

Purple Ruler Therapy Safeguarding Policy

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1. Introduction

Purple Ruler is committed to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding in the delivery of therapy services to children and young people. This safeguarding policy ensures that all children and young people under 18 who engage in therapy with Purple Ruler are supported in a safe, ethical, and nurturing environment. The policy adheres to the relevant UK legislation, including the **Children Act 2004**, **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024**, and the **British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework**. By adhering to this policy, we seek to protect children and young people from harm and ensure their overall well-being throughout their therapy journey. This policy must be read in addition to [Purple Ruler Safeguarding Policy 2024/2025](#).

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for safeguarding and to outline procedures for the protection of young people receiving therapy services. Specifically, it aims to:

- Protect children from abuse, neglect, or any form of harm while engaging in therapy services provided by Purple Ruler.
- Ensure that therapists are well-trained and equipped to handle safeguarding concerns appropriately, reporting them effectively when necessary.
- Promote individual-centred practice where the needs and safety of young people are placed at the forefront of all decision-making processes in therapy.
- Provide a robust framework for action in case of any safeguarding concerns, ensuring that all staff understand their responsibilities and act promptly.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in the therapy programme at Purple Ruler, including:

Therapists and counsellors delivering therapy services.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any support staff overseeing safeguarding.

Parents, guardians, and schools involved in referring young people for therapy.

Administrative staff handling therapy-related processes and documentation.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Therapists, Counsellors and Psychologists: Responsible for delivering therapy sessions that meet the highest professional standards. They are required to monitor the safety and welfare of the children throughout the therapy process, ensuring any safeguarding concerns are addressed immediately and appropriately. Therapists must document any concerns and escalate them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding at Purple Ruler. They ensure compliance with safeguarding protocols, liaise with external agencies, and oversee safeguarding training for staff. The DSL is also responsible for reviewing any safeguarding concerns raised by therapists and making decisions on appropriate interventions or referrals.

Supervisors: Supervisors play an essential role in providing emotional and professional support to therapists. They assist in identifying potential safeguarding issues during therapy sessions and ensure that therapists follow the correct procedures for reporting concerns. Supervisors must report any concerns about therapist practices to the DSL.

Management and Support Staff: Responsible for ensuring that therapists receive the necessary support and supervision to effectively safeguard children. Management oversees the implementation of this policy and provides ongoing training to staff to ensure awareness and compliance.

5. Safeguarding Principles

The safeguarding of children in therapy is underpinned by the following principles from 

[Purple Ruler Safeguarding Policy 2024/2025](#):

Young Person - Centered Approach: All decisions, interventions, and actions must prioritise the child's safety, well-being, and best interests. Therapy services should be tailored to meet the unique needs of each child, with their views being respected and incorporated into decision-making wherever possible.

Preventative Approach: Purple Ruler aims to prevent harm by creating a safe environment, providing early intervention, and conducting regular safeguarding training for staff. Identifying potential risks early enables us to take action before any harm occurs.

Respect for Confidentiality: Confidentiality is a fundamental element of therapy. However, confidentiality is not absolute, and there are circumstances where it may need to be broken to protect a child from harm. In such cases, information will be shared only with those who need to know, and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the child's continued safety. For more details, please read [☰ Purple Ruler Therapy Confidentiality Policy](#).

Collaboration with External Agencies: We recognise the importance of working with other professionals and agencies to ensure the young person's safety. In cases where safeguarding concerns arise, Purple Ruler will collaborate with schools, local authorities, social services, and other relevant external bodies to ensure appropriate protective actions are taken.

6. Safeguarding Concerns and Reporting

Purple Ruler has a clear and structured approach to identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns. Before each young person enters our registry for Therapy, Purple Ruler must obtain critical information in cases of emergency, this includes but are not limited to emergency contact details, school's DSL contact information the address of the location where the young person is accessing the service. Sensitive data will be managed in accordance to our Data Protection and Privacy Notice Policies.

Safeguarding Preparedness, Risk Assessment and Management

Initial Risk Assessment: An initial risk assessment will be conducted in the consultation session with the young person. Therapists and counsellors must follow the protocols outlined in [☰ Purple Ruler Therapy Client Assessment Policy and Procedure](#).

Episodic Risk Assessment:

- Therapist should also gauge an understanding of the environment of which the young person is situated for the session. Therapist should also ensure there's emergency contact details or DSL contact details in the young person's file.

- At the beginning of the session, if the young person is accessing the session from home, the Therapist should ask to check in with the parent or guardian. If the young person is accessing the session from school, the therapist should ask to check in with the member of staff who is supervising.
- Therapists should also conduct a risk assessment at the start of each therapy session. This process includes identifying any potential risks that may affect the child's mental health or safety, based on the child's history, family background, and current well-being.

Ongoing Risk Monitoring: Throughout the therapy process, therapists should continually monitor the young person's progress and emotional state. If new risks emerge, therapists must adapt their approach and ensure any safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL immediately after the session concludes.

Immediate Risk to the Child:

1. If a therapist identifies that a child is at immediate risk of harm, they must report the concern to the DSL immediately. Remain calm and provide guidance to ensure the harm does not escalate.
2. The DSL will take swift action, including the young persons' emergency contact or school safeguarding team, or children's social services if necessary. If the concern involves imminent risk to the child's safety, emergency services (police or ambulance) will be contacted directly.
3. Therapist must provide a full report after the incident.

7. Response to Safeguarding Concerns

When a safeguarding concern is identified, Purple Ruler follows a comprehensive process to ensure that all concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately:

- The DSL assesses the level of concern and urgency. If the concern is urgent and immediate, the DSL will contact the relevant authorities, such as children's social services or emergency services.
- If the concern is non-urgent but serious, the DSL will liaise with the appropriate school or external agency to ensure the child's safety is protected and that a proper course of action is followed.
- A report will be made in a safeguarding case management system to ensure thorough documentation of the issue and actions taken. These reports will remain confidential, with access limited to the relevant parties involved.

- **Referral to External Agencies:** If the safeguarding concern requires intervention from an external agency, the DSL will make appropriate referrals to children's social services, the local authority, or the police. The child's school or guardian will be informed unless doing so would place the child at further risk.
- **Follow-Up and Monitoring:** Once the concern has been reported and action is taken, the situation will be closely monitored. This includes:
 - Follow-up therapy sessions to check the child's well-being.
 - Ongoing communication with external agencies or schools to ensure the child receives adequate protection and support.

8. Breaches of Safeguarding Policy

- Any breach of safeguarding procedures must be reported immediately to the DSL. This could include failure to report a concern, inappropriate conduct by a staff member, or failure to adhere to confidentiality requirements when child safety is at risk.
- Upon identification of a breach, the DSL will investigate the matter and take corrective action. Depending on the severity of the breach, this could include retraining, disciplinary measures, or changes to internal processes to ensure future compliance with safeguarding policies.
- Where necessary, incidents will be reported to the school's DSL to be investigated.
- Any breaches of the safeguarding policy will be documented, reviewed and improved to ensure that the policy is effectively protecting the young people who are receiving our services.

9. Policy Monitoring and Review

1. **Annual Review:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will review this policy annually to ensure its effectiveness. This review will include feedback from therapists, schools, parents, and external agencies. Any changes in legislation or best practice guidelines will be incorporated.
2. **Ongoing Evaluation:** Purple Ruler will continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its safeguarding practices. This includes regular audits of safeguarding cases, reviewing the outcomes of referrals, and ensuring that all therapists and staff receive up-to-date training.
3. This policy must also be reviewed and updated along with the review procedures of the main Safeguarding Policy.