

DIDAC SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Didac is dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment for all apprentices and staff involved in our delivery. Our safeguarding policy aims to protect apprentices from various risks, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, disguised compliance, and online safety risks. We recognise the importance of creating a culture of vigilance and fostering a supportive atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable reporting concerns. Additionally, we seek to promote an inclusive environment that respects the diversity of our apprentices and staff, ensuring equal opportunities and access to resources and support.

Purpose

This policy aims to establish clear guidelines and procedures for safeguarding apprentices and staff, ensuring compliance with Ofsted requirements and other legal and regulatory obligations. We aim to create a robust framework for effectively identifying, reporting, and addressing safeguarding concerns. This policy also demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding and our dedication to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including directors, managers, trainers, quality assurers, and apprentices. This also extends to any volunteers, consultants, or contractors working with Didac and any visitors or guests on our premises. By establishing a broad scope, we seek to ensure that safeguarding is a priority for all individuals involved in our organisation's activities.

Organisational Structure and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT, consisting of four directors, Gavin Lewis – Managing Director, Elaine Stanley – Operations Director & Mark Stevens – Health & Safety Director and are responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of this safeguarding policy
- Ensuring that safeguarding is a priority in strategic planning and decision-making
- Allocating appropriate resources for safeguarding training, support, and initiatives
- Regularly review and update the organisation's safeguarding risk assessments, identifying and mitigating potential risks

Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team, which is composed of one Safeguarding Lead, three Deputy Leads, and three Safeguarding Officers, the team is diverse, so it is better equipped to understand and respond to the unique needs and experiences of anyone reporting a safeguarding concern

The safeguarding team has the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that safeguarding concerns are promptly and appropriately addressed, following established procedures
- Providing guidance, advice, and support to staff and apprentices on safeguarding matters, including conducting regular meetings and training sessions
- Overseeing the organisation's safeguarding training programs, including regular updates and refreshers, and identifying any additional training needs
- Monitoring and reviewing the safeguarding policy regularly, ensuring that it remains compliant and effective, and engaging with staff and apprentices to gather feedback on its implementation
- Collaborating with external organisations and experts to stay informed about best practices, new developments, and resources related to safeguarding

All Staff Members

All staff members have a responsibility to:

- Familiarise themselves with the safeguarding policy and follow the guidelines and procedures outlined.
- Complete mandatory training on safeguarding and attend additional courses as required, as well as participate in ongoing learning and development activities related to safeguarding
- Report any concerns or incidents to the Safeguarding Team promptly and appropriately, and actively participate in the resolution process.
- Contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment for all apprentices and colleagues by modelling respectful behaviour, promoting positive relationships, and challenging inappropriate conduct.

Recruitment and Screening

Didac follows safer recruitment practices, which include:

- Requiring all applicants to provide a complete employment history and explain any gaps, as well as disclose any previous convictions, cautions, or other relevant information
- Conducting thorough interviews to assess the applicant's suitability for working with apprentices, including exploring their motivations, values, and attitudes towards safeguarding
- Obtaining and verifying professional references, ensuring they are from reliable sources and address the applicant's suitability for working with apprentices
- Conducting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on all new staff members to ensure their suitability to work with apprentices and updating these checks periodically as required.
- Providing an induction program for new staff members that emphasises the importance of safeguarding and familiarises them with the organisation's policies, procedures, and Expectations.

Training and Support

Didac is committed to providing comprehensive training and support on safeguarding for all staff and apprentices. This includes:

- Mandatory online learning modules covering various aspects of safeguarding, including signs of abuse, reporting procedures, and the roles and responsibilities of different staff members in safeguarding
- Regular refresher courses and updates to ensure staff and apprentices are aware of the latest best practices, legislative changes, and emerging safeguarding issues, such as those related to social media or mental health
- Encouraging staff to attend external courses and workshops to enhance their safeguarding knowledge and skills and share their learnings with colleagues
- Providing support and guidance for staff and apprentices through the Safeguarding Team, ensuring they feel confident in identifying and reporting concerns, and creating opportunities for open dialogue and consultation on safeguarding matters

Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Didac has established clear procedures for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns:

- If a trainer has a safeguarding concern, they must immediately report it to a member of the Safeguarding Team, providing as much relevant information as possible
- Apprentices can contact a Safeguarding Officer directly via phone numbers provided on their ePortfolio or email safeguarding@didac.co.uk, which is constantly monitored.
- The Safeguarding Team will assess the concern, gather necessary information, and decide on the appropriate course of action, which may include involving external agencies, such as social services, the police, or specialist support organisations.
- All safeguarding concerns will be documented and stored securely in compliance with data protection regulations. Records will be maintained and reviewed regularly to identify patterns, trends, or areas for improvement in the safeguarding lead.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the reporting and investigation process, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis while ensuring that legal reporting obligations are met.
- Support will be provided to the apprentice or staff member who raised the concern and any affected individuals, which may include counselling, mentoring, or referrals to external support services.

Collaborations with External Organisations

Didac maintains partnerships with national safeguarding teams and other external organisations to enhance its safeguarding practices.

This includes:

- Regularly sharing information and resources on best practices in safeguarding and participating in networks, forums, or conferences focused on safeguarding in the apprenticeship sector
- Participating in joint training and development opportunities and inviting external experts to deliver workshops or presentations to staff and apprentices
- Collaborating on initiatives to promote the welfare and safety of apprentices within the industry, such as awareness campaigns, research projects, or policy development

Online Safety

Didac is committed to ensuring the online safety of all apprentices and staff members. To achieve this, we:

- Provide training and resources on online safety, including guidance on appropriate online behaviour, digital literacy, and the responsible use of technology, as well as addressing specific issues such as cyberbullying, sexting, or online radicalisation
- Implement measures to protect the privacy and data security of apprentices and staff members in accordance with data protection regulations, and ensure that all users are informed about their rights and responsibilities in relation to online privacy and security
- Monitor and address any incidents of cyberbullying, harassment, or other online safety concerns promptly and effectively, ensuring that appropriate support is provided to those affected and that consequences are applied in line with the organisation's disciplinary procedures.
- Encourage open communication and dialogue about online safety, creating a culture where apprentices and staff feel comfortable discussing concerns, sharing experiences, and seeking advice.

Social Media Conduct

Didac expects all staff, apprentices, and associated personnel to act responsibly and professionally online. This includes ensuring that any personal or public use of social media does not contain or share material that could be viewed as discriminatory, offensive, extremist, or otherwise inconsistent with Didac's values, safeguarding, or Prevent duties.

Staff and apprentices should also avoid connecting with each other on personal social media platforms, where this could blur professional boundaries. All online conduct must uphold the same standards of respect and inclusion expected in the workplace. Breaches of this may result in action under Didac's Disciplinary Procedure.

Online Safety Measures

In addition to providing training and resources on online safety, Didac has implemented robust technical measures to protect apprentices and staff members while using the organisation's network and computers.

This includes:

Web Filtering

Didac has established effective web filtering across its network and computers to maintain online safety. This filtering system is designed to block access to inappropriate or harmful content, such as websites containing explicit materials, hate speech, or promoting illegal activities.

Monitoring and Alerts

The organisation has set up alerts to notify relevant staff members if attempts are made to access inappropriate content. This monitoring system allows for prompt intervention and helps maintain a safe online environment for all users. Incidents involving attempts to access inappropriate content will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken, which may include disciplinary measures, additional training, or support.

Mental Health

Mental health is an important issue and we have seen rises in cases of this, especially since Covid-19. Didac are committed to ensuring that the mental health of learners and staff are addressed at all times. For learners, this starts as early as the enrolment process, to ensure that all issues that a learner feels able to discuss, are taken into account during their learner journey and that procedures are put in place to ensure that the learner is supported correctly. We are also able to recommend additional support is put in place, not only for the programme of learning but also for any allowances required to assist with the End Point Assessment process.

Ask Twice Campaign

In the interests of wellbeing, we want to ensure that every possible action is taken to prevent someone suffering. By simply asking twice if a learner, staff member or colleague who may appear to be struggling with their mental health, is okay. This simple act of asking again, shows a genuine willingness to talk and listen.

Sexual Harassment

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This can include,

- Sexual harassment
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Cyber bullying
- Relationship abuse
- Physical and sexual abuse
- Emotional harm
- Grooming/Coercive control
- Sexting

Some motivations of sexual harassment can include sexual orientation, age, race, disability, gender or religion. The person/s can become isolated and experience a very traumatic time.

We will ensure that,

- our staff are regularly receiving updated training to ensure that they are able to identify the sign and symptoms.
- Our policies are reviewed regularly
- Offer guidance where required
- Challenge inappropriate behaviours
- Discuss healthy relationships with learners
- Implement into our learning programmes through our online modules

Regular Reviews and Updates

Didac will regularly review and update its web filtering and monitoring systems to ensure they remain effective in protecting users and maintaining online safety.

This may include:

- Evaluating the performance of current filtering and monitoring solutions
- Keeping up to date with new technologies and best practices in online safety
- Addressing any identified gaps or weaknesses in the organisation's online safety measures
- Providing training and updates for staff and apprentices on any changes to the organisation's online safety systems, tools, or procedures

Policy Review and Updates

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The review process will include:

- Assessing the effectiveness of the policy in practice, identifying any areas for improvement and implementing changes as needed
- Gathering feedback from staff, apprentices, and external partners on the policy's impact and any suggested changes using methods such as surveys, focus groups, or consultations
- Incorporating any relevant updates in legislation, industry standards, or best practices and ensuring that the policy remains aligned with the organisation's values and strategic objectives
- Communicating any updates to the policy to all staff members and apprentices and providing any necessary additional training or support to ensure successful implementation

Conclusion

Didac is committed to promoting the welfare and safety of all apprentices and staff members. We will continue to implement, monitor, and improve this safeguarding policy to ensure the highest standards of protection and care for everyone involved in our apprenticeship programs. By fostering a culture of vigilance and support, we aim to create an environment in which every individual can thrive and reach their full potential.

Our Process – the four ‘R’s.

Response

If a learner has a safeguarding issue, they can speak in the first instance to their trainer, a parent or their mentor in the workplace. Our trainers will be discreet but cannot promise the learner that the issue will remain confidential and that they will need to refer the matter to a member of Didac’s safeguarding team. If the issue puts the learner at risk then it may be that the safeguarding officer will need to refer to an external organisation.

This respond also applies to any staff members that have their own safeguarding concerns/issues.

Report

The staff member informed of the safeguarding concern by a learner must report this matter to a safeguarding officer immediately, either by completing a cause for concern form, an email but only to the safeguarding email address which is accessed by two members of the safeguarding team – Elaine Stanley and Annalise Morris. If sending an email, please ensure that a telephone call to one of the two named above, to advise of the expected email. Once reported the designated officer will ensure that the staff member involved is also supported.

Record

In the first instance the issue should be recorded in writing, capturing as much information as possible. Please refrain from asking too many questions, allow the individual to speak and just listen. Always use the learners own words and try to describe their emotions when talking about their concerns. Offer reassurances and not promises or guarantees of outcomes. Our records are kept password protected and only accessible to the safeguarding officer dealing with the incident and the safeguarding lead.

Referrals

The Safeguarding Officer will decide whether the issue requires external guidance, but it is recommended that this is discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding@didac.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Elaine Stanley – 07413 145010

Deputy Safeguarding Officers

Gavin Lewis – 07476 267847

Annalise Morris – 07427 525137

Jack Stanley – 0117 4620425

Safeguarding Officers

Gemma Bennett – 07474 592640

Jon Hodgkins – 07872 691223

Review & Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed manually or in the event of a change in requirements to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of Didac and its community.

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Section(s) amended	Brief Description	Author
04/05/2023	N/A	Policy complete rewrite	Gavin Lewis
05/07/2023	N/A	Formal review and adoption by Didac Board of Directors	N/A
18/08/2023	Sexual harassment	To include Ask Twice	Elaine Stanley
05/08/2024	SLT	SLT section changed to reflect current SLT structure	Gavin Lewis
04/08/2025	N/A	No areas changed, policy reviewed	N/A