

Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy

Introduction

The Skills Centre (The Skills Centre) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners. This policy outlines the Code of Behaviour and the associated disciplinary procedures to be followed in the event of a breach. It applies to all learners and ensures a fair, transparent, and consistent approach to behavioural management.

The Skills Centre promotes positive behaviour through strong relationships, clear expectations, and an understanding of learners' individual needs. We aim to create an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and safe, and where anti-social behaviour is not tolerated. Our intention is to make a positive difference to every learner, whatever their starting point.

We recognise that each learner brings their own lived experience, which may influence behaviour. Our five core values underpin this policy, and all staff and learners are expected to always uphold them. Consequently, learners can expect from us:

- **Accessibility:**
 - We will strive to make ourselves available to learners online, via telephone, and in person.
- **Responsibility & Support:**
 - We're here to help learners grow and succeed — not just in gaining their qualification, but in building confidence, independence, and the skills to thrive beyond the classroom.
- **Safety:**
 - Providing a friendly, safe and professional learning environment, which is pleasant, reassuring and inspiring.
- **An Engaging and Positive Experience:**
 - We want learners to thrive and be uplifted through their experience with us.
- **Consistent:**
 - Learners can rely on us.

If negative learner behaviour(s) link to harm or risk of harm, The Skills Centre staff will raise a safeguarding concern and follow safeguarding procedures alongside this policy, which are outlined in Safeguarding Policy (The Skills Centre 049) - this includes sexual harassment, exploitation, grooming, threats, self-harm disclosures, missing person risk, violence, weapons, substance risk, or criminal allegation. Disciplinary action does not replace safeguarding action.

Expected Code of Behaviour

All learners are expected to:

- Attend all lessons, workshops, and activities on time and for the full duration. Any exceptions (e.g. illness or personal circumstances) must be communicated in advance, and supporting evidence may be requested. The expected standard of attendance is 90% or above. 80% is the minimum acceptable attendance level, and learners falling below this threshold may be subject to intervention or disciplinary procedures.
- Engage positively by participating fully and remaining focused without distractions.
- Refrain from using mobile phones in any The Skills Centre learning environment, including classrooms or practical areas, unless prior permission has been granted.
- Use mobile devices in communal areas with discretion, respecting the privacy, comfort, and personal space of others.
- Take phone calls respectfully in communal spaces and ensure others are not overheard or captured without their permission.
- Avoid capturing any video or imagery on The Skills Centre premises without prior authorisation.
- Do not take or share images or video of others without consent and authorisation. Do not capture images in toilets, changing areas, or welfare areas. Do not share images or video of learners or staff in group chats or social media.
- Treat others with respect and tolerance, uphold British Values, and avoid disrupting learning.
- Report safeguarding concerns at once to a tutor, centre staff, or the safeguarding lead. Safeguarding posters are located in each centre including the safeguarding contact phone number and email. Safeguarding concerns can also be reported using The Skills Centre dedicated safeguarding app. If you are in immediate danger, call 999.
- Maintain a professional relationship with all The Skills Centre staff, boundaries, and avoid contacting staff via personal communication platforms.
- Use published centre contact routes only. Do not contact staff using personal phone numbers, personal email, or social media. In you are in immediate danger, call 999.
- Follow all Health & Safety rules, policies, and staff instructions.
- Respect the learning environment and resources, keep spaces tidy, and avoid intentional damage. Any accidental damage must be reported immediately for replacement.
- Complete work and activities to the best of their ability.
- Comply with The Skills Centre's zero-tolerance stance on exploitation, coercion, and grooming, including criminal exploitation.
- Comply with The Skills Centre's zero-tolerance stance on weapons.

- Comply with The Skills Centre's zero-tolerance stance on drugs and alcohol. Learners must not bring, consume, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol on The Skills Centre premises.
- Act lawfully and professionally. If conduct outside The Skills Centre creates on-site risk, a manager completes a risk review and sets controls, including restrictions, supervision, suspension, or withdrawal.
- If a learner is under 18, The Skills Centre contacts a parent or carer in line with safeguarding procedures. If a learner is 18 or over, The Skills Centre seeks consent before contacting family or professionals, unless serious risk exists or law requires contact.

Failure to follow these expectations may result in disciplinary action, including possible removal from The Skills Centre programme(s) and/or premises.

Disciplinary Procedures

All staff will refer to this policy to ensure fairness, transparency, and equality. We encourage a collaborative approach to behavioural management. Disciplinary decisions should be made jointly between the staff member responsible for a learners' progress (tutor / assessor) and their line manager (Centre Director or equivalent). Where required, the manager's decision is final. Managers are responsible for completing all checks and balances.

Before any formal disciplinary warning is applied, the staff member should check and consider any pre-existing safeguarding concerns. If safeguarding concerns are present, staff follow safeguarding procedures alongside formal warnings. Staff should consider disability, additional needs, and reasonable adjustments before a decision to apply a formal warning.

Informal Warning

Before initiating formal disciplinary procedures, staff should address low-level, minor, and isolated incidents through informal discussion.

Examples include:

- Isolated lateness or absence
- Forgetting equipment or materials
- Minor distractions (e.g. occasional phone use)
- Low-level disengagement

Formal Disciplinary Process

If low-level behavioural incidents become a pattern of repeated, persistent negative behaviour, do not improve after informal intervention, or negatively affects others, a Formal Intervention will be applied and recorded according to the guidelines outlined below.

If a learner has already received a formal intervention, disciplinary action should escalate to the next stage. Incidents do not need to be connected for escalation to occur. Before issuing a new disciplinary action, staff will review the learner's previous disciplinary record and relevant context.

If Formal intervention is required, safety controls for practical areas may be applied at the discretion of The Skills Centre staff member, including task restrictions, increased supervision and a stop-work authority.

The formal stages are outlined below.

Intervention 1: First Formal Warning (Any Staff Member)

This may be issued by any relevant staff member, typically the tutor or assessor. A meeting will occur to discuss:

- A. The negative behaviour and its impact
- B. Reasons for the behaviour
- C. Review of any ongoing or required support and / or reasonable adjustments
- D. Specific, time-bound improvements and review dates
- E. Safeguarding check, referral routes considered
- F. The learner will understand that:

- It is a formal warning
- Further incidents may lead to withdrawal
- Their employer / referrer may be informed (where applicable and deemed appropriate by The Skills Centre)

After the Meeting

The staff member (or administrator) will:

- Record the meeting details on the Learner Warning Record (PICS). For NVQ or non-PICS learners, a conversation is detailed on e-portfolio system. Confirming agreed support, adjustments, review dates and learner awareness of any intended external communications

- Follow up in writing to the learner
- Notify employer / referrer / partner organisation (where applicable and deemed appropriate by The Skills Centre), following programme rules and privacy requirements
- Record any raised safeguarding concerns or referrals

Intervention 2: Final Formal Warning (Manager / Director)

A final formal warning is issued by a manager / director (e.g. Centre Director). A meeting will occur between the manager / director, the learner, and the member of staff responsible for the learners' progress (i.e. tutor or assessor). The employer / referrer / partner organisation, and / or other external parties may also be invited to attend the meeting at The Skill Centres discretion. The meeting will discuss:

- A. The ongoing negative behaviour and its impact
- B. Reasons for continued behaviours
- C. Review of any ongoing or required support and / or reasonable adjustments
- D. Specific, time-bound improvements and review dates
- E. Safeguarding check, referral routes considered
- F. The learner will understand that:

- It is a final warning
- Further incidents are likely to lead to withdrawal
- Their employer / referrer / partner organisation will be informed (where applicable)

After the Meeting

The manager / director (or administrator) will:

- Record the meeting details on the Learner Warning Record (PICS). For NVQ or non-PICS learners, a conversation is detailed on e-portfolio system. Confirming agreed support, adjustments, review dates and confirming learner awareness of any intended external communications
- Follow up in writing to the learner
- Notify employer / referrer / partner organisation (where applicable), following programme rules and privacy requirements
- Record any raised safeguarding concerns or referrals

Withdrawal (Manager/Director)

Withdrawal decisions are made collaboratively between the member of staff responsible for the learners' progress (i.e. tutor or assessor) and the relevant manager / director, who holds final decision-making authority. Where appropriate, such as in the case of NVQ learners, an employer may also contribute towards the decision to withdraw a learner from the programme.

The meeting will address:

- A. The behaviour / breach leading to withdrawal
- B. Safeguarding check, safety risk and any required immediate protective actions considered
- C. Ensure the learner understands:

- Who to contact at The Skills Centre if required
- How to access the Complaints Policy
- Next Steps Guidance (if applicable – i.e. future reapplications / alternative providers)
- Rules around potential future reapplication
- Manager / director / safeguarding lead confirms a safe departure plan before the learner leaves site. This covers immediate risk, under-18 handover, transport plan, and police or emergency contact where risk is present. Staff should avoid lone working during the departure.

After the Meeting

The manager / director (or administrator) will:

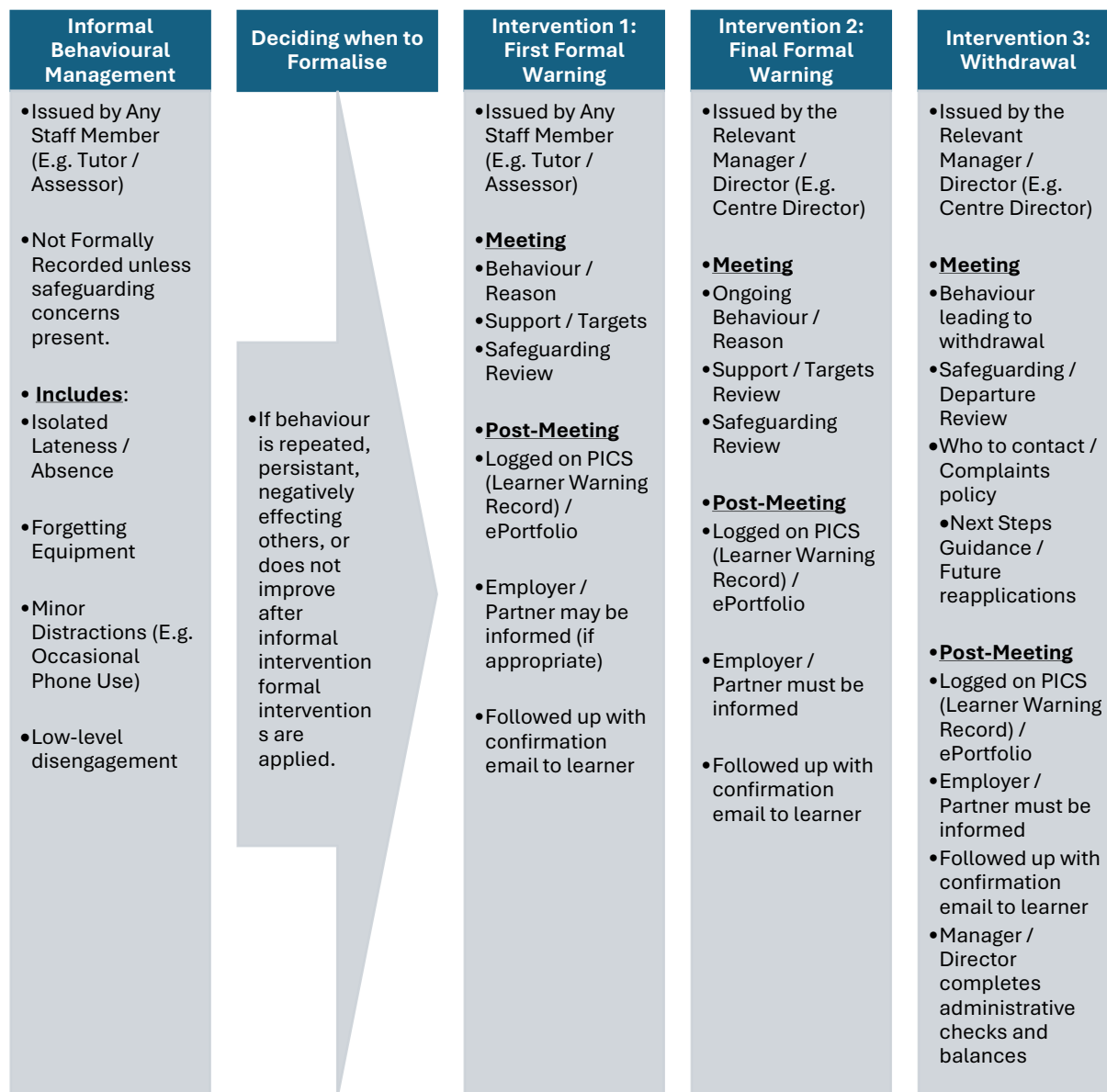
- Record the meeting details on the Learner Warning Record (PICS). For NVQ or non-PICS learners, a conversation is detailed on e-portfolio system. Confirming attendees and justification of any external attendees, contents of meeting, learner awareness of any intended external communications, and details of safe site departure plan
- Follow up in writing to the learner
- Notify employer / referrer / partner organisation (where applicable), following programme rules and privacy requirements
- Record any raised safeguarding concerns or referrals
- Finalise all administrative checks and ensure all previous disciplinary details are recorded in full

Notice of a formal warning meeting is not required; learners may bring a support person where need exists, including a parent or carer (for learners under 18), advocate, key worker, or interpreter. The Skills Centre restricts attendance where safety risk exists or process integrity is



at risk. Safety and wellbeing will always be considered before withdrawal or any request to leave the premises.

Disciplinary Process: Summarised



Bypassing Standard Disciplinary Stages

Disciplinary action may be escalated directly to a final warning or withdrawal when appropriate, bypassing the intended prior Formal and Informal warning stages. A manager / director approves bypass decisions and records the rationale when logging on PICS or ePortfolio.

For example, behaviours that may bypass the regular disciplinary process could include:

Immediate Final Warning (Guidance)

These behaviours are serious but do not usually endanger others directly. Examples include:

- Non-threatening or low-level bullying
- Significant disruption affecting learning or safety without causing direct harm
- Being under (or suspected to be under) the influence of illegal substances or alcohol consumed off-site.

Immediate Withdrawal (Guidance)

Behaviours that endanger others or are grossly inappropriate will result in immediate withdrawal (gross misconduct). Examples include:

- Physical violence or credible threats
- Possession or use of offensive weapons
- Serious bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Theft, fraud, or deliberate property damage
- Possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances
- Being under the influence in a practical environment or where safety is endangered
- Accessing, sharing, or possessing illegal or highly inappropriate material
- Taking or sharing images/videos of others without consent
- Serious health, safety, or safeguarding breaches

The behaviours above are for guidance only and are non-exhaustive.

On commercial / weekend programmes - including where delivery is off-site or involves lone staff working - it may also not be feasible to apply all standard Formal Intervention stages. In these cases, these tutors may exercise professional judgement to escalate disciplinary action, including issuing formal warnings or withdrawal, without following the usual staged process. Actions taken must be shared with a manager or director at the earliest opportunity.

Police or external authorities may be contacted, staff will raise a safeguarding concern for any incident involving sexual harm, exploitation, grooming, violence, weapons, serious bullying, harassment, discrimination, or image-based abuse. Staff will preserve evidence, including CCTV retention and device content handling, in line with safeguarding and privacy requirements. Staff will also set and record no-contact controls between parties where required.

The Skills Centre also reserves the right to inform appropriate external stakeholders such as employers, job centres, colleges, or referring organisations, following privacy requirements, of any Formal Interventions.

Investigations and Suspensions

Some incidents require investigation before disciplinary decisions are made. Suspension is a protective measure, not a disciplinary sanction.

The Skills Centre sets welfare contact arrangements and communication routes during suspension. The Skills Centre sets no-contact instructions where required to protect others and protect process integrity.

Under-18 parent or carer contact follows safeguarding procedures.

Learners may be suspended to protect themselves, others, or property. They will be informed of next steps and timelines, where it's possible to share them.

- On limited occasions, a staff member (i.e. a tutor or assessor) may deem it necessary to temporarily suspend the learner in absence of their manager / director. Where this is appropriate, the staff member should always attempt contact with the relevant safeguarding lead to confirm a safe departure plan, before then informing a manager / director at the earliest possible opportunity to do so.
- A staff member is permitted to temporarily suspend a learner where immediate action is required, such as in the interests of safety, serious ill-discipline, being under the influence of drugs / alcohol, and where a manager / director is logistically unavailable.
- The manager / director informed will then investigate the matter and determine a resolution / issue a formal escalation as soon as possible thereafter.

Investigations will be led by a manager / director and may involve:

- Additional managers / staff for insight or guidance
- The safeguarding manager where safety or wellbeing concerns exist

Investigations will:

- Be conducted promptly and fairly
- Gather evidence and witness statements where relevant
- Allow the learner an opportunity to respond
- Maintain confidentiality in line with safeguarding requirements

Details, including controls, timelines, and review points will be recorded in PICS (or ePortfolio for non-PICS learners).

Learner Safety and De-escalation

The Skills Centre prioritises safety and wellbeing. When a learner is upset or behaving unsafely:

- Learners will be encouraged to step away and calm down, with staff offering support while respecting their need for space
- Reasonable force and/or restrictive intervention is not used except in extreme, immediate risk situations, and only to prevent serious injury, such as to prevent or stop a pupil from:
 - 1. causing injury to themselves or others
 - 2. committing a criminal offence
 - 3. damaging property
 - 4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise
- Where reasonable force and/or restrictive intervention has been applied, this should be recorded in PICS (or ePortfolio for non-PICS learners) and a manager / director should be informed immediately.
- Any staff who are deemed likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions will be trained in its safe and lawful use, along with preventative strategies.

Again, a manager / director / safeguarding lead will confirm a safe departure plan before the learner leaves site. Staff will avoid lone working during a departure, and should raise safeguarding concerns where applicable, including self-harm disclosures or threats.

Addiction and Medication-Related Disclosures

Learners should share information needed to manage safety in training, including side effects that affect safe participation. The Skills Centre will agree a safety plan where required, including task restrictions, supervision, and review dates. The Skills Centre will signpost to support

services where applicable and agreed controls will be recorded on PICS (or ePortfolio for non-PICS learners).

A withdrawal or suspension decision will follow a risk review and safeguarding considerations, not punishment for disclosure.

If impairment is suspected, staff will remove the learner from practical areas immediately. A manager / director / safeguarding lead will complete a safety check and safe departure plan and must record details immediately on PICS (or ePortfolio for non-PICS learners).

Off Premises Learners

Learners completing parts of their programme off-site (e.g. employer placements, apprenticeships, NVQs, mentoring) should also discuss issues such as addiction or medication with the off-premises organisation, which will have its own policies and procedures.

This policy governs only The Skills Centre engagement. External disciplinary matters or contractual requirements are separate.

Learners must inform The Skills Centre of external matters when they affect safety, safeguarding, placement status, or suitability to attend The Skills Centre training. The Skills Centre requests only information required for risk management and safeguarding action.

The Skills Centre records the risk decision and controls applied on PICS (or ePortfolio for non-PICS learners).

Future Applications

Learners that have been previously issued a formal behavioural warning, including those that have been withdrawn from a programme, may reapply for future programmes; however, places are not guaranteed.

The Skills Centre retains disciplinary records for an indefinite period. With the insight of these disciplinary records, reapplication decisions are made by the relevant manager / director, using objective criteria linked to safety, attendance, engagement, and safeguarding risk management.

Evidence of positive change (e.g. employment references, lifestyle improvements) may be requested. Evidence requests focus on programme suitability and safety, and subsequent offers may require the learner to agree to a series of strict additional rules and guidelines.

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Appeals

Learners may appeal only if new evidence becomes available, or if they believe the policy and procedures were applied unfairly. Appeals must follow the process outlined in the **Complaints Policy (The Skills Centre 044)**.