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Safeguarding at the heart of leadership and management: PGL Travel Limited

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Brief description

This example shows how PGL Travel Ltd safeguards its learners by teaching them how to safeguard the young people they work with. The company also prioritises safeguarding at board level, to create a culture of confident, safe working.

Overview – the provider’s message



'We've always taken safeguarding and safe working seriously. We have to – it's essential for our business of providing adventure holidays and educational courses for children and young people. But a recent restructuring gave us the opportunity to look again at what we were doing, and we've made significant changes. The board takes a real interest in our safeguarding practice, and we've strengthened the reporting procedures so everyone knows what they should do. Our staff, who are also our learners, are not only knowledgeable about safeguarding, they're also confident in that knowledge – and passionate about getting it right. And they tell us where they think we can improve further!

Jo Mortimer, Apprenticeship Programme Manager

The good practice in detail

Clearly, a company which exists to provide adventure and educational courses for children and young people needs to have sound safeguarding and health and safety practices. But PGL has gone much further than meeting minimum requirements. By critically re-examining safeguarding policies and procedures, and working with a



specialist agency, the company has raised the profile of its safeguarding practice even further. This has reinforced the culture of providing a safe environment for clients and learners, where all staff are confident about what they need to do. So perhaps it isn't surprising that [Ofsted](#) inspectors judged safeguarding to be outstanding.

Prioritising safeguarding

When Paul Kenwright was appointed Head of Safety and Standards, he took the opportunity to review the existing policies for safeguarding guests, staff and learners. A desk-based benchmarking exercise against competitors in the sector provided some useful pointers. As a result, PGL decided to:

- set up a safeguarding management team, with board level support
- make no distinction between the safeguarding provided to protect guests, and that for learners and all staff
- re-launch the safeguarding policy
- buy in specialist training and support.



The safeguarding management team includes two directors, as well as a specialist human resource manager and the safety and standards manager. This means that the board has access to the specialist input it needs to be able to fulfil its function of challenging and supporting managers. Paul believes that it is board-level commitment to safeguarding and safety which supports the company's culture of prioritising safeguarding while providing an exciting environment for guests and staff alike.

Staff training

As part of the review of safeguarding and health and safety, PGL identified the need to increase staff training in the activity centres. It selected a specialist external agency, SAFEchild, which had the flexibility PGL needed to work with its centres across the UK as well as providing online and telephone support for the overseas centres. Collaborative working with SAFEchild has enabled PGL to develop an e-safety policy and training programme, which it promotes regularly and frequently, and which it reviews and updates to reflect the rapidly changing nature of online risks. Giles Smith, who is responsible for learning and development in the company, sees training as being critical to building confidence about safeguarding as well as increasing learners' knowledge. The specialist training has also led PGL to look beyond CRB checks, and where appropriate, find ways to support learners or staff members who have acquired a criminal record, rather than just applying a blanket refusal to employ.



Risk assessment

Each centre submits an annual risk assessment, covering health and safety issues as well as safeguarding. SAFEchild offers a 'SAFEchild Award', and each centre's risk assessment is entered for this external and objective evaluation. SAFEchild provides constructive feedback on each risk

assessment, which builds managers' confidence that they are doing the right things and have the right procedures in place, even if there have been no incidents at their centre.

Protecting all staff

Learners following the activity leadership and outdoor education apprenticeships, and who have direct contact with children and young people, have to complete a module on child protection as part of their National Vocational Qualification. But all staff, whether or not they are current learners, receive training in safeguarding, even if they are not going to be in regular direct contact with their young clients. This protects staff, as well as ensuring they know what to do to protect the children and young people who are in the company's care.



Provider background



PGL Travel Limited (PGL) is a privately owned company which provides residential activity holidays for young people at 29 centres in the UK, France and Spain. The head office is in Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire. PGL has 250 full-time permanent staff and employs approximately 3,000 seasonal staff. The company provides training in hospitality, customer service, sports and leisure and travel for its employees.

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch [here](#).

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