**CAMBRIDGE ART THERAPY**

**Safeguarding Children and Adults: Policy and Guidelines**

**(Updated 31 August 2024)**

Cambridge Art Therapy (CAT) offers Art Therapy to children, young people and adults in various settings, including our own art therapy spaces, NHS premises, schools, homes and charitable organisations. We also offer online art therapy.

The therapeutic relationship between the therapist and client provides a safe space for clients to share difficult emotions and impart information about harmful experiences. This can happen verbally, through creative play, or through art making. Physical signs of neglect or injury may also become apparent during the therapeutic process.

**Purpose the Safeguarding Policy:**

* To ensure all CAT clients are safeguarded and protected
* To provide clear guidance for CAT therapists on how to follow the Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection procedures

**Application of the Policy**

CAT takes very seriously the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all clients, recognising the following:

* The welfare of the client is of paramount importance
* All clients have the right to protection from harm and abuse regardless of age, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or race/cultural heritage.
* A collaborative approach is often necessary to promote a client’s welfare, which may entail working with the client’s family/carers and other external agencies.
* The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information to safeguard children or adults.

**We will endeavour to safeguard clients by:**

* Offering them a safe space to be open about their issues, to listen and to value what they say.
* Reporting any concerns about the safety of a client to appropriate persons/organisations (see below).
* Applying local and national safeguarding and child protection guidelines.
* Ensuring necessary checks are made if we involve other staff in working with our clients.
* Sharing information on our safeguarding/child protection procedures with commissioners, clients, parents/carers and staff. This document is available on our website.
* Ensuring therapists receive regular supervision and training

**CAT therapists are aware of their safeguarding duties and ensure the following:**

* The law and statutory guidance concerning child protection and safeguarding adults is complied with.
* The policies of the setting, the local authority and Local Safeguarding Children Board in which CAT works are followed.
* Safeguarding of all clients is promoted.
* This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is understood and adhered to by all staff.

In England and Wales, the Children Act of 1989 and 2004 provide the overall framework for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The child’s welfare is the paramount consideration in all decision-making.

The Government’s guidance on safeguarding children in England ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ updated in December 2023, acknowledges the need for all providers of children’s services, including those in the voluntary sector, to work in collaboration and to agreed local standards.

‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (2024) sets out what schools and colleges in England must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18. Section 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002, and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, places upon School Governors the duty to ensure that schools safeguard and promote the welfare of children. What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused (2015) provides clear guidance for practitioners. The DfE ‘Code of Practice for Out of School Settings’ (2020) may also relevant be for art therapy in some settings.

DfE (2021) ‘Support for Parents and Carers: Keeping children safe online’, is a useful reference in the context of online therapy.

**Coronavirus safety**

During the Covid pandemic CAT therapists adhered to DfE Guidance (April 2021) on safety measures including hand washing, social distancing, face coverings, social distancing, respiratory hygiene, cleaning of materials and surfaces, and ventilation of rooms. We are aware that some clients have vulnerabilities which require ongoing protective procedures.

CAT therapists maintain their vaccinations for Coronavirus. Should a therapist show any symptoms of COVID-19 they will self-isolate, test, and if positive notify any contacts of their status.

**Recognition and Reporting of Abuse**

Everyone who works with clients and their families should be alert to the signs of abuse outlined below:

‘Abuse’ is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It may involve a single or repeated act or omission, occurring within a personal or other close relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm to a vulnerable person. Abuse can be intentional or unintentional. It can be active or passive, and it may be part of a pattern of behaviour or a single incident.

The following examples of abuse are not exhaustive:

Physical Abuse

* Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, throwing, shaking, inappropriate/careless handling and other forms of assault that may not leave visible signs of injury, but may cause pain or discomfort
* Beating (with or without an implement), punching, biting, deliberate burns, scalding, unnecessary restraint and other forms of assault that leave injuries
* Stabbing, strangulation, drowning, poisoning and wounding (breaking the skin) and other forms of assault that cause serious injuries or death
* Medical mistreatment such as withholding or inappropriately altering or administering medication or other treatments, and the inappropriate use of restraint or other sanction.

Sexual Abuse or Exploitation

Sexual abuse involves a child/vulnerable adult being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the person to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the person is irrelevant.

* Incest, rape
* Offensive or suggestive sexual language or behave in a sexually inappropriate way
* Touching, fondling, caressing, kissing, masturbation
* Oral sex on alleged victim, oral sex by alleged victim on perpetrator
* Sexual intercourse
* Involvement in prostitution or pornography
* Watching sexual activities
* Female genital mutilation

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child/vulnerable adult’s behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-worth.

* Use of threats or fears to over-ride a person’s wishes
* Lack of privacy or choice
* Denial of dignity
* Deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation
* Being made to feel worthless
* Threat(s) to withdraw care or support or contact with friends
* Humiliation, blaming
* Use of coercion
* Treating an adult as if they were a child
* Verbal abuse
* Exploitation or corruption
* Always feeling frightened or in danger

Neglect and Acts of Omission

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child/vulnerable adult’s basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in serious impairment of the person’s health or development.

 Lack of care

* Withholding food, drink, medication or shelter
* Deprivation of necessary personal care
* Failure to protect from harm
* Removal of aids to daily living
* Failure to give access to health and social care or educational services
* Failure to give information about sexual and reproductive health

**Vulnerable adults** have two additional categories of abuse, but these could apply equally to 16-18 students:

Financial Abuse or Exploitation

* Stealing, theft of money or property
* Deceiving or manipulating a person out of money or property
* Withholding or misusing money or property
* Stripping the person of his or her assets
* Exploitation of dependence for personal gain
* Misuse of benefits by others

Discriminatory Abuse

* Racist, sexist or homophobic abuse
* Abuse relating to age, illness or disability
* Acts or comments, including incitement of others to commit abuse

**Other safeguarding concerns**

In addition to the above concerns about children self-harming or expressing suicidal ideas must be treated as safeguarding and child protection issues.

PREVENT duty

Any concerns about radicalisation and extremist views or behaviours in children, young people or adults must be reported as a safeguarding concern. CAT work in line with Prevent Duty 2015 guidance and will consult with local Prevent Coordinators where necessary.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Concerns that a child or adult has been, or may be about to be, subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), fall under this policy and must also be reported as a safeguarding concern.

Forced marriage

In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure and abuse.
Forced marriage is primarily, but not exclusively, an issue of violence against females. Most cases involve young women and girls aged between 13 and 30, although there is evidence to suggest that as many as 15 per cent of victims are male. These procedures are aimed at dealing with forced marriage for a child/young person under 18 years of age.

Honour Based Violence

The term ‘honour crime’ or ‘honour-based violence’ embraces a variety of crimes of violence (mainly but not exclusively against women), including assault, imprisonment and murder where their family or their community is punishing the person. They are being punished for (actually or allegedly) undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour. In transgressing this correct code of behaviour, the person shows that they have not been properly controlled to conform by their family and this is to the ‘shame’ or ‘dishonour’ of the family.

**Confidentiality**

In establishing an initial art therapy contract with the client (and in the case of a child, their parents/carers), the limits of confidentiality must be explained, i.e., that the CAT therapist will need to inform others if there are concerns about the client’s safety. This is an important part of the contract at the outset of the work.

Where the CAT therapist is working in a school or other organisation/agency, they will report safeguarding concerns to the designated Safeguarding Lead/officer of that setting.

The duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and share information about child concerns takes priority over all other considerations, including the confidential nature of the counseling relationship. CAT therapists will fully participate in multi-agency working, in line with government guidance, in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

**Reporting a concern**

If a client tells a CAT therapist about possible abuse, or indicates a safeguarding issue, the following steps should be taken:

1. Listen carefully and remain calm.
2. If necessary, seek to clarify, using open questions and without putting words into the person’s mouth, in order to be sure that you understand what the person is telling you.
3. Reassure the person that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
4. Inform the person that you must pass the information on, but only those who need to know about it will be told. Tell them who you will report the matter to.
5. Note the main points carefully (on the appropriate CAT form if you have this available).
6. Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the person said, did and your questions etc.
7. If working within a commissioning organisation/agency, immediately inform the designated safeguarding lead. The safeguarding lead will make a referral in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children’s Board, or Local Safeguarding Adult Board guidelines. You may give them a written copy of the CAT form.
8. Report the safeguarding issue to the CAT team.
9. If working with a private client, report the issue to the Local Authority’s Adult or Children’s Services Safeguarding line. Prior to beginning therapy with a private adult client, CAT Therapists should always ask the client for a GP contact and next of kin/emergency contact in case of serious concerns about their immediate safety or wellbeing arising.

CAT is committed to reviewing our policy and practice annually. This policy was last reviewed in August 2024.

**Reference Documents**

Department for Education (2023) Working together to safeguard children: statutory framework: legislation relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (PDF). <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65797f1e0467eb000d55f689/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_framework.pdf>

Department for Education (2024) Keeping children safe in education,Statutory guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused. Advice for practitioners (2015) <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf>

Department for Education (2023) Children’s social care national framework: statutory guidance on the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of children’s social care. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-national-framework>

Department for Education (2023) Improving practice with children, young people and families. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-practice-with-children-young-people-and-families>

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents>.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents>

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Risk of Being Drawn into Terrorism) (Revised Guidance) Regulations 2024 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/704/contents/made>