




GP Strategies Training Limited

Policies and Procedures  
**Safeguarding Code of Conduct Policy**

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Prepared by:	Sharron Symon
Authorised by:	Dave Martin

Signed by:   
Shay Moran, Senior Vice President

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## Safeguarding Code of Conduct Policy

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### 1. Aim

1.1 GPSTL fosters a culture of the highest professional standards. All employees, visitors, employers, suppliers and sub-contractors have a duty to keep learners and apprentices safe and to protect them from all forms of abuse and inappropriate behaviours. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between employees and learner and/or apprentices and in addition by encouraging appropriate behaviour by employees that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgment.

### 2. Statement and intent

2.2 This policy applies to:

- Employees (individuals who work – or have applied to work for the company either on a permanent, temporary, contractual or voluntary basis).
- Employers (organisations that work in partnership with GPSTL to provide apprenticeships or work placements to learner/apprentices).
- Suppliers (external partners/sub-contractors who are in receipt of and/or providing work-based and/or classroom based GPSTL services on our behalf).

2.3 The word 'employees' is used in this policy to denote all those above.

2.4 This code of conduct sets out the standards expected and the duty upon all employees, to abide by it.

Adhering to this code of conduct will help to safeguard employees from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of professional misconduct in relation to learner/apprentice or clients.

2.5 Employees must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise their duty to do so particularly in terms of safeguarding the interests of our learners. Where an allegation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour is made against an employee, the appropriate senior manager must be contacted immediately who will then contact one of the Company's designated safeguarding leads for guidance and action. The appropriate procedure will be followed to manage allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children, young people, and/or adults at risk in their present position, or in any capacity under GPSTL's Company Disciplinary Policy.

2.6 This approach will be used where it is alleged that an employee:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, young person or adult at risk, or may have placed a child, young person or adult at risk of harm; and
- Behaved towards a child, young person or adult at risk in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children or adults at risk.

2.7 The code of conduct cannot provide a complete checklist of what is or is not, appropriate behaviour for employees. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate, or inadvisable in relation to learners or clients. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police, the local authority children's social care department and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service.

2.8 Employees are expected to make responsible and informed judgments about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the learners or clients in their care. Any breach of this code of conduct will result in appropriate action being taken under the Company Disciplinary policy and procedure. This may also include a referral to external authorities.

### 3. General principles

3.1 All employees as appropriate to the role and/or job description of the individual must:

- Place the wellbeing and learning of learners at the centre of their professional practice;
- Maintain and promote good practice, and high work ethics with all learners;
- Be committed to addressing underachievement and work to help learners progress regardless of their

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- background and personal circumstances;
- Treat all learners fairly with dignity and respect; take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and value diversity and individuality;
  - Role model the characteristics you are trying to inspire in learners, including enthusiasm for learning, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people;
  - Respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of learners;
  - Reflect on your own practice. Undertake training, develop your skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with and from other employees;
  - Champion everyone's right to be involved in learning by not discriminating against anyone, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation or ability;
  - Follow GPSTL's Safeguarding, Prevent and e-Safety Policies and Procedures at all times and report any low level concerns or allegations of abuse or poor practice to a member of Safeguarding Team immediately;
  - Communicate with others in an open, respectful and sensitive way whether in person, by phone, writing or digital media;
  - Ensure any contact with children and young people and adults at risk is appropriate and in relation to the work of the projects;
  - Always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory;
  - Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicious of abuse;
  - Respect other's right to personal privacy in line with our policies and procedures; and
  - Encourage children, young people and adults at risk to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.

### 4. Confidentiality

- 4.1 Employees have access to confidential information about learners in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be highly sensitive. Confidential or personal information about a learner/apprentice or their family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the learner identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the learner.
- 4.2 There are some circumstances in which employees may be expected to share information about a learner for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, employees have a duty to pass information on without delay as appropriate and in line with GPSTL's Safeguarding & Prevent Policy.
- 4.3 Confidential information about learners must be held securely. Confidential information about learners must not be held off the Company's sites other than on security protected systems and equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required as detailed in GPSTL's Safeguarding & Prevent Policy.
- 4.4 Where a personal mobile phone is used as part of the company's mobile phone stipend agreement, the employee agrees to use the Teams and e-Track secure applications to store information and make phone calls.
- 4.5 If an employee is in any doubt about the storage of sharing of information, they should seek guidance from a designated safeguarding lead.

### 5. Sexual contact with children, young people, adults at risk and abuse of trust

- 5.1 Any sexual behaviour by an employee with or towards a learner is not permitted under any circumstances and will be regarded as a serious breach of this code of conduct. Children and young people are additionally

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protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. Particular attention should be drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which considers individuals aged 18 or over to be in a position of trust in relation to a younger person (under 18) if they care for, train or advise that young person.

Therefore where a person aged 18 or over is in a 'position of trust' with a person under 18 and engages in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or young person or causes or incites that child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity this is regarded as a criminal offence. All employees who have contact with learner are regarded as being in positions of trust. Consequently, it is essential that employees recognise the responsibility they must exercise in ensuring that they do not abuse their position of trust, and do not seek out opportunities to be alone with a learner or client.

- 5.2 Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or vulnerable adult to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, young person or vulnerable adult and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Employees should be aware that giving special attention and favour upon a learner might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.
- 5.3 A relationship between an employee and a learner cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of learner and all employees have a responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. It is important to recognise that women as well as men may abuse a position of trust.

### **6. Infatuations and crushes**

- 6.1 Employees must recognise that a learner may be strongly attracted to them and/or develop an infatuation. An employee who becomes aware that a learner and client may be infatuated with them or a colleague, should report this without delay to their line manager, who in consultation with the designated safeguarding lead will decide the appropriate action to be taken. The situation will be taken seriously and the employee should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the learner. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations.

### **7. Examples of situations which must be reported are given below:**

- Where an employee is concerned that they might be developing a relationship with a learner which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust.
- Where an employee is concerned that a learner is becoming attracted to them or that there is a developing attachment or dependency.
- Where an employee is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another employee and a learner, or receives information about such a relationship.

- 7.1 Employees may be suspended whilst an investigation takes place in line with GPSTL's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

### **8. Gifts**

- 8.1 Employees need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Small gifts that are genuinely given by learners as a token of appreciation or gratitude will be acceptable, provided that it is properly declared to their Line Manager in line with the GPSTL's Bribery Policy, and provided that the employee does not subsequently treat the learner who sent the gift more favourably than other learners or clients.

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8.2 Personal gifts must not be given to a learner **under any circumstances**. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the learner/apprentice. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

### 9. Social contact

- 9.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact with learners for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a learner/apprentice seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the employee should exercise their professional judgment in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
- 9.2 Employees must not allow learners or clients to appear on their personal social networking sites and vice versa or alternatively give their personal contact details, such as home or mobile phone numbers or home email address to learners or clients.
- 9.3 Employees using mobile phones under the company's stipend agreement, must use their direct telephone numbers through the secure Teams application.

### 10. Physical contact and personal privacy

- 10.1 There are occasions where it may be appropriate for employees to have physical contact with learners/apprentices, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.
- 10.2 When physical contact is made with learners this should be in response to the learner's needs at that moment in time. It should be of limited duration and appropriate given their age, gender, physical needs, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one learner in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different learner.
- 10.3 Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the employee, or represent a misuse of authority. If an employee believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to their line manager without delay.
- 10.4 There may be occasions when a distressed learner needs comfort and reassurance. Employees should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Where an employee has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice from their line manager.

### 11. Behaviour management and physical intervention

- 11.1 All learners have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Employees must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a learner. The use of sarcastic, demeaning, suggestive or insensitive comments towards learner is not acceptable under any circumstances nor is shouting aggressively or berating a learner. Deliberately intimidating learners/apprentices by overwhelming physical presence is not acceptable in any situation.
- 11.2 Employees may legitimately intervene to prevent a learner from the following:
- Committing a criminal offence;
  - Injuring themselves or others;
  - Causing damage to property; and
  - Engaging in intimidating behaviour.
- 11.3 However, in all situations, employees should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form or punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

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### **12. One to one situation and meetings with learner/apprentices**

- 12.1 Employees working in one to one situations with learners are more vulnerable to allegations. They must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both employees and learners/apprentices are met.
- 12.2 Managers should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work for each employee and learner. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the company premises and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. Unless pre-arranged at employers or placement provider's premises; meetings with learners/apprentices away from the company's premises, or at the company's premises outside the company hours are not normally permitted unless prior approval is obtained from their line manager.

### **13. Laptops, Photography, videos and other creative arts**

- 13.1 The Company's activities may involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra company activities, for publicity or to celebrate achievement. The General Data Protection Regulation affects the use of photography, specifically where the image of a child is involved which is considered personal data.
- 13.2 Employees need to be aware of the potential of such images to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for 'grooming' purposes, and therefore must seek prior approval before this activity takes place to ensure that the activity remains within lawful guidelines. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are taking place. Learners/apprentices who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc.
- 13.3 Employees must therefore remain sensitive to any learner who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the learner/apprentices remembering that some may not wish to have their photographs taken.
- 13.4 Use of laptops and mobile phones are only permitted for training purposes where it is safe to do so, where it does not pose a safeguarding risk to children, young people and adults and where it is not in breach of regulatory authority guidance.
- 13.5 Use of laptops and mobile phones is not permitted where child or adult service users are in the same room

### **14. When using a photograph the following guidance must be followed:**

- Images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so;
- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded;
- Ensure that the appropriate manager is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose;
- Ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability;
- Be able to justify the images made; and
- Do not take, display or distribute images of learners/apprentices unless there is consent to do so.

### **15. Sharing concerns and recording incidents**

- 15.1 All employees must be aware of the Company's Safeguarding Policy and procedures. Individuals must be vigilant and share concerns regarding employees and report incidents without delay. Concerns should be initially and where possible in the first instance be made to the designated safeguarding lead, these concerns will then be investigated and an outcome determined using GPSTL's Disciplinary Policy.

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### **16. Monitoring and review**

16.1 This policy will be monitored annually GPSTL to review its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law and GPSTL contract provisions. In particular, GPSTL will monitor the number of concerns; complaints and actions taken under this policy and will review this policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, GPSTL will implement them.

### **Referenced procedures and documentation**

GP-UK-P-08 Disciplinary Procedure

GPSTL-100-OP-18 Safeguarding & Prevent Policy

GPSTL-100-OP-18 Safeguarding & Prevent Policy Annex 7

GP-UK-C-06 Anti Bribery Policy

GPSTL-100-OP-26 e-Safety Policy