procedures.

Trial Period: Appointment will be conditional on the successful completion of a trial period, the length of which will be decided at the outset. This gives an opportunity to assess the suitability of a new personnel to work with children and his/her commitment to our policies on safe practices.

Records: Details of selection and induction will be recorded, along with notes on any matters arising during any part of the process.

Additional Training: To maintain quality standards and good practice, training will be encouraged on an ongoing basis for all personnel.

Staff Meetings: Will be held on an ongoing basis to ensure clear communication between all personnel working with children and young people, to allow for any grievances or concerns, or lack of clarity on policy or procedures, to be aired and worked out, and to ensure the environment for children and young people remains safe and monitored at all times.

Annual Review: To assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that needs to be made, personnel will be supervised and receive annual reviews of their work practices.



Involvement of Primary Careers

It is the policy of M Dagge Therapy to be open with and respectful of all parents and other primary careers of young people and children participating in our service. We do this by:

- Ensuring that all primary careers are aware of our Child Safeguarding Policy (a copy is available on our website)
- Making sure primary careers are informed of our current and potential services for children and young people including content, schedules, adult supervision and age-appropriateness of the service.
- Providing appropriate consent forms, collecting signatures, and gathering necessary information from caregivers prior to engaging children in any therapy.
- Complying with the health and safety practices of venue's we work in.
- Reviewing and if necessary updating our Child Safeguarding Policy on a regular basis.
- Adhering to stringent recruitment guidelines for our personnel and ensuring they are properly vetted, trained and supervised.
- Encouraging the involvement of parents and caregivers in services for children and young people, when possible.

If any caregiver has concerns about the welfare of children and young people in the context of services organised by M Dagge Therapy we undertake to:

- Listen to any concerns and act according to our Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Respond to the needs of children and young people, and act according to Child Safeguarding Policy.
- When obliged to, we will pass on any child safety concerns to the authorities (An Garda Síochána and/or Tusla) in cases where concerns have been expressed regarding the welfare or safety of any child participating in services under the auspices of M Dagge Therapy.
- In the event of a complaint against any member of our personnel, we will immediately follow Child Safeguarding Policy procedures to ensure the safety of the child/young person, and inform primary careers as appropriate.

It is the policy of Maggie Dagge Therapy to make sure that Children and Young People are protected and kept safe from harm and abuse while they are in our services. To that end we will:

- Act on any child protection/welfare concern by contacting Tusla or Gardai when necessary and in accordance with our policy guidelines.
- Encourage primary caregivers to be familiar with our policy guidelines, and work with us to ensure the safety of every child participating in our service.
- Make sure caregivers are provided with the appropriate forms to ensure the children/young people in our care are properly covered for participation in our services.
- Make known the contact person(s) for Child Safeguarding and ensure their availability to caregivers



Staff Allegations Procedure

If allegations of abuse are made against our personnel it is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child
- The procedure for dealing with our personnel

In general it is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues, therefore:

The Designated Person (DP) for Child Protection is Maggie Dagge

The DP has responsibility for dealing with any issues relating to the welfare of a child or young person.

However, the DP has responsibility for any issues relating to allegations of child abuse made against members of staff. Therefore the DDP will be responsible for the reporting procedures for the child in such circumstances.

Personnel may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore any allegations of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for personnel including counseling where necessary. However, the primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

Agreed procedures to address situations where allegations of child abuse are made against our personnel:

- Senior management will inform the person that an allegation has been made against him/her.
- Senior management will inform the person of the nature of the allegation.
- The person should be afforded the opportunity to respond. Senior management will note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to Tusla.
- Senior management will follow the standard procedure for reporting allegations to Tusla without delay.
- Action should be guided by the agreed procedures stated in the Child Safeguarding Policy document, by referral to Tusla guidance, and the applicable employment contract.
- The first priority will be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. Senior management will as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures. These measures will be proportionate to the level of risk and will not unreasonably penalise the person, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children. Where protective measures do penalise the person early consideration will be given to the case.
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against a person will be taken in consultation with Tusla and An Garda Siochana. Senior management will maintain a close liaison with these authorities to achieve this.
- After these consultations referred to above and when pursuing the question of the future position of the person, senior management will advise the person accused of the allegation and the agreed procedures will be followed.
- Children and/or their primary caregivers will be informed by management of any allegations made against personnel concerning them, so long as it is in accordance with our Child Safeguarding Policy guidelines for reporting and confidentiality, and taking into consideration the age of the child and any specifics of the alleged incident(s), always taking the welfare of the child as the primary concern.



Complaints Procedure

When a complaint is made against M Dagge Therapy personnel

Always:

- Record the complaint in the incident book and make a confidential report of the complaint immediately to senior staff.

Procedure for senior staff:

- Where possible meet and talk to the person making the complaint face to face.
- Confirm all the details recorded in the incident book are accurate, record further details if necessary
- If the situation involves a complaint against the property, it should be addressed immediately; and the problem rectified.
- If the situation involves a complaint against a person, that person should be informed immediately.
- If the situation involves more than the person making the complaint, where possible, organise a meeting with all parties so everyone can discuss what happened and an outcome agreeable to all can be reached.
- If disciplinary action has to be taken against personnel, allow them the opportunity to be present at the meeting, and action should be guided by the agreed procedures as outlined in our Child Protection Policy and the applicable employment contract.

Accidents Procedure

Good practices in M Dagge Therapy to keep children and personnel safe.

If an accident occurs always:

- Stay calm, listen and act quickly
- Seek medical attention immediately if required.
- Record the accident in the Incident Book.
- Inform the parents and Designated Person.

Know the location of a First Aid box

Good Practices to avoid or monitor accidents

Know the children:

- We have defined codes of behaviour for adults and young people.
- We have a registration system for each child.
- We keep a record on each child, including medical details, any special needs and emergency contact telephone numbers.

Keep records of:

- Attendance
- Accidents - accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to senior management
- Consents given for therapy service
- Any complaints or grievances

Pay attention to health and safety matters making sure that:

- Any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards for example Covid 19 guidelines.
- There is sufficient heating and ventilation



- Toilets and washing facilities are up to standard
- Fire precautions are in place
- First aid facilities and equipment are adequate
- There is access to a phone with emergency numbers displayed.
- Equipment is checked regularly
- Insurance cover is adequate

Discipline and challenging behaviour:

- More than one person should be present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with
- A record is kept in the Incident Book describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or to property and how the situation was resolved

Provide training, including:

- Induction training for all staff
- Particular skills training to fit in with the nature of the organisation
- Child safeguarding training to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicions or incidents of child abuse

Supervising workers:

- Focus on the work to be done, always acknowledging the positive tasks that have already been carried out
- Provide opportunities for discussing concerns and training needs
- Hold a review at the end of the trial period to confirm personnel position, to extend his/her probation period or to determine his/her services
- Have an annual review or appraisal to assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that you need to make.



Declaration Form

Declaration from all personnel working with children and young people in M Dagge Therapy

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Any other name/previously known as: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

1. Have you been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order? YES NO

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

Nature of Offence:

Date of Offence:

2. Are there reasons you might be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people? YES NO

If yes, please state why:

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
(Therapist, Resident, Student therapist)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
(Senior Manager at M Dagge Therapy)