

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY (2024)

About Maitri Studio

Maitri Studio Ltd is a small limited company with only Directors Claire Ferry & Geoffrey Moore and freelance administrative help. However, Maitri Studio is used by many freelance teachers and therapists (henceforth "freelancers") who rent rooms. While not employed by Maitri Studio, these freelancers undertake work on Maitri Studio premises and therefore we feel that Maitri Studio Ltd has a responsibility to ensure that all freelancers commit to child safeguarding, so that our premises will be a safe space for all.

About this policy

We have based this policy on a template drafted by NSPCC and made publicly available (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/writing-a-safeguarding-policy/>). In addition, we refer to the child safeguarding policy of the Yoga Fellowship of Northern Ireland (YFNI), to which we subscribe (<https://www.yfni.co.uk/yfni-safeguarding>).

Policy headline

This policy applies to all staff including directors, and freelancers renting space at Maitri Studio, or anyone working on behalf of Maitri Studio Ltd. The purposes of this policy is:

- to protect children and young people who receive services at Maitri Studio, or from freelancers working elsewhere on behalf of Maitri Studio Ltd; and
- to provide all staff and freelancers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

We at Maitri Studio believe that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

Legal framework

This policy is based on a publicly available template by the NSPCC drawn up on the basis of relevant law and guidance. In addition, full policy definitions are laid out in the YFNI policy, including the definition of a child, abuse, and bullying.

Our policy

This policy should be read alongside the procedures given in the appendices:

1. Code of behaviour, including photography policy

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- [1B consent form](#) for photos/videos
- 2. Reporting procedure when concerned about a child
- 3. Procedure for dealing with allegations against staff or freelancers
- 4. Useful numbers

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues; and
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- appointing Claire Ferry as the Designated Safeguarding Officer;
- adopting child protection and safeguarding practices as listed in the appendices, including how to make reports of concerns or allegations;
- using those procedures to manage any allegations against staff or freelancers appropriately;
- ensuring that all staff and freelancers and anyone working on behalf of Maitri Studio is aware of these policies and procedures;
- recording and storing information professionally and securely in line with our data protection policy; and
- creating and maintaining a safe environment for all including children, young people, staff and freelancers in accordance with our health & safety policy.

Key roles & practice

Claire Ferry is Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), but all Maitri Studio freelancers also have a responsibility to act on concerns of possible abuse and should inform relevant authorities and/or the DSO.

All freelancers teaching children's classes must have an Access NI check (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/accessni-criminal-record-checks>), appropriate qualifications and insurance, and have done training in child safeguarding. They should have their own code of practice and reporting procedures, including consent forms.

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Maitri Studio Ltd may organise periodic training in child safeguarding for all freelancers to attend. All freelancers should be aware of their own need as self-employed persons to have safeguarding policies and to ask about safeguarding policies at other organisations where they work. Training is also available with other organisations including SportNI and VolunteerNow.

Some adult classes accept children under the age of 16 only if their parent or carer accompanies the young person.

Policy review

This document will be reviewed and updated annually, or upon any major changes in the workplace should we become a larger organisation, including if we become an employer.

Agreed, signed and dated



CLAIRE FERRY (director)
16 September 2024



GEOFFREY MOORE (director)
16 September 2024

Review date: 16 September 2025

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APPENDIX 1: CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

By adopting this code, we set out to protect children, young people and staff from being places in harmful situations.

All children and young people should be treated with respect. This includes:

- carefully considering language used towards them;
- inclusion in decision-making about them, appropriate to their age, maturity and understanding;
- offering them time to explain their actions or thoughts;
- listening actively to them; and
- ensuring their views are valued and not ridiculed.

Staff and freelancers are likely to befriend children and young people as part of their work, while remaining authority figures. Good practice behaviours will help form those relationships and not subject either the child or young person, or the staff or freelancer, to a situation that could be perceived to be a threat.

- Not spending time alone but meeting with an individual child or young person openly, for example with door left open and nearby parents/carers/staff informed.
- Not making unnecessary physical contact with children or young people. Sometimes contact is needed, for example for comfort or reassurance, or physical support in a sport activity. All contact should have the consent of the child or young person involved, appropriate to their age, maturity and understanding.
- Not taking children or young people in their private cars or houses without an accompanying parent or carer.
- Shouting only when needed to highlight danger for the child or young person's protection, not as a matter of course.
- Not meeting a child or young person outside the organised activities unless with accompanying parent or carer.
- Never engaging in sexually provocative or rough physical games.
- Challenging use of inappropriate language from the child or young person.
- Never making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in fun.
- Not doing things of a personal nature for a child or young person that they can do for themselves. Any requirement to do such things (e.g. help use a toilet or change clothes) must be done with

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full understanding and consent of the child or young person and their parent/carer.

- Take any allegation against themselves very seriously, even if made in jest by a child or young person. This form of joke needs to be addressed and should be reported to the DSO.
- Be conscious of gender issues at all times. It is often impossible to have male and female staff/freelancers present if a class is being run by an individual teacher, but take gender issues into account.
- Be aware of regulations regarding the number of children to adults at events. In reality at Maitri Studio classes and events with children always have parents or carers in attendance too.

It is recognised that Maitri Studio staff, teachers and therapists may wish to have a visual record of activities. When taking photographs, we should all apply principles of dignity and respect. When children are involved:

- parental consent is required if the photos/video recordings are to be used publicly or for publicity.
- the child's permission should be maintained.
- avoid using children's names in captions.
- photos and videos to be stored securely in line with data management policy
- photos and videos should never be taken of children or young people in what could be perceived as compromising situations.
- professional photographers or press will be expected to do the same, provided with a copy of the policy and with no unsupervised access to children.

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APPENDIX 1B: PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO CONSENT FORM

(to be edited and printed on headed paper)

CONSENT FORM for the use of photographs and video (for parents/carers and children/young people)

*** Insert organisation/self-employed teacher here*** recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all children. In accordance with our child safeguarding policy, we will not permit photographs, video or other images of children and young people to be taken without the consent of parents/carers and children.

We/I will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they were intended from. If you become aware of these images being used inappropriately you should immediately inform us/me.

Parent/carer consent

I _____ (Parent/Carer)

Consent to **** organisation/self-employed teacher**** photographing or videoing

(Name of child/young person)

Signed _____ Date _____

Child/Young person's consent

I _____

consent to **** organisation/self-employed teacher**** photographing or videoing me while I am using their services.

Signed _____ Date _____



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APPENDIX 2: RESPONDING TO A CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Maitri Studio Ltd recognises it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect. If you have a reason to believe that abuse is or may be taking place, you have a responsibility to act swiftly on this information. Doing nothing is not an option.

If a child discloses abuse to you directly, you should follow this course of action:

- assure them you are taking the concerns seriously;
- do not be judgemental or jump to conclusions;
- listen carefully to what they are telling you, stay calm, get as clear a picture as you can, use open ended questions;
- do not start investigating or ask detailed or probing questions;
- explain that you have a duty to tell the Designated Safeguarding Officer; and
- reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality – the child needs to know you may share this information to help them.

Your responsibilities are:

1. To take action if the child is at current risk to keep the child safe if possible. If an urgent police presence is required to keep someone safe, call 999 and ask for police.
2. Do they need urgent medical assistance? If they do call 999 and ask for an ambulance.
3. If a crime has occurred, be aware of the need to preserve evidence.
4. Always inform the DSO. You cannot keep this information secret, even if the child asks you to. But reassure the child that only those who need to know to help will be informed.
5. Clearly record what you have witnessed or been told, recording your responses and any actions taken.
6. If contacting the DSO would cause a delay and further risk, raise a safeguarding concern yourself or phone 999 immediately.
7. Raising a safeguarding concern is to report to the local Health and Social Care Trust: Belfast is on 028 9050 7000.

For allegations of previous abuse from a now adult complainant, advise the complainant to inform the PSNI. If they refuse, but you have enough identifying details, you must share the information with the PSNI. For full details, we refer you to the YFNI policy on the same (page 8

<https://simplicitesolutions.com/yfni/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/YFNI-Safeguarding-Children-Policy-and-Procedure-for-publication-Feb-2018.pdf>).



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A more detailed approach is available in the NSPCC procedure for children at possible risk of abuse available from <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse>.

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APPENDIX 3: RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION AGAINST STAFF OR FREELANCERS

Maitri Studio Ltd will ensure that any allegations against staff or freelancers (or indeed other adults attending classes) at Maitri Studio will be dealt with swiftly. Where staff or freelancers are thought to have committed a criminal offence the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately. The DSO will ensure that appropriate disciplinary procedures are co-ordinated: in the case of a suspected criminal offence, freelancers may no longer be able to rent rooms and teach at Maitri Studio.

In the event of such allegations, Maitri Studio would call the Health & Social Care Trust Gateway for advice unless a crime had obviously been committed in which case we would contact the PSNI. The HSCT may also involve the police.

If the allegation or concern raised related to the DSO, you should make the safeguarding referral directly.

More detailed advice is provided by the NSPCC
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse>.

APPENDIX 4: USEFUL CONTACTS

Maitri Studio Designated Safeguarding Office: Claire Ferry 07743 841415

Health & Social Care Trusts – ask for the Gateway team:
Belfast Trust 028 9050 7000

Regional Emergency Social Work Service including cover over bank holidays 028 9504 9999

AccessNI www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni 0300 200 7888

Childline UK <https://www.childline.org.uk/> 0800 1111

Domestic Violence <https://www.womensaidni.org/>

NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000