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Professional Practice Standards for Therapeutic Support Workers

(Including Therapeutic Support Assistants)

These Professional Practice Standards define the expectations for Therapeutic Support Workers (TSWs) working at Orchard Therapeutic Farm (OTF). They are used to inform performance management, supervision, appraisal, professional development and capability procedures.

The standards apply to all Therapeutic Support Workers and should be read alongside:

- the Therapeutic Support Worker Job Description
- the Performance Management Policy
- the Code of Conduct
- the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

These standards describe how the role is carried out, not only the tasks involved, and reflect OTF's therapeutic, relational and inclusive model, including THRIVE-informed and attachment-aware practice.

Standard 1: Professional Conduct, Boundaries and Safeguarding

Therapeutic Support Workers are expected to:

- Consistently demonstrate calm, kind and respectful behaviour in all interactions with children, colleagues and families.
 - Model emotional regulation, empathy and integrity, particularly when supporting children who are distressed, anxious or dysregulated.
 - Maintain clear professional and therapeutic boundaries at all times.
 - Safeguard the emotional and physical wellbeing of children and young people, remaining alert to signs of distress, risk or harm.
 - Follow safeguarding procedures accurately, including recording, reporting and escalating concerns promptly.
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Standard 2: Therapeutic and Values-Led Practice

Therapeutic Support Workers are expected to deliver support within a therapeutic framework by:

- Applying therapeutic principles, including THRIVE-informed, trauma-aware and attachment-aware approaches, to support emotional regulation and wellbeing.
- Adapting responses and interactions to meet individual emotional, sensory and developmental needs.
- Valuing the therapeutic role of outdoor learning, animal care, routine, structure and hands-on activity in supporting regulation and growth.
- Supporting children to feel safe, respected and valued through consistent, nurturing practice.
- Upholding OTF values of safety, dignity, empowerment and reflective practice in day-to-day work.

Therapeutic practice is assessed through observable behaviour and impact, not personal beliefs or personality.

Standard 3: Relational Practice and the Child's Voice

Therapeutic Support Workers are expected to:

- Build trusting, consistent and attuned relationships with children and young people.
- Be intuitive to children's emotional and physical needs, responding sensitively and appropriately.
- Treat behaviour as communication and respond using supportive, de-escalating strategies.
- Encourage children to express their views verbally and non-verbally.
- Support confidence, self-esteem and emotional growth through positive relational interactions.

Standard 4: Support for Learning, Engagement and Daily Activities

Therapeutic Support Workers are expected to:

- Support children to engage in learning, vocational and therapeutic activities alongside teachers and mentors.
 - Use flexible and creative strategies to encourage participation at a pace appropriate to each child.
 - Promote positive risk-taking, independence and responsibility where appropriate.
 - Support transitions, routines and daily activities in a calm and predictable manner.
 - Escort and supervise children safely during activities, transport and off-site visits in line with risk assessments.
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Standard 5: Observation, Recording and Accountability

Therapeutic Support Workers are expected to:

- Accurately record daily information, incidents and observations using agreed systems (e.g. Learntrek)
 - Contribute to trackers, reports and reviews where required.
 - Produce clear, factual and timely records that support safeguarding, care planning and continuity.
 - Share relevant information appropriately with colleagues to support consistent care.
 - Maintain confidentiality and data protection standards at all times.
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Standard 6: Collaboration, Communication and Teamwork

Therapeutic Support Workers are expected to:

- Work collaboratively as part of a multidisciplinary team, supporting a joined-up approach to care and education.

- Communicate professionally and respectfully with colleagues, families, carers and external professionals.
 - Participate in team meetings, briefings, handovers and debriefs.
 - Support colleagues during challenging situations and contribute to a positive team culture.
 - Engage positively in the wider life of the farm to ensure consistency and emotional safety for children.
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Standard 7: Reflective Practice, Supervision and Professional Development

Therapeutic Support Workers are expected to:

- Engage openly and constructively in supervision and performance reviews.
 - Reflect on their practice and respond positively to feedback.
 - Participate in required training and CPD, including therapeutic, safeguarding and behaviour support training.
 - Demonstrate willingness to develop skills, confidence and professional judgement over time.
 - Take responsibility for maintaining professional standards and wellbeing.
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Use of These Standards

These standards are used to:

- set performance expectations
- inform 6-weekly reviews, supervision and appraisal
- identify support and development needs
- guide capability or disciplinary procedures where required

Meeting these standards is an ongoing professional requirement for all Therapeutic Support Workers at Orchard Therapeutic Farm.