

# Safeguarding Policy

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## INTRODUCTION

Auto Assess regards the health, safety and welfare of all young people and vulnerable adults engaged in apprenticeships, courses, and other activities, as one of its highest priorities. The company recognises and fully accepts its moral and statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and its duty to protect staff from unfounded allegations of abuse.

This Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with our Policy for Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation, Health and Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Apprenticeship Handbook.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and directors, paid staff, consultancy staff, agency staff, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of Auto Assess.

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## PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING

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Auto Asses will take all reasonable measures to ensure that any risk of harm to learners' health is minimised and will take all possible action to address concerns about the welfare of any student in full partnership with other local agencies.

### **We will ensure:**

- A safe environment for all learners and staff
- Those suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm or abuse are identified and referred to the necessary agencies as appropriate
- All apprentices learn about safeguarding, our safeguarding procedures and how to keep themselves and others safe

### **We will do this by:**

- Appointing and training a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and ensuring all staff working with apprentices are trained in Safeguarding.
- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring all staff working in regulated activity read and understand 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Part 1) and Annexe B and the respective updates.
- Adopting a safe recruitment practice to ensure that all staff who are working with apprentices are safe to do so. This may involve carrying out enhanced DBS checks if the member of staff is working in regulated activity.
- Ensuring staff recognise the signs of abuse or that an individual may be at risk of significant harm.
- Promoting a safe learning environment in the workplace and in the classroom.
- Engaging with employers to ensure their commitment to safeguarding in the workplace.
- Working with other agencies as appropriate (e.g. Safeguarding Partners) where an individual is being, or at risk of being, significantly harmed.

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- Providing a framework for reporting and dealing with concerns and disclosures.
- Embedding safeguarding in the delivery of learning and in assessments.
- Establishing clear procedures for the reporting and handling of allegations of abuse against staff.
- Requiring staff to undertake mandatory safeguarding training upon employment with annual updates.
- Ensuring that board members are trained in safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to keep both apprentices and staff safe from harm.

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## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

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The legislative frameworks around our policy are:

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** reaffirms safeguarding as everyone's responsibility and the sharing of information between agencies.

**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023** requires all staff to read and understand their responsibilities if engaged in 'regulated' activities with young people.

**The Prevent Duty 2023** requires specified authorities, including education, in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

**Children's Act 2004**, which is fundamental to people working with children and young adults in the UK

**Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009** (as amended) introduces a wide range of measures covering apprenticeships, learning and skills and educational provision. It provides for a statutory framework for apprenticeships and creates a right to an apprenticeship for suitably qualified 16-18 year olds.

**Sexual Offences Act 2003** makes it is an offence for a person over 18 (e.g. a lecturer or other member of staff) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies where the child is in full- time education and the person work in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** sets out the type of activity in relation to children and adults at risk for which employers and individuals will be subject

**Protection of Freedoms Act 2012** which changed the definition of Regulated Activity including who is eligible for a barred list check.

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## DEFINITIONS

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**Safeguarding** – protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their physical and mental health or development and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

**Child Protection** – any activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm

**Child/Young Person** – anyone under the age of 18

**Vulnerable Adult** – for the purposes of this policy, an individual under the age of 25, with specific personal or situational needs, which increase their risk of suffering significant harm

**Significant Harm** – The Children’s Act introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of the children. Some children may be in need of help because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

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## TYPES OF ABUSE

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The following are recognised as types of abuse, although any act which harms a child, young person or vulnerable adult should also be considered:

**Physical Abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent an injury occurring

**Neglect** - the persistent or severe failure to meet a child’s, young person’s or vulnerable adult’s physical and/or psychological needs, which may result in serious impairment of their health or development

**Sexual Abuse** involves a child, young person or vulnerable adult being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity of any kind. Any apparent consent or awareness is irrelevant

**Emotional Abuse** – persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection; includes abusive or offensive electronic communications. This causes severe and adverse effects on behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-esteem. Some degree of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

**Financial Abuse** - in intimate or parental relationships is a way of controlling a person’s ability to acquire, use, and maintain their own money and financial resources

**Extremism and Radicalisation** – Extremism is defined as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance

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of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.” Radicalisation is defined as “the way in which a person comes to support terrorism and encourages other people to believe in views that support terrorism”

**Child Sexual Exploitation** - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

**Child Criminal Exploitation** - Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

**Peer-on-peer Abuse** - Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

**Sexual Harassment and Violence** - sexual harassment and violence and can occur between two learners of any age and sex and can occur in person or on-line. Auto-Assess understands its responsibility to take all reports and concerns seriously, challenge inappropriate behaviour and support both the victim and the perpetrator.

**Domestic Abuse** - Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

**Forced Marriage** – describes a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. Different from an arranged marriage, in which both parties’ consent

**Female Genital Mutilation** - all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons. FGM is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003

**Mental Health** - all staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

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**Online Abuse** – staff should recognise that many types of abuse take place online and should therefore ensure that apprentices understand the risks and how to spot the signs that they may be at risk of harm. Online safety will be embedded in the curriculum and discussed with apprentices at reviews. Particular emphasis will be placed on unprotected IT networks that they may have access to (e.g. work systems)

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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff involved in the delivery and support of apprenticeships have a role to play. All staff employed by Auto Assess will undergo safeguarding training at induction, advanced training (as appropriate) and will take part in the annual CPD programme where safeguarding updates/refreshers will be programmed.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is GILL SOMMERS**

**Email:** [safeguarding@auto-assessltd.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@auto-assessltd.co.uk) or [info@thesafeguardingconsultant.co.uk](mailto:info@thesafeguardingconsultant.co.uk)

**Tel:** 07879 844769

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is: PAUL EDENBROW**

**Email:** [pauledenbrow@auto-assessltd.co.uk](mailto:pauledenbrow@auto-assessltd.co.uk)

**Tel:** 07538 399391

**The DSL and DDSL have responsibility for:**

- Ensuring the organisation's policies reflect prevailing legal and contractual requirements
- Full compliance of the legislative duties
- Managing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant agencies
- Providing advice and support to staff who have made referrals to other agencies
- Keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- Referring concerns around Prevent to the DfE Prevent Co-Ordinator
- Maintaining a proper record of any child protection referral, complaint or allegation
- Attending case conferences and review meetings if required and as appropriate
- Communication of the policy and arrangements to all relevant parties including but not limited to children, young people and vulnerable adults, their parents and families, staff and apprentice employers
- Engaging with local authorities and other agencies as appropriate
- Escalating concerns, where they have not been followed up or managed correctly.
- Ensuring that staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and update this annually

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- Safety of all apprentices, including when a young person or vulnerable adult is absent or missing, without explanation
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff

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## SAFE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF (Also see separate policy)

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Auto Assess operates safer recruitment and employment practices. Staff checks and critical process undertaken include:

- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (required prior to working in 'regulated' activity with children, young people or vulnerable adults)
- Where a conviction is recorded, the DSL will carry out a risk assessment and decide whether to confirm or reject the individual's appointment. (Anyone that is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults will NOT be appointed)
- Employment/education reference will be sought which will include the most recent employment. One or more references will be sought depending on the applicant's employment history.
- Any unexplained gaps in employment will be explored at interview.
- Online checks will be made on all shortlisted applicants.
- Prohibition from teaching check, where relevant.
- Evidence of identity is obtained, including the right to work in the UK.
- Qualifications are checked and verified with original certificates.
- Areas of concern in the application will be addressed during the interview.
- Applicants will sign the application form to declare the information they have provided is true.

**This information will be held on Breathe HR and will be monitored by the DSL/DDSL for compliance with safe recruitment requirements.**

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## ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF (see also separate policy)

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Auto Assess expect all staff to behave in a professional and appropriate manner. The Staff Code of Conduct provides staff with clear guidelines on how to behave and how to avoid unfounded allegations. Breaches of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary proceedings.

The primary concern in the event of an allegation is to ensure the safety of the young person or vulnerable adult. In all cases, action will be taken quickly, confidentially and professionally, with all parties clear that suspension is not an indicator of guilt, but a required part of a process.

In the event that a member of staff suspects any other member of staff of abusing a student, it is their responsibility to report these concerns to the DSL (or Deputy), except when they are the person against whom the allegation is being made. In this instance the report should go to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Staff will be made aware of the company's Whistleblowing Policy' and encouraged to follow this procedure if they feel it is in their best interests to do so.

The company understands that 'low level concerns' are still a matter for investigation and action. Low level concerns are actions that do not meet the 'harms threshold' The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of Auto Assess may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating pupils.

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It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Managing Director and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

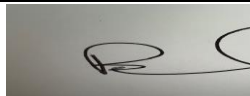
The DSL will contact the Local Authority and seek the advice of the Designated Officer in all situations where a member of staff has been accused of or is suspected of abuse. The DSL will also contact the DBS to advise them of any subsequent dismissals, regardless of prosecution.

**The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed each year, and updates will be brought to the attention of employees**

**Date of Last Review: September 2023**

**Next Review Date: September 2024**

## Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Managing Director	Brendon McMahon		Sept 2023

## SAFEGUARDING PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

### Procedure to follow if a learner makes a disclosure:

1. Remain calm and listen.
2. Do not judge.
3. Do not ask questions or interrogate, unless you need to clarify you have understood correctly what is being said.
4. Reassure the learner that they have done the right thing by telling you.
5. Do not promise to keep secrets. Tell the learner you need to report this and get advice from someone who can help.



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6. Make notes at the time or as soon as possible. Note main points carefully, including date, time, place, what learner said/showed you and any questions you may have asked.
7. Do not investigate concerns or allegations yourself but report them immediately to the DSL.
8. Find out what the learner or vulnerable adult would like to happen, but make them aware that you may have to act against their wishes (e.g. if they ask you not to disclose to anyone else)

## **Procedure to follow if you are concerned about a learner:**

1. Tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy as soon as you can.
2. Early referral gives more time to offer help, before the situation becomes severe or serious
3. When the matter is already severe or serious, early referral gives more time for others to help protect the victim
4. Make written notes at the earliest opportunity. Record facts accurately, legibly and sign/date notes as they may be required as evidence at a future date.
5. Give the notes to the designated person as soon as possible.

## **What happens next?**

The DSL and/or DDSL will make a decision on further action. They may decide simply to record the concern and monitor the situation or signpost the learner to further support. If the DSL/DDSL is concerned that the learner is at risk of harm, they may refer the matter to Children's Service or Adult Services. If the learner is at risk of immediate harm, then they will contact the police.

**Remember - it is better to do something and be wrong than do nothing and be right!!!**