CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Purpose/Commitment

This policy sets out Skills to Group's commitment and approach to safeguarding and promoting/protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults at all levels of the organisation. It provides the defining framework for the organisations strategic, operational and tactical safeguarding position. Informing and guiding business direction and expectations.

As such the policy is positioned at the vanguard of business culture, development and planning. Skills to Group is committed to promoting and advancing equality of opportunity for all. We strive to maintain an inclusive, transparent and open culture for all stakeholders. We believe it is everyone's commitment/responsibility to implement and promote this policy throughout the organisation and expect all staff and Apprentices/Learners stakeholders to sign and agree share this commitment.

Policy Scope/Promotion

This policy applies to all aspects of Skills to Group work, onsite, remotely and across the online environment. As such the policy applies to everyone working for Skills to Group and all Apprentices/Learners. This includes permanent and temporary employees, contractors, volunteers, self-employed and visitors.

Our policy is set out to show our commitment to promote and implement when training Apprentices/Learners. It is an important part of the Mission, Vison, Values and Strategic Plan of Skills to Group, our policy is available to all stakeholders and is published on our website. We ensure that Safeguarding/Prevent are contained in all our policies, we do this by thinking about Safeguarding/Prevent when we write any new policy or procedure. All staff and Apprentices/Learners receive training and updates in Safeguarding and Prevent throughout their time with Skills to Group.

Strategic Context

Skills to Group Vision, Mission and Values provide a strong, positive and ambitious strategic environment for the promotion and success of the Safeguarding Policy. Skills to Group's Strategic Plan is the framework for business success and sets direction through a

number of strategic priorities which are themselves underpinned by a set of essential principles which include.

- Self-Reflection and Review
- Prevent Risk, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity
- British Values
- Transparency

The core positioning of safeguarding at the vanguard of business planning and leadership is reflected in a bespoke Safeguarding Strategy which is owned and driven at board level. The strategy contains 3 priorities and is accompanied by an action plan. The priorities are;

- *Culture - The business will foster and embed a culture of safeguarding which is built upon the organisational values and promoted through positive behaviours.*

- *People - The business will ensure that it invests energy, time and resource to ensure its people have the capacity, capability and support to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities and aligned behaviours. This will be promoted through positive business activities.*

- *Processes - The business will design, implement and deliver effective structure, process and governance to compliment the cultural and people elements of safeguarding. Business processes will be underpinned by the legal, ethical and effective collection, storage and sharing of relevant information to enable the most effective decision making leading to the best outcomes.*

This means that everything we do should safeguard our Apprentices/Learners and staff and promote their welfare. This includes ensuring that the third party providers, partners and other stakeholders we work with also have a positive safeguarding culture, trained staff and effective processes for keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Legal Framework and Definitions

Skills to Group draws relevant definitions from the governing legislation and Statutory Guidance. The following legislation and guidance provides the governing framework (not exhaustive)

- Children Act 1989
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Every Child Matters 2003 (Green Paper)
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022
- Humans Right Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018

Skills to Group Safeguarding Policy and arrangements will aim to meet the two key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective, each individual and

organisation should play their full part; and
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective, they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of Apprentices/Learners.

Safeguarding children is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to ensure all children have the best outcomes

A child is defined by law as a person under the age of 18 years old.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the *Care and Support Statutory Guidance* issued under the *Care Act 2014* as:
- Protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- People and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking into full account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
- Recognising that adults sometimes having complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing

Policy Statement

Skills to Group and all its staff and volunteers will at all times act in a proactive and co-ordinated fashion tosafeguard and protect Apprentices/Learners, staff and visitors.

Statutory and professional obligations will be discharged in a fashion which places the individual's safety and welfare at the centre of the organisations culture, actions and response. In implementing this policy Skills to Group operates on the following principals:
1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that for services to be effective each individual and organisation must play their full part
2. The approach taken to all child safeguarding will be child centred with decisions and actions being based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children

Recruitment

Skills to Group carries out recruitment checks on everyone that works for us. All roles require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and references before the individual joins us, some roles may require an enhanced DBS check. Anyone interviewed for a position with Skills to Group, will have social profiling checks and will need to show an understanding of safeguarding that is relevant to the role that they are applying for, including but not limited to Volunteers and Invigilators.

Staff Training

All staff and Volunteers at Skills to Group receive, and must successfully complete, appropriate safeguarding and child protection and prevent training and are trained in implementing the policy. In addition all staff will receive regular and meaningful safeguarding, child protection and

prevent updates (for example, via e-mail, staff bulletins, meetings and training sessions). This is undertaken andchecked to ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children and adults safely.

All training provision is recorded, reviewed and updated to ensure currency and effectiveness and all staff have their training record held centrally and reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on a quarterly basis.

Expectations of Staff / Volunteers – Prevention/Protection

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children and adults experience and learn. In addition all staff share a responsibility to identify risk, vulnerability, harm and abuse and to act to protect and safeguard the child or vulnerable adult in accordancewith Skills to Group values and working practices.

All staff and volunteers are required to undertake mandatory safeguarding and prevent training and to ensurethey are up to date with their training, updates and knowledge in these areas. Staff are also expected to be familiar with the systems and working practices employed by Skills to Group tosafeguard children and adults.

Staff and volunteers are specifically expected to be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that theyare able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help of protection. If unsure staffare expected to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All staff and volunteers working with children are expected to have and maintain the attitude that 'it can happen here'

Staff are expected to be aware of and capable of undertaking their role in dealing with cases where;

- Children may benefit from early help
- Children are assessed as 'A Child in Need' under the Children Act 1989
- Children are assessed as 'suffering or likely to suffer significant harm' under the Children Act 1989

Skills to Group will ensure that there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) contactable and accessible at all times to support staff in undertaking their safeguarding roles and to lead on statutory safeguarding responsibilities under governing legislation and guidance.

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) (and any deputies) will take lead responsibility for child protection and safeguarding in relation to examinations and assessments. The DSL will offer advice, support and expertise in all matters relating to child protection and safeguarding in relation to examinations and assessments etc.

Monitoring IT Usage

Appropriate level of security protection procedures is in place to safeguard Skills to Group systems, staff and learners and an annual review takes place. Staff are expected to be aware and capable of undertaking monitoring of IT usage by: -

- Establish effective online filters to block inappropriate websites.

- Use tools to monitor and report on the search terms students are searching for, and their internet usage behaviour.
- Consider the fair use of personal devices.
- Respond to concerns and alerts and are up to date with policy and practice.
- Teach Apprentices/Learners how to stay safe online with their online privacy and the content they access.

Responding to and acting on safeguarding concerns/support and guidance Skills to Group has robust procedures to allow raising, recording and investigating concerns. All staff whether paid or voluntary along with any contractors, consultants or other persons working on Skills to Group premises or on behalf of Skills to Group, where they come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults or their parents or carers should;

- Be alert to the potential indicators of abuse, neglect, Sexual violence/Harassment and Child Sexual Exploitation.

- Be alert to the risks which individual abusers or potential abusers, may pose to children or vulnerable adults

- Be alert to the impact on the child or vulnerable adult of any concerns of abuse or maltreatment

- Be able to gather and analyse information as part of an assessment of the child's or vulnerable adult's needs

- Be alert to and respond to allegations of Child on Child abuse, including being to alert to online abuse and Workplace settings.

If staff have any concerns about a child's or vulnerable adult's welfare they should act on them immediately. This means that staff will need to follow the Skills to Group Safeguarding and Child Protection working practices and central to this is following the flow chart contained in those working practices. This will always involve speaking to the Skills to Group Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is trained to deal with any issues raised by apprentices, apprentices (learners), staff and employers etc. To ensure support, assessment and record keeping is engaged.

Options for action include;
- Supporting and guiding the child or vulnerable adult internally through Skills to Group's own welfare or pastoral support provision
- Taking immediate practical action, alone or in conjunction with others to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult and protect them from harm, threat or assessed risk
- An early help assessment
- A referral to statutory services

Review, Learning and Improving

Skills to Group is determined to keep improving our knowledge and understanding of how to best safeguard children and vulnerable adults. We will review our own policy, practices and actions regularly to check we are acting in a legal, effective and proportionate fashion.

We will carry out regular reviews of all safeguarding cases dealt with by Skills to Group to assess outcomes for the child or vulnerable adult against specific plans. In addition Skills to Group will ensure that we proactively work with other agencies to review the cases which we

are managing in partnership or can contribute to.

All cases will be subject to a vigorous review for lessons learned whilst still active and at the point of closure. This will be undertaken by a team of tactical, strategic and board level leaders to ensure Skills to Group is taking the correct actions at the correct time. The voice of the child, vulnerable adult, parents and carers will also be sought (If appropriate) to ensure all learning is realised. Ensuring we place the child and vulnerable adult at the centre of all we do.

Skills to Group will also ensure that it employs a robust, effective and comprehensive system for gathering, analysing and assessing information relevant to specific safeguarding cases or concerns and to non-case specific trend data which can be used to inform planning, development and training needs.

Interdependencies

This policy does not sit in isolation and needs to be viewed as part of a wider set of interconnected and dependant policies and working practices which provide for a safe, professional and effective environment where Apprentices/Learners and staff welfare is promoted and their learning and developmental outcomes are prioritised.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy therefore has clear links and interdependencies with a broad range of Skills to Group policies and working practices, the strongest connectivity is with the policies and working practices below:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Working Practices
- Prevent Policy and Procedure
- Monitoring and Acceptable Use of IT Systems and Usage
- Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedure
- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and Related Documents
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy and Equality and Diversity Action Plan
- Promotion of Fundamental British Values Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Lone Working Policy and Procedure
- Contingency and Critical Incident Planning Continuity Plan
- Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Learners Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Legal Duties Towards the Prevent Duty

Skills to Group has a legal responsibility to fulfil the prevent duty statement including:

- Protect its staff, Apprentices/Learners, employers from radicalising influences.
- Ensure staff, Apprentices/Learners and employers are resilient from extreme narratives
- Identify changes in behaviours of staff, Apprentices/Learners and employers.
- Deal, in a timely fashion, with any issues raised by staff, Apprentices/Learners and employers.

Supporting Documents

The following links to source documents are useful;

- Children Act 1989
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/38/contents

- Every Child Matters 2003 (Green Paper)
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-matters

- Children Act 2004
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted

- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE 2018
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

- Care Act 2014
  https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted

- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance

- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice

- The Plymouth Assessment Framework for Safeguarding Young People and their Families including the inert-agency Thresholds Protocol for support and Intervention 2016
  https://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/building-support

Key Contacts and Signposting

- Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer (DLSO)
  Name: Annette Davey
  Phone: 01752 332442
  Email: safeguarding@skillsgroupuk.com or adavey@skillsgroupuk.com

- Health and Safety Officer
  Name: Stephen Jeffery
  Phone: 01752 332442
  Email: sjeffery@skillsgroupuk.com

- Plymouth Safeguarding
  Children's Board
  Phone:01752 668000
  Email: MASH@Plymouth.gov.uk

- Devon Safeguarding Board
  Multi-Agency Safeguarding
  Hub (MASH) Phone:
  0345 155 1071
  Email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

- Torbay Safeguarding
  Children Board
  Phone:01803208100 or
  01803207176
  Email: mash@torbay.gov.uk/tscp@torbay.gov.uk

- Cornwall Safeguarding
  Children Board Multi-Agency
  Referral Unit (MARU) Phone:
  0300 1231 116
  Email: multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

Other agencies available for advice/guidance:

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection
  Website: www.ceop.police.uk
- Channel Referral Process
  https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ReferralProcessMap.pdf
- NSPCC Helpline
  Phone: 0808 800 5000

Document Control

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if deemed necessary

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Authorised By

Signed



Mark Boulting
Managing Director