



Stablemates Therapy

Safeguarding Policy

Review Date: [17.09.25]

Next Review Due: [1.09.26]

1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

At **Stablemates Therapy**, we are committed to creating a culture of safeguarding and vigilance to protect all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who come into contact with our services. Our therapy sessions and equine-based activities provide a safe, supportive environment where wellbeing and protection from harm are paramount.

We uphold our responsibility to act in the best interests of those in our care and take all safeguarding concerns seriously. This policy outlines our procedures for identifying, responding to, and preventing abuse and neglect, in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)**, the **Children Act 1989 and 2004**, and local authority guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, therapists, volunteers, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of Stablemates Therapy.

3. Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

We recognise the four primary categories of abuse, and the signs and symptoms associated with each:

3.1 Physical Abuse

Definition: Intentional use of force that results in injury or physical suffering.

Signs: Bruises, burns, bite marks, unexplained injuries, fear of adults, aggression.

3.2 Emotional Abuse

Definition: Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts emotional development.

Signs: Low self-esteem, withdrawal, anxiety, excessive need for validation, developmental delays.

3.3 Sexual Abuse

Definition: Involving a child in sexual activity, whether or not they understand what is happening.

Signs: Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, pain or itching, reluctance to be alone with certain people.

3.4 Neglect

Definition: Persistent failure to meet basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, emotional support).

Signs: Poor hygiene, underweight, constant hunger, lack of supervision, untreated medical issues.

4. Specific Safeguarding Issues (KCSIE 2025)

We are alert to the following issues and have clear procedures for recognising and responding:

- Mental Health
- Child Abduction / Community Safety Incidents
- Children in the Court System
- Children Missing Education
- Children with Family Members in Prison
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines
- Domestic Abuse
- Homelessness
- Honour-Based Abuse (including FGM – mandatory reporting applies)
- Radicalisation and Prevent Duty (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
- Sexually Harmful Behaviour
- Child-on-Child Abuse (including bullying, sexual violence, harassment)
- Children with SEND and other vulnerabilities
- Private Fostering
- Looked After Children / Previously Looked After Children
- Work Experience
- Children Staying with Host Families

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- **Name:** Matthew Kee, aka: Tatty Kee
- **Role/Position:** Therapist
- **Contact Info:** +44 7715931748, tattykee08@hotmail.com

5.2 Deputy DSL(s)

- **Name(s):** [Susanna Kate Kee]
- **Contact Info:** [07515148743]

5.3 Safeguarding Governance Lead

The individual responsible for the overall governance of safeguarding:

- **Name:** [Susanna Kate Kee]
- **Role:** [., Director / Owner]

6. Role of the DSL

The DSL is responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Coordinating safeguarding responses.
- Referring concerns to external agencies (e.g., MASH, Police).
- Maintaining secure and confidential records.
- Delivering and monitoring safeguarding training.
- Liaising with parents/carers and external professionals as appropriate.

7. Reporting and Recording Concerns

- Any concern must be reported **immediately** to the DSL or deputy.
- A written record must be completed using the **Safeguarding Concern Form**, including:
 - Date/time of concern
 - Details of what was said/observed
 - Actions taken
- Records are stored securely and confidentially.
- Concerns are never dismissed, ignored, or kept confidential when a child may be at risk.

8. Allegations Against Adults Working in the Setting

If an allegation is made about a member of staff, volunteer, or contractor, the DSL will:

1. Refer immediately to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**:
 - **Northamptonshire LADO Contact:**
Email: LADOREferral@northnorthants.gov.uk
Phone: 01604 362993
2. Inform the safeguarding governance lead.
3. Record the concern, actions, and outcomes in detail.

If the concern is about the **DSL**, contact the governance lead or LADO directly.

9. Staff Training

- All staff receive safeguarding training on induction and annually thereafter.
- DSL and deputies receive enhanced training every 2 years (minimum).
- Training includes:
 - Types and signs of abuse
 - How to report
 - KCSIE updates
 - Prevent Duty and FGM awareness

Records of all training are maintained.

10. Promoting Awareness Among Children and Young People

Where appropriate, we help understand:

- What safeguarding is
- How to speak up about worries or concerns
- How to stay safe around others and online
- Consent, boundaries, and respectful relationships

We ensure content is age-appropriate and integrated into sessions where suitable.

11. Early Help and Local Support

Northamptonshire Children's Social Care (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH)

- **Northamptonshire MASH (Children):**
Phone: 0300 126 7000
Email: MASH@northnorthants.gov.uk

When to refer:

- Early signs of neglect, risk-taking behaviour, family breakdown, mental health, risk of exploitation, etc.

If a child needs immediate protection, call 999 or report to MASH urgently.

12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information is shared only on a **need-to-know basis**.
- Disclosures are never promised full confidentiality if someone is at risk.
- Records are kept securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- We may share information without consent if someone is at risk of harm.

13. Responding to Disclosures

If a child or young person discloses:

1. **Listen carefully** – do not interrupt or judge.
2. **Do not promise confidentiality** – explain you will have to share with someone who can help.
3. **Reassure** – they have done the right thing.
4. **Record** – write down what was said ASAP using the child's words.
5. **Report** – inform the DSL immediately.

14. Monitoring, Review & Publication

- This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes.
- It is publicly available via the Stablemates Therapy website:
www.stablematestherapy.com
- All staff are required to read and confirm understanding.
- Safeguarding is discussed regularly in staff meetings and reviews.

15. Appendices (to include in full policy document)

1. **Safeguarding Concern Form**
2. **Flowchart for Reporting Concerns**
3. **Local Safeguarding Contacts**
4. **Training Record Template**

5. Signs & Symptoms Cheat Sheet

16. Key Contacts – Northamptonshire

Agency	Contact Info
Northamptonshire MASH	0300 126 7000 – MASH@northnorthants.gov.uk
LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	01604 362993 – LADOREferral@northnorthants.gov.uk
Emergency – Police	999 or 101
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Prevent Duty Advice Line	020 7340 7264

17. Review & Approval

Approved By: [Susanna Kate Kee-Owner / Director]

Date: [17.09.25]

Next Review Due: 01.09.26]

Appendix 1: Safeguarding Concern Form

Safeguarding Concern Form

Date of Concern: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Time of Concern: [HH:MM]

Name of Child / Young Person / Vulnerable Adult:

Date of Birth (if known):

Name of person reporting the concern:

Role / Position:

Nature of the concern / disclosure:

(What was said, observed, reported. Use exact words where possible.)

Safeguarding Concern Form

Any visible signs / injuries?

(If yes, describe location, appearance, size, etc. Do not examine.)

Actions taken so far:

(Who was informed, any immediate safety steps taken, etc.)

DSL/Deputy Informed?

[Yes/No]

Name of DSL/Deputy informed:

Time & date DSL/Deputy was informed:

Signature of person completing form:

Date & Time:

DSL Action Taken:

(Completed by DSL)

Referral made?

[Yes/No]

If yes, to which agency and when?

Outcome / follow-up required:

Note: This form must be stored securely and confidentially in line with data protection policy.

Appendix 2: Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart

What to do if you have a concern about a child or vulnerable adult

1. **You have a concern** about a child or young person, or a disclosure is made
↓
2. **Immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy**
↓
3. **Record your concern** in writing using the Safeguarding Concern Form
↓
4. **DSL assesses the concern:**
 - If immediate danger → Call emergency services (999)
 - If threshold met → Refer to **MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)**
 - If unsure → Seek advice from LADO or MASH
↓
5. **DSL records action taken** and ensures secure record-keeping
↓

6. **Follow-up and support** offered where needed

↓
7. **Review and reflect** in supervision or safeguarding review

Appendix 3: Local Safeguarding Contacts – Northamptonshire

Service	Contact Details
MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)	Phone: 0300 126 7000 Email: MASH@northnorthants.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Phone: 01604 362993 Email: LADOREferral@northnorthants.gov.uk
Northamptonshire Police (non-emergency)	Phone: 101
Emergency Services	Phone: 999
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Prevent Duty Advice Line	020 7340 7264
Stablemates Therapy DSL	[Insert Name, Role, Phone, Email]

Appendix 4: Safeguarding Training Record Template

Name	Role	Date of Induction Training	Date of Latest Refresher	Level of Training (e.g., Basic / DSL)	Trainer / Source	Next Training Due
[e.g., Jane Doe]	Equine Therapist	01/02/2025	01/08/2025	Basic	NSPCC Online	01/08/2026

Ensure this table is updated after every training session.

Appendix 5: Signs & Symptoms Quick Reference Sheet

Type of Abuse	Common Signs and Symptoms
Physical	Unexplained bruises/injuries, burns, bite marks, withdrawal, fear of adults, flinching.

Type of Abuse	Common Signs and Symptoms
Emotional	Low self-esteem, attention-seeking, depression, extreme behaviour (aggression or withdrawal), delayed development.
Sexual	Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, bruising in genital area, pregnancy, STIs, running away, anxiety.
Neglect	Poor hygiene, frequent hunger, inappropriate clothing, tiredness, untreated medical needs, developmental delays.

REMEMBER: These may also indicate other issues — always pass concerns to the DSL to assess.

KATE KEE -LEAD- AT ABOVE ADDRESS.

JULIE SCOTT-DEPUTY- at Appletree Stud Riding School- 01295 660015- OX19 1ET (in the event of a client not wishing to make a complaint direct to Kate Kee or other member of the Stable Mates Team)

Stable Mates Therapy is committed to enhancing the wellbeing and safeguarding of all its . All will always be treated with respect and dignity.

Any employees of Stable Mates will be required to hold an Enhanced DBS check and have passed a minimum of 'Level 2- SAFEGUARDING'

Any concerns/allegations will be consulted, monitored, dated and recorded. If deemed appropriate they will be reported to the local children's social services or in the case of an emergency, to the police.

All records will be kept confidential to the client/carer/parent unless it is viewed that a disclosure is necessary to safeguard the vulnerable person or another.

Should an allegation need to be reported, this information will be kept confidential from public knowledge.

No photography or filming will be carried out without prior permission of the client/carer/parent.

Policies will be reviewed annually, or with any update of law or company structure.

GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT- 16/06/2025

Stable Mates Grounds - This is a premises that regularly admits with varying physical and emotional needs and is 'set up' accordingly. All have a 1 to 1 support worker with them to ensure they are not at risk throughout the entirety of the session. 1 to 1 ensures that no are unattended and therefore always supervised when appropriate. There are no stairs or level changes so all risk assessment is taken at ground level.

No smoking is allowed 'on site' lowering any risk of fire, however in the unlikely event of fire, the fire procedure as specified on signs should be followed. New have this procedure explained on arrival.

/Guardians are required to complete paperwork before attending advising Stable Mates of any allergies/behaviours/needs that could put the client in unexpected danger. This paperwork also stipulates activity appropriate foot and general wear.

Animals- all the animals at Stable Mates are used on a regular basis as Therapy animals and are therefore, in the main, predictable to the owner/handler. However, there is always a risk when dealing with animals and larger groups. To minimize this, all contact with the animals will be supervised plus,

- 1) The ponies do not wear metal shoes, so, although still painful if one treads on your foot...the damage is lessened.
- 2) are not allowed unsupervised into the pen that holds the 'horned goat'
- 3) All animals are regularly reassessed for suitability for the job that they are asked to do.
- 4) A First Aider is present at all times.
- 5) An 'animal free' room is available for anyone requiring one.
- 6) interact with one 'animal group' at a time...i.e dogs, or horses, or goats...so that the handler can adequately supervise and assess behaviour and needs of both animal and client.
- 7) Before having access to any of the animals, will be given advice on appropriate behaviour around whilst around each type of animal group.
- 8) Toilet/hand washing facilities are available.

List of typical activities- Please see above for all general safety measures.

Grooming ponies- Ponies do not wear shoes. Both extensively used for this activity. Supervised.

Leading ponies- Extra rope is held by regular 'handler' in case client needs help. Hi Vis vests worn if 'off site'. Supervised.

Interaction with goats (non- horned) – Goats are small and do not bite or kick. Supervised. Unsupervised interaction is not allowed with the horned goat, she is in her own secure paddock.

Leading goats- As with ponies

Interacting with dogs and grooming dogs- The dogs have been working as 'therapy dogs' with Kate for the entirety of their lives, and are therefore very predictable to her and will be advised of appropriate behaviour around them.

Wildlife projects- Supervised.

Wildlife walks Supervised

Learning/interacting with chickens- are advised of appropriate behaviour and supervised.

Stream activities- are supervised on a one to one basis at all times. The stream generally runs at 1.5 ft (as indicated on the measuring stick) Should the measure show that it has risen to 2.5 ft, no access is allowed due to increased flow. Typical activities include magnet fishing/rubber duck racing/ summertime paddling (in wellies/old trainers), potential for sitting in a kayak held by a staff member who is standing in the river with a rope attached. This is a shallow, slow moving stream the majority of the time.

All are advised to wash their hands thoroughly after contact with the animals using antibacterial soap provided.

Risk Assessment Section: Front Gate / Site Entrance

Hazard:

Unauthorised access to the premises; pupils leaving the site unsupervised; vehicles entering/exiting while pupils are present; risk of absconding, particularly for vulnerable learners.

Who may be harmed:

- Pupils / learners
- Staff and volunteers
- Visitors
- Members of the public

Existing control measures:

- The front gate is **kept closed at all times during operational hours.**
- The front gate is **not locked**, as it also serves as a **designated fire exit point** and must remain immediately accessible in the event of an emergency, in line with fire safety requirements.
- All learners are **supervised on a 1:1 basis at all times while on site**, including when outdoors.

- Due to this level of supervision, learners are **not able to exit the site via the front gate or by any other means (e.g. climbing over or opening the gate)**.
- Learners are **never permitted to approach, operate, or open the gate independently**.
- Staff maintain **constant visual and physical proximity** to learners when near the entrance area.
- Staff are particularly vigilant during **arrival, departure, and delivery times**.
- Visitors are required to **report directly to staff on arrival** and are not permitted to access the site unaccompanied.

Additional control measures required:

- Regular checks to ensure the gate, hinges, and closure mechanisms are **secure, well maintained, and functioning correctly**.
- Front gate procedures to be reinforced through **staff induction and ongoing safeguarding training**.
- Individual risk assessments to identify any learners with a **known history of absconding**, with enhanced supervision or positioning of staff where required.

Risk level (before controls): High

Risk level (after controls): Low

Responsible person:

Site Lead / Designated Safeguarding Lead / Manager

Review date:

19.09.26

Signed S.K.KEE 17.09.25

Introduction:

Stablemates Therapy is dedicated to fostering a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for all participants. Our Behavioural Policy outlines our expectations for behaviour during sessions involving animals and outdoor activities, ensuring the well-being of both participants and animals.

Policy Statement:

- 1. Respect for Animals:** We expect all participants to treat animals with kindness, gentleness, and respect at all times. This includes following guidelines for interacting with animals, respecting their boundaries, and refraining from any behaviour that may cause harm or distress to the animals.
- 2. Safety First:** The safety and well-being of both participants and animals are our top priorities during therapy sessions. Participants are expected to follow safety guidelines, listen to instructions from staff members, and refrain from any behaviour that may pose a risk to themselves, others, or the animals.
- 3. Positive Interaction:** We encourage participants to engage in positive and constructive interactions with animals during therapy sessions. This may include activities such as grooming, feeding, and walking animals under the guidance of staff members, fostering empathy, and building trust between participants and animals.
- 4. Environmental Stewardship:** Participants are encouraged to appreciate and respect the natural environment during outdoor activities. This includes minimizing littering, avoiding damage to plants and wildlife, and respecting the natural habitats of the animals we work with.
- 5. Communication and Boundaries:** Open communication and clear boundaries are essential during therapy sessions involving animals. Participants are encouraged to communicate any concerns or discomfort they may have, and staff members will ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Implementation:

- Our Behavioural Policy will be communicated to all participants, staff members, volunteers, and visitors through written materials, orientation sessions, and ongoing reminders.

- Staff members will receive training in animal-assisted therapy techniques, safety protocols, and behaviour management strategies to effectively implement the Behavioural Policy during therapy sessions.

Review and Evaluation:

- This Behavioural Policy will be reviewed periodically to assess its effectiveness and make any necessary updates or revisions.

- Feedback from participants, staff members, and stakeholders will be solicited and considered as part of the review process.

Conclusion:

Stablemates Therapy is committed to providing a safe and enriching environment for participants to engage in therapy sessions involving animals and outdoor activities. Our Behavioural Policy reflects our dedication to maintaining high standards of behaviour and ensuring the safety, well-being, and positive experiences of all involved.

Introduction:

Stablemates Therapy is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and accountability in all aspects of our operations. Our Whistleblowing Policy provides a confidential mechanism for employees and to report any concerns or suspected wrongdoing related to therapy sessions, animal welfare, or organizational practices.

Policy Statement:

1. Purpose: The purpose of this Whistleblowing Policy is to encourage employees and to report any suspected unethical, illegal, or improper conduct within Stablemates Therapy, including concerns related to animal welfare, participant safety, or organizational integrity.
2. Confidentiality: All reports of suspected wrongdoing will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and discretion. Whistleblowers can choose to remain anonymous if they wish, and their identities will be protected to the fullest extent possible, except as required by law.
3. Non-Retaliation: Stablemates Therapy is committed to protecting whistleblowers from retaliation or adverse consequences as a result of making a report in good faith. Retaliation against whistleblowers is strictly prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
4. Reporting Procedure: Whistleblowers can make a report of suspected wrongdoing through designated channels, which may include reporting to their immediate supervisor, Julie Scott (of Appletree Stud Riding School-07517 068354) or an anonymous reporting hotline. Contact information for reporting channels will be clearly communicated to all employees and stakeholders.

Implementation:

- Our Whistleblowing Policy will be communicated to all employees and through employee handbooks, training sessions, and other relevant channels.
- Reporting channels and contact information will be prominently displayed and easily accessible to all employees and .

Review and Evaluation:

- This Whistleblowing Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Feedback from employees and regarding the Whistleblowing Policy will be solicited and considered as part of the review process.

Conclusion:

Stablemates Therapy is committed to fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct, and our Whistleblowing Policy is an integral part of that commitment. By providing a safe and confidential mechanism for reporting suspected wrongdoing, we strive to maintain the trust and confidence of our employees, stakeholders, and the community.

Stablemates Therapy SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Policy 17/09/25

Introduction:

Stablemates Therapy is dedicated to providing inclusive and accessible therapeutic services for individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Our SEND Policy outlines our commitment to meeting the unique needs of individuals with SEND and ensuring their equal access to therapy sessions and outdoor activities.

Policy Statement:

1. Inclusivity: We believe in the inherent value and dignity of every individual, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Our therapy sessions and outdoor activities are designed to be inclusive, welcoming individuals of all backgrounds and abilities.

2. Accessibility: We are committed to providing accessible facilities, resources, and services to individuals with SEND. We strive to remove barriers to participation and ensure that everyone can fully engage in our therapeutic activities, including those with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities.

3. Individualized Support: We recognize that each individual with SEND has unique needs and requirements. Therefore, we are committed to providing individualized support to accommodate these needs, including personalized therapy plans, sensory adaptations, and communication supports as necessary.

4. Collaboration: We value collaboration and partnership with individuals, families, caregivers, and relevant professionals involved in the support of individuals with SEND. We will work closely with these stakeholders to ensure that our therapy sessions and outdoor activities meet the needs and goals of each individual.

Implementation:

- Our SEND Policy will be communicated to all staff members, volunteers, and stakeholders involved in the delivery of our therapeutic programs.
- Staff members will receive training on inclusive practices, disability awareness, and strategies for supporting individuals with SEND during therapy sessions and outdoor activities.

Review and Evaluation:

- This SEND Policy will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and make any necessary updates or revisions.
- Feedback from individuals with SEND, their families, staff members, and stakeholders will be solicited and considered as part of the review process.

Conclusion:

Stablemates Therapy is committed to providing inclusive and accessible therapeutic services for individuals with SEND, ensuring that they have equal opportunities to benefit from our programs. Our SEND Policy reflects our dedication to meeting the diverse needs of all individuals and promoting inclusivity and diversity in our therapy sessions and outdoor activities.

Introduction:

Stablemates Therapy is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for all participants, staff members, volunteers, and animals involved in our therapy programs. Our Health and Safety Policy outlines our commitment to identifying and mitigating risks, promoting a culture of safety, and ensuring compliance with relevant health and safety regulations.

Policy Statement:

1. Risk Assessment: We will conduct regular risk assessments of our facilities, equipment, and activities to identify potential hazards and assess the associated risks. Measures will be implemented to eliminate or minimize these risks to the greatest extent possible.
2. Safety Training: All staff members, volunteers, and participants will receive appropriate training on health and safety procedures, emergency protocols, and the safe handling of animals. Training will be provided regularly and tailored to the specific needs of each role.
3. Emergency Preparedness: We will maintain emergency response plans and procedures for addressing accidents, injuries, medical emergencies, and other unforeseen incidents. Staff members will be trained in emergency procedures, and emergency contact information will be readily accessible.
4. Animal Welfare: The well-being of the animals involved in our therapy programs is of utmost importance. We will ensure that animals receive proper care, nutrition, and veterinary attention as needed. Animal handling protocols will be implemented to minimize stress and ensure the safety of both animals and participants.
5. Hygiene and Sanitation: We will maintain high standards of hygiene and sanitation throughout our facilities, including regular cleaning and disinfection of equipment, surfaces, and animal enclosures. Participants will be encouraged to practice good hygiene, including handwashing, before and after interacting with animals.

6. Incident Reporting and Investigation: Any accidents, injuries, near misses, or incidents involving health and safety concerns will be promptly reported, investigated, and documented. Corrective actions will be taken to prevent recurrence and improve safety practices.

Implementation:

- Our Health and Safety Policy will be communicated to all staff members, volunteers, participants, and visitors through written materials, training sessions, and signage.
- Regular inspections and audits will be conducted to monitor compliance with health and safety policies and identify areas for improvement.

Review and Evaluation:

- This Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed periodically to assess its effectiveness and make any necessary updates or revisions.
- Feedback from staff members, participants, and stakeholders regarding health and safety practices will be solicited and considered as part of the review process.

Conclusion:

Stablemates Therapy is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all individuals involved in our therapy programs. Our Health and Safety Policy reflects our dedication to identifying and mitigating risks, promoting a culture of safety, and ensuring the well-being of both participants and animals.

1. Purpose and Scope

Stablemates Therapy is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all , staff, and stakeholders. We believe in maintaining open communication and handling complaints in a timely, confidential, and constructive manner. This policy outlines the process for lodging complaints, our commitment to addressing them, and the steps for resolution.

2. Principles of the Complaints Process

- **Transparency:** All complaints will be handled transparently, with clear information provided to the complainant regarding the steps involved and anticipated timelines.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints will be managed with strict confidentiality to protect the privacy and dignity of all parties involved.
- **Fairness:** All complaints will be treated fairly, objectively, and without bias.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for addressing complaints promptly, reviewing outcomes, and making improvements where needed.

3. Types of Complaints Covered

This policy applies to any complaints related to:

- The quality of services provided by Stablemates Therapy
- The conduct or professionalism of staff members
- Animal welfare concerns
- Issues with safeguarding practices
- Any other matters affecting , staff, or the general operations of Stablemates Therapy

4. Complaints Procedure

4.1 Informal Resolution

Whenever possible, we encourage concerns to be addressed informally by discussing them directly with the staff member involved or a manager. Often, issues can be resolved quickly and effectively in this way.

4.2 Formal Complaints Process

If informal resolution is not possible, or the complainant wishes to pursue a more structured approach, the following steps should be taken:

- **Step 1: Initial Consultation with Primary Support Network**

Upon receiving a complaint, we will first engage with the complainant and, where appropriate, involve the client's primary support network. This may include foster

carers, school representatives, legal guardians, or others who provide regular support. Our goal is to collaboratively discuss the issue and identify adjustments or accommodations that might resolve the complaint effectively and sensitively.

- **Step 2: Collaborative Solution Development**

Together with the primary support network, we will work to develop and implement adjustments aimed at addressing the complaint. This may involve:

- Modifying the therapy approach
- Adjusting service schedules
- Addressing any interpersonal concerns between staff and
- Providing additional support for the client as needed

4.3 Escalation of Complaints

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review by an external mediator or governing body related to animal-assisted therapy. The Complaints Officer will provide information on how to initiate this review.

5. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be submitted but are more challenging to investigate fully. Stablemates Therapy will consider any information provided but may have limited ability to take action without sufficient detail or the ability to follow up.

6. Record Keeping and Continuous Improvement

All complaints, investigations, and outcomes will be documented and securely stored. Stablemates Therapy reviews complaints data annually to identify trends, learn from feedback, and implement changes that enhance service quality, client safety, and staff conduct.

7. Policy Review

This Complaints Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current, effective, and aligned with best practices in handling complaints in the animal-assisted therapy field.

1. Purpose and Scope

Stablemates Therapy is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. This policy outlines our commitment to treating all , staff, volunteers, and stakeholders with respect, regardless of their background, identity, or personal characteristics. Our aim is to foster an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to participate fully in our services.

2. Policy Principles

- **Equality:** We strive to provide equal opportunities for all individuals, ensuring they are treated fairly and have access to our services without discrimination.
- **Diversity:** We recognize, value, and celebrate the diversity of the communities we serve and seek to reflect this diversity in our practices and team.
- **Inclusion:** We aim to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and supported to reach their potential.

3. Commitment to Non-Discrimination

We are committed to preventing discrimination in any form, including but not limited to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender and gender identity
- Race, ethnicity, or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic background

Any form of harassment, bullying, or discriminatory behavior is not tolerated at Stablemates Therapy and will be addressed according to our complaints and disciplinary procedures.

4. Equality and Diversity in Service Delivery

4.1 Accessibility

Where possible, we are committed to making our services accessible to as many as possible, and we will work to identify and remove physical, social, or cultural barriers that might prevent individuals from fully engaging with our programs. This includes:

- Offering flexible therapy schedules to accommodate individual needs
- Ensuring our facilities are accessible to those with disabilities
- Tailoring sessions to stay within the demands of their needs

- Providing information in accessible formats, upon request

4.2 Culturally Sensitive Care

We aim to understand and respect cultural differences, beliefs, and practices. Our staff members are encouraged to participate in ongoing training to ensure cultural sensitivity and awareness in all interactions.

5. Equality and Diversity in Recruitment and Employment

5.1 Fair Recruitment Practices

Stablemates Therapy is committed to fair and transparent recruitment practices. All applicants will be considered based on their skills, qualifications, and experience, and will not be disadvantaged by personal characteristics unrelated to the role. Our recruitment processes are designed to ensure equality of opportunity and encourage diverse applicants.

5.2 Inclusive Workplace Culture

We are dedicated to creating a workplace culture where all staff feel valued, respected, and supported. This includes:

- Encouraging staff to share diverse perspectives
- Supporting flexible working arrangements where possible
- Regularly reviewing our workplace policies to ensure they promote an inclusive and respectful environment

6. Policy Review and Improvement

Stablemates Therapy is committed to continuous improvement in equality and diversity. Feedback from , staff, and other stakeholders is actively sought and used to enhance our practices. This policy will be updated as needed to reflect new insights and maintain alignment with legal and ethical standards.

This policy serves as our framework for promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion at Stablemates Therapy and reflects our dedication to supporting a vibrant, diverse, and harmonious environment for all.

1. Introduction

Stablemates Therapy is committed to protecting the personal data and privacy of all individuals we work with, including children, young people, families, staff, volunteers, and partners.

We comply with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**, ensuring that personal data is processed lawfully, transparently, and securely.

2. Purpose of This Policy

This policy outlines:

- What data we collect
- Why we collect it
- How we use, store and share it
- Your rights regarding your data
- How to contact us about data concerns

It applies to all personal data we handle, whether digital, paper, or verbal.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Personal Data	Any information that identifies a living individual (e.g. name, contact info, date of birth, health notes).
Special Category Data	Sensitive data including health, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or data about children.
Data Subject	The individual whose personal data is held (e.g. client, staff member).
Data Controller	Stablemates Therapy – we decide how and why personal data is used.
Data Processor	Anyone who processes data on our behalf (e.g., cloud-based therapy notes service).

4. Legal Basis for Processing Data

We only collect and process data where we have a lawful basis under GDPR. These include:

- **Consent** – where explicit permission is given

- **Contractual necessity** – e.g., to provide therapy services
- **Legal obligation** – e.g., safeguarding, health & safety
- **Vital interests** – to protect someone's life
- **Public task** – for work in the public interest (e.g. school therapy)
- **Legitimate interests** – where necessary for business operation and not overridden by individual rights

5. Data We Collect

We may collect the following categories of data:

For (Children, Young People, Adults)

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Address & contact info
- Parent/carer contact info
- Emergency contact
- GP details
- Referral information
- Medical / psychological history
- Safeguarding concerns
- Session notes / progress reports

For Staff / Volunteers

- Name and contact info
- DBS checks and safeguarding training records
- Contracts or agreements
- Supervision records
- Emergency contact details

For Website Users

- Contact form submissions
- Website usage (cookies, analytics – see Cookie Policy)

6. How We Use Your Data

We use personal data to:

- Deliver safe, effective therapeutic services
- Ensure client safety and wellbeing
- Maintain accurate records
- Manage appointments and communication
- Comply with legal/safeguarding obligations
- Monitor service quality and outcomes
- Manage staff, volunteers, and contractors

7. How We Store Data

- Client records are stored securely on encrypted systems and/or locked filing cabinets
- Access is restricted to authorised staff only (e.g. therapist, DSL)
- Digital files are protected by secure passwords and encrypted storage
- All paper files are stored in locked filing cabinets in secure premises
- Records are backed up securely and regularly

8. Data Retention

We retain data only as long as necessary. Our retention schedule follows legal, clinical, and safeguarding guidelines:

Type of Data	Retention Period
Client records (children)	Until the child's 25th birthday (or 26th if in care)
Safeguarding records	Minimum of 25 years (per best practice)
Staff / volunteer records	6 years after employment/engagement ends
Accident / incident reports	At least 3 years (longer for minors)

Once no longer needed, data is securely destroyed or deleted.

9. Sharing Data

We do **not** sell or share personal data for marketing. We may share data only when:

- **You give consent**
- We have a **legal obligation** (e.g. safeguarding)
- It is necessary to protect someone's life or wellbeing

- It is required by law or by a court
- We are working with a professional (e.g., a school SENCO, GP, CAMHS), and you've agreed to share info

All third parties we work with (e.g., cloud storage, admin services) sign Data Processing Agreements and comply with UK GDPR.

10. Your Rights Under UK GDPR

You have rights over your personal data, including:

- **Right to be informed** – about how we use your data
- **Right of access** – request a copy of the data we hold about you
- **Right to rectification** – correct inaccurate data
- **Right to erasure** – ask for data to be deleted (in some cases)
- **Right to restrict processing** – limit how we use your data
- **Right to object** – to certain types of processing
- **Right to data portability** – request data in digital form (for transfer)

To exercise your rights, please email: katekee@btinternet.com

We will respond within 30 days unless the request is complex.

11. Data Breaches

In the event of a data breach:

- The Data Protection Lead (see below) will investigate immediately
- If there is a risk to individuals' rights or freedoms, the ICO will be informed within 72 hours
- Affected individuals will be informed where appropriate

12. Our Responsibilities

- Appoint a Data Protection Lead to oversee compliance
- Train staff in data protection principles
- Conduct risk assessments for new systems or services
- Maintain an internal Data Register
- Ensure safe disposal of confidential data (digital and paper)

13. Cookies & Website Data

Our website (www.stablematestherapy.com) uses cookies for basic functionality and analytics. See our **Cookie Policy** for full details. You can manage cookie preferences on our website.

14. Contact & Complaints

If you have questions, requests or concerns about how we use your data, contact:

Data Protection Lead

Susanna Kee, Owner.

katekee@btinternet.com

You can also contact the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**:

- 0303 123 1113
- www.ico.org.uk

15. Review & Updates

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner if required (e.g. following a breach or changes in legislation).

Stablemates Therapy Safer Recruitment Policy 17.09.25

1. Purpose and Scope At Stablemates Therapy, we prioritize creating a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for both our and team members. This Safer Recruitment Policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that all individuals hired to work with us meet our standards for professionalism, competence, and integrity. Although our team is small and includes members recruited through personal relationships, we adhere to a clear and formalized recruitment process to maintain high standards in safeguarding and professionalism.

2. Recruitment Principles

2.1 Commitment to Equality and Inclusivity

Stablemates Therapy values diversity and equal opportunity. Our recruitment decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and experience, with all applicants treated fairly and without discrimination.

2.2 Safeguarding Focus

Our recruitment process is designed to safeguard , staff, and the animals involved in therapy. All potential employees will be assessed for their suitability to work with vulnerable groups and animals.

3. Recruitment Procedure

3.1 Initial Assessment

- All applicants will undergo an initial review, including background checks and reference checks, regardless of prior personal relationships.
- During the recruitment process, potential hires will be asked to provide at least two references, one of which should be professional.

3.2 Interviews

- Applicants will participate in a formal interview where they will discuss their skills, experience, and understanding of safeguarding principles.
- During the interview, potential staff members will be asked about their experience working with vulnerable individuals and animals.

3.3 Background Checks

- Prior to employment, Stablemates Therapy will require an enhanced DBS background check, including any legal checks required for working with vulnerable populations.
- All staff members are required to report any subsequent legal issues or changes in their background that could impact their ability to work safely with or animals.
- Staff are required to provide 2 references upon request

3.4 Training and Induction

- New staff members will participate in an induction program covering safeguarding, animal welfare, and safe handling practices.
- All team members are expected to complete regular training on safeguarding and maintaining the wellbeing of both people and animals.

4. Ongoing Safeguarding and Review

- Stablemates Therapy is committed to ongoing staff development and training. All employees will receive regular supervision and training refreshers.
- Our safer recruitment practices will be reviewed periodically to ensure they meet evolving standards and legal requirements.

5. Personal Relationships in Recruitment

While Stablemates Therapy acknowledges that all current staff were recruited through personal relationships, we maintain that each staff member must undergo the same formalized recruitment process as described above to ensure consistency, transparency, and the safety of all parties involved.

6. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in safeguarding legislation, best practices, and the needs of the organization.

Anti-Bullying Policy 17.09.25

1. Purpose

Stablemates Therapy is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment where all children, young people, staff and visitors are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is **repeated, intentional** behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm and involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying may be:

- **Physical:** hitting, pushing, intimidation.
- **Verbal:** name-calling, threats, discriminatory language.
- **Social/Relational:** exclusion, humiliation, spreading rumours.
- **Cyberbullying:** messages, posts or images causing distress.
- **Prejudicial:** based on disability, race, gender, sexuality, religion, appearance or background.

3. Aims

- Prevent bullying through culture, supervision and education.
- Respond clearly and consistently to all concerns.
- Support victims of bullying to feel safe and empowered.
- Address behaviour of those who bully using restorative approaches.

4. Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** oversees all bullying concerns.
- **Staff:** identify early signs, record concerns, intervene immediately.
- **Students:** treat others respectfully and report unsafe behaviour.
- **Parents/Carers:** support the centre's procedures and communicate concerns.

5. Reporting

Bullying can be reported by **anyone**, including anonymously, through:

- Speaking to a staff member
- Contacting the DSL

- Emailing the centre
All incidents are recorded on the safeguarding log.

6. Response Procedure

1. Staff intervene immediately if safe to do so.
2. DSL investigates within 24 hours.
3. Both parties are spoken to individually.
4. Appropriate action taken (restorative work, sanctions, support plans).
5. Parents/carers informed.
6. Follow-up review within 2 weeks.

7. Prevention

- High staff-to-student ratio and close supervision
- Positive behaviour modelling
- Circle-time and emotional literacy activities
- Staff training on spotting early signs of bullying
- Clear expectations displayed on site

Admissions Policy 17.09.25

1. Purpose

To ensure fair, transparent admission of students to Stablemates Therapy as an Alternative Provision partner for schools and local authorities.

2. Who We Admit

We provide placements for people who may benefit from:

- Animal-assisted therapeutic provision
- Outdoor learning
- SEMH support
- Alternative education packages
- Short-term or long-term interventions

3. Referral Routes

Referrals must come from:

- Local authorities
- Schools
- Social workers
- Other approved professionals

(Private enquiries may be considered on a case-by-case basis.)

4. Admissions Criteria

A placement is considered when:

- Needs can be safely met at our setting
- Risks can be appropriately managed
- The young person will benefit from our therapeutic/alternative offer

We cannot admit where:

- Risks cannot be managed safely on site
- The young person requires specialist clinical provision beyond our scope

5. Admissions Process

1. **Referral form received** with background information.
2. **Risk assessment** completed by the DSL/manager.
3. **Visit/taster session** offered.
4. **Placement agreement** drawn up (hours, funding, expectations).
5. **Induction Meeting** scheduled.
6. Placement begins once paperwork is complete.

6. Waiting List

Where provision is full, referrals may be added to a waiting list.

First Aid Policy 17.09.25

1. Purpose

To ensure immediate and effective first aid for staff, students and visitors while on site.

2. Responsibilities

- **First Aid Lead:** oversees provision and training.
- **Trained First Aiders:** provide emergency care.
- **All Staff:** follow procedures and report accidents.

3. First Aid Provision

- Clearly marked first aid kits
- Portable outdoor kits for sessions with animals
- At least one trained First Aider present during operating hours
- Accident reporting forms completed for all incidents

4. Procedure for Injury

1. Assess the situation and ensure safety.
2. Provide appropriate first aid.
3. Contact emergency services if required.
4. Inform parents/carers.
5. Record all details in the accident log.
6. Review risk assessments if necessary.

5. Medication

No medication is given unless:

- It is pre-agreed with parents/carers
- It is logged in the medication record
- Staff have appropriate training (e.g., EpiPen)

6. Review

This policy is reviewed annually.

Fire Safety Policy 17.09.25

1. Purpose

To protect all individuals on site by ensuring effective fire prevention, detection and evacuation procedures.

2. Responsibilities

- **Fire Safety Officer:** oversees fire risk assessments and drills.
- **All Staff:** know evacuation routes, assist students and follow procedures.

3. Prevention Measures

- Regular risk assessments of stables, barns, classrooms and outdoor areas
- No smoking or vaping on site
- Safe storage of hay, straw and flammables
- Routine maintenance of electrical equipment
- Clear fire exit signage

4. Detection

- Smoke detectors and alarms tested
- Fire extinguishers inspected

5. Evacuation Procedure

1. When alarm sounds, staff lead students to the **assembly point**.
2. Do not stop to collect belongings.
3. Fire Safety Officer conducts roll call and liaises with Fire Services.
4. No one re-enters the building until clearance is given.

6. Drills

Fire drills take place **termly** and are recorded.

Induction Policy 17.09.25

1. Purpose

To ensure a consistent, safe and supportive induction for all new staff, volunteers and students.

2. Staff Induction Includes:

- Introduction to safeguarding and DSL
- Tour of site and emergency procedures
- Role expectations
- Code of conduct
- Lone working procedures
- Risk assessments and behaviour management guidance
- Health & safety and first aid locations
- Policies and training requirements

All staff sign an induction checklist.

3. Student Induction Includes:

- Introduction to key staff
- Tour of the site and animals
- Explanation of rules, routines and expectations
- Health & safety, including behaviour around animals
- Personalised timetable
- Review after the first 2 weeks

Lone Working Policy 17.09.25

1. Purpose

To ensure the safety of staff working alone on site or off site.

2. Definition

Lone working occurs when a staff member is alone without direct supervision, including during:

- Opening/closing the site
- Working in barns, fields or classrooms alone
- Off-site visits with a single young person (pre-approved only)

3. Risks

- Injury or accident without immediate help
- Behavioural incidents with students
- Environmental or animal-related risks
- Personal safety concerns

4. Procedures

- Staff must inform a manager when arriving and leaving.
- A mobile phone must be carried at all times.
- Lone working with students is avoided where possible; if required, a risk assessment is completed.
- Staff do not enter closed barns or fields with animals alone unless authorised.
- Emergency contact numbers kept accessible.
- Staff report concerns immediately.

5. Training

All staff receive training in:

- Risk awareness
- Emergency response
- Behaviour management
- Safe animal handling

All policies approved by S K Kee on 17/09/25