GTG Online Safety Policy

Purpose

Online safety is an integral part of Safeguarding and all issues raised will follow the procedures within the safeguarding policy which can be accessed on the website:

https://gtg.co.uk/about/key-policies-documents/

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that steps are taken to provide and promote a safe online environment, free from harmful and inappropriate content. This includes safe use for those who may access online shopping, YouTube, appropriate social media, attendance at remote learning sessions, instant messaging, accessing e-portfolio and generally when browsing online content. We will also raise awareness of how to stay safe online outside of the learning and workplace environment i.e., phishing scams

Aim

- Have processes in place to ensure the online safety of learners and staff
- Liaise with the cyber team to test network and Wi-Fi connections for access to harmful, or inappropriate content
- Embed online safety within the curriculum, which empowers us to protect and raise awareness for our learners
- Staff and learners will understand good online behaviour and know safe use of digital technology by raising awareness and following the IT acceptable use policy
- Make clear that online/digital behaviour standards (including social media activity) regardless of device or platform are monitored
- Make clear the impact of online abuse and how it will be treated, and what procedures should be followed where there are doubts or concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Responsibility for implementing and reviewing for effectiveness sits with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Group Head of Quality is accountable for the effectiveness of the policy
- Practitioners are responsible for day-to-day implementation of the policy
- The policy will be reviewed, when necessary, in response to emerging trends and developments
- This policy will be reviewed and aligned with the safeguarding policy

The Designated Safeguarding;

Ensure that policies and procedures are followed by staff, learners, and other stakeholders. Ensure that staff receive suitable training to promote online safety. Address any online safety issues or incidents. Ensure that any incidents of cyber-bullying are reported and dealt with in accordance with the safeguarding policy. Liaise with agencies and/or external stakeholders where necessary. Receive regular updates on online safety issues and legislation, be aware of local and national trends. Ensure that online safety is embedded in the curriculum.

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Practitioners;

Adopt a culture of safeguarding and where online safety is delivered to all learners in an engaging and consistent way. Undertake training on safeguarding, in accordance with statutory guidance, to include online safety. Report swiftly to the DSL any online-safety issues which arise. Communicate with the DSL on which potential online safety issues may arise and receive regular updates on issues and broader policy and practice information. Take a proactive approach to online safety so that we educate learners in their use of technology, by avoiding, or at least identifying, any threats of harm and inappropriate content.

Senior Management team will;

Act responsibility, and in line with the law regards data management and information security. Ensure that GTG's provision follows best practice regards information handling, data-protection processes, and support careful and legal sharing of information. Ensure GTG implement and makes effective use of appropriate ICT systems and services including safe filtering and monitoring of protected email systems, and that all technology (including cloud systems) are implemented for safe, effective, and appropriate use. Ensure that any online safety incidents are reported to the cyber team.

Online safety risks

Online safety risks are categorised, traditionally, upon a framework of risks;

- *content*: being exposed to inappropriate, harmful, or illegal content. For example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, sectarianism, radicalisation, and extremism.
- *contact*: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, peer on peer pressure, commercial advertising, adults posing as children, and those with the intention of grooming others to exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- *conduct*: appropriate online behaviour that may cause harm. For example, making, sending, and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual/non-consensual sharing of nude/semi-nude photos or videos) and pornography, other explicit images, and online bullying.
- *commerce* - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate or pressured advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

These categories are a helpful way to understand risks and potential exposure, however these risks may not happen in isolation, they may occur together. For many of us over the years online-safety messages have been focussed on meeting strangers online, and then meeting them face to face (contact) or online fraud (ranging from viruses or online theft of information). Whilst these dangers have not gone away, we recognise that more violent, and sexual content is now more prevalent (sending or receiving information voluntarily or coerced). It is vital that learners and staff remain vigilant of new 'friends', false competition winnings, links, fake email / text / WhatsApp messages etc. as these are the common way to confuse and entrust the user.

How will this policy be communicated

This policy can only impact upon practice if it is a live document. It must be accessible to and understood by all stakeholders. It will be communicated in the following ways:

- Accessible via GTGs website
- Available on the internal SharePoint file
- Available on Smart Assessor; wellbeing resources
- Email policy updates to all staff

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How to report online safety concerns

In line with our Safeguarding policy, learners and employers are to report any concern to their linked safeguarding officer. Any online safety concerns for staff are reported to the cyber team.

Learners /Employers:
- Email help@gtg.co.uk
- Call our dedicated Safeguarding phone number – 07887 293277

Employees:
- Email quality@gtg.co.uk

Additional resources:

- National online safety - https://nationalonlinesafety.com/wakeupwednesday/what-isonline-safety
- Safer Internet - https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/
- NSPCC website - https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed biennially, or sooner if required.

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Document revision				
Amendment	Date	Modifier	Version	Sign off
Version control	01/05/2020	Rosie Heron	1	Billy Hammond
Version control	23/01/2022	Tom Madden	2	Billy Hammond
Version control	03/04/2024	Rosie Heron	3	Billy Hammond
Version control	26/09/2025	Steph Harris	4	Rosie Hawkins