**Child Safeguarding Statement 1 February 2021**

**Meadowsweet Therapies**

1. **Name and nature of service being provided:**

Meadowsweet Therapies provides Play and Creative Arts Therapy to children, adolescents and adults.

Meadow Therapies is currently located at:

Callan,

Co. Kilkenny

The purpose of Meadowsweet Therapies is to provide therapeutic support to children, young people and adults through the medium of Play and Creative Arts Therapy and Parent Support / Filial Coaching.

**2. Principles to safeguard children from harm**

Meadowsweet Therapies is committed to promoting and facilitating the full participation of children and young people in our work. It aims to provide a safe, confidential and child-oriented therapeutic space for children and young people with a view to promote children’s' and young peoples' development, self-confidence and well-being.

Meadowsweet Therapies is committed at all times to ensuring children's and young peoples' safety and welfare in line with Children First 2015.

Meadowsweet Therapies principles to safeguard children from harm are:

* The safety, welfare and best interests of a childor young person is everyone’s responsibility and always paramount.
* The overall aim in all dealings with children and their families is to support families to keep children safe from harm and support child well-being.
* Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, children are consulted and involved in all matters and decisions while attending Meadowsweet Therapies. The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be heard and respected.
* Therapeutic interventions are child-led and child-oriented in nature as well as take account of a child's holistic development and well-being.
* Therapeutic interventions build on existing strengths and protective factors in the child and family, and consider at its heart the welfare of the child and family.
* Parents/carers have a right to be consulted and involved in their child's Play/ Creative Therapy. Meadowsweet Therapies endeavours to balance parents/carers’ needs for consultation and involvement with the child's/young person's need for a safe, secure, child-led and confidential therapeutic space. This is done within ethical and professional best practice policies for Play and Creative Arts Therapy services.
* A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/carers and families.
* Meadowsweet Therapies will work in accordance with the interests of children, young people and their families and adhere to Meadowsweet Therapies’ Child Protection Policy.
* Meadowsweet Therapies will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.
* Child protection is a multiagency, multidisciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the interests of children.

**Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment has been carried out of any potential for harm to a child while availing of this service. The definition of harm in relation to a child is: ‘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 sexual abuse of the child’.

Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks. It is not possible to eliminate risk completely, but risks can be significantly reduced if they are properly managed. A more detailed list of potential health and safety risks and associated strategies in place to manage same can be found in Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy.

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|  | Risk Identified | Procedure in Place to Manage Identified Risk |
|  | **Allegation of abuse** | Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy clearly outlines the procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers of a child availing of our service.  Meadowsweet Therapies’s Child Protection Policy outlines the procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers |
|  | **Recruitment** | All staff at Meadowsweet Therapies are Garda Vetted and maintain current vetting every 2 years.  Staff at Meadowsweet Therapies undertake yearly Continuous professional Development Training (CPD) of a minimum of 30 hours per year.   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | |
|  | **Training** | Training in child protection matters (updating statutory policies; Children First 2015; national best practice guidelines; etc) is on-going in its nature and all staff commit to update training as updated regulations/ practices become available |
|  | **Reporting** | Staff are aware of and committed to their duty to report concerns or disclosures of abuse that they receive in the course of their duties to Tusla. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities as Designated Liaison Person/Mandated Person as outlined in Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy. |
|  | **Lone Working with Children in Play Therapy Room** | An updated version of Tusla Child Protection and Welfare Report Form is at all times available and mandated to be completed within a reasonable time frame in the case of child protection and welfare concerns in line with Children First 2015. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action through the professional membership organisation Play Therapy Ireland. Adequate safety precautions and best-practice guidelines are outlined in detail in Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy. 1:1 therapy sessions are a valuable and necessary aspect of Play Therapy practice. A parent/carer is always present in the building. The parent/carer will be asked to accompany the child to the bathroom if necessary. |
|  | **Confidentiality** | Meadowsweet Therapies respects children's and families right to privacy when availing of services at the Centre. Confidentiality and its limitations in the case of child welfare concerns are explained to clients and families before commencement of Play Therapy and informed consent is provided by carer/s in writing (Consent Form).  Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy sets out policies regarding confidentiality, limitations and best-practice information sharing with families and outside agencies, taking into account best-practice ethical and clinical guidelines by Play Therapy Ireland and relevant data protection guidelines. |
|  | **Record Keeping** | Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy sets out clear procedures in relation to record-keeping of all child protection and welfare concerns. Client records are kept securely and are processed in line General Data Protection Regulation 2018. |
|  | **Sharing Information in Child Protection Concerns** | Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy outlines co-operation with TUSLA Child and Family Agency on the sharing of their records where a child welfare or protection issue arises. This is in keeping with the principles of Data Protection which recognise that in certain circumstances information can be shared in the interest of child protection. |
|  | **Physical injury to a child** | Child clients remain under adult supervision at all times while availing of Play Therapy at Meadowsweet Therapies and are not left unattended. A carer is available at all times on the premises in the waiting room.  The potential for health and safety risks and management procedures for minimising risks and dealing with any accident or injury to a child during Play Therapy are outlined in the Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy. |

**Procedures**

Meadowsweet Therapies’ Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), and Tusla’s *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*as well as with best-practice guidance for Play and Creative Arts Therapists through Play Therapy Ireland / UK. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service and can be found in Meadowsweet Therapies Child Protection Policy, available on request:

* Procedure for the safe recruitment of staff to work with children as well the access to and utilising of child safeguarding training and information;
* Procedure for the provision of clinical supervision and yearly CPD training of staff;
* Procedure to share information about the child protection policy and good practices with families and children
* Procedure to respond to concerns of children's welfare and safety and the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
* Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against staff of a child availing of our service;
* Procedure for maintaining and publicising to service users a list of the person who provides role of designated liaison officer/ mandated person

**Implementation**

Meadowsweet Therapies recognises that implementation is an on-going process and is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of this service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

For queries, please contact:

Jose van der Donk

jose@meadowsweettherapies.ie

Meadowsweet Therapies

Callan

Co. Kilkenny