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Further Education Centre
The Neale Road
Ballinrobe
Co. Mayo

Code of Conduct for students of Ballinrobe Youthreach

Academic year 2016-2017

Introduction

Mission Statement

Youthreach Ballinrobe aims to develop the core skills needed for further learning in a safe person centred environment and thereby prepare young people to progress to further education/training or to employment.

The purpose of this code is to ensure, as far as possible, that an environment is maintained, in this centre, which enables students to learn and teachers to teach safely and free from threats, bullying and disruption.

The centre recognizes that such an environment is dependent on the co-operation of staff, students and parents working together to ensure that all students are given the chance to realise their full potential.

While the centre recognises the need for sanctions, it also recognises the equal need for a rewards system and this is set out in this code.

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this centre. The aim is to provide a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour by all concerned, staff, parents and students alike, and to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to accommodate the individuality of each student while acknowledging the right of each student to education in a relatively disruption-free environment. This code is supported by our centre policies and the Operator Guidelines for Youthreach.



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Youthreach Ballinrobe offers access to training on a yearly basis.

Participant's attendance, time-keeping and level of co-operation will be reviewed at the end of each year. Based on this review, further training may or may not be offered.

All efforts will be made, given the resources available to the centre, to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each student.

Staff Responsibility for Centre Discipline

Staff should consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of students within sight and should respond promptly and firmly to any instances of unacceptable behaviour.

Centre Rules

Our centre rules are:

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1. Attend all training hours as per the centre timetable, normally 9.30am – 4.30pm
2. Treat everyone with respect and co-operation
3. Actively take part in all activities in an honest manner
4. Keep all safety rules
5. Replace, repair or pay for any damage caused by my own actions
6. No-body under the influence of drugs or alcohol can attend
7. A student may be sent to a doctor if believed to be unfit for work
8. If you need to smoke, smoke only where and when allowed – the smoking of self-made cigarettes/ rollies is not allowed



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Procedures for dealing with breaches of the Code of Conduct

This procedure is flexible and if any single misdemeanour is deemed serious enough, the Co-ordinator can apply any of the steps without having to go through the full process.

Step Back

If after twenty working days from the issuing of a sanction there have been no unjustified absences or breaches of the Code of Conduct by the student s/he will be stepped back from his/her current position on the disciplinary scale to the next lowest position. Subsequent periods of twenty day of good behaviour and attendance by a student will each be rewarded by a further step back on the disciplinary scale. In this way, it is possible for a student to have his/her name removed from the scale altogether.

The normal steps for dealing with breaches of the code of conduct with regard to behaviour, attitude, punctuality and attendance are as follows:

- 1: First Verbal Warning
- 2: Second Verbal Warning with Internal Action
- 3: Report Form
- 4: Suspension for 1 day plus parents/guardians will be called in
- 5: Suspension
- 6: Moving out

- 1: First Verbal Warning

The staff member concerned, in the presence of one other staff member and away from all other students, will issue a verbal warning, formally, to the student. Included in the warning will be a reminder to the student that s/he is being given a chance to improve their behaviour and thus avoid more serious sanctions. Verbal warnings will be recorded and signed by both members of staff present.



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2: Second Verbal Warning with Internal Action

The second verbal warning will be issued in the same manner as the first verbal warning. Internal actions are sanctions such as not being allowed out of the centre, at lunch-time, extra duties in the centre, or withdrawal of privileges e.g. Hairdressing privileges, Leisure & Recreation privileges, including the use of the pool table etc. All or some of these privileges may be withdrawn at the discretion of the staff member issuing the sanction or the Co-ordinator.

3. Report Form

Report forms will be issued to students to be carried by the student and signed after each class by the class teacher. Parents/Guardians will be notified that the student is on report. A report form will have a life of five working days. It contains a space for each class teacher to sign for each class and to comment on the student's behaviour during the class if they wish to do so. At the end of the five-day period the student will present the form to the person who issued it and/or Co-ordinator for review. If the form is deemed satisfactory, no further sanctions will be applied to the student for this breach.

4: Suspension for one day plus parents/guardians will be called in

The student's parents/guardians will be written to and informed of the student's unsatisfactory behaviour. Where possible a meeting between the parents and centre staff should be arranged. In any case, the help of the parents in effecting positive change in the student's behaviour should be sought. The parents will be made aware of the fact that the student needs to improve in order to avoid suspension and, equally, so that the student can gain the maximum advantage from their participation on the programme.

5: Suspension

Suspension will be applied for a specific period, the length of which will depend on the seriousness of the offence. Suspension will be applied a maximum of three times to any student unless a step back applies.



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6. Moving Out

Students will be suspended indefinitely. A letter will be sent to MSL ETB recommending exclusion.

In the event of the student's exclusion, s/he may reapply after a six month timeframe, excluding holidays. A decision on their re-admission will depend on all relevant circumstances, his/her attitude towards re-entry and appropriate professional reports, if necessary. If approval is given, Centre management will recommend to MSL ETB that the applicant be re-admitted to training on a probationary basis. If the student is re-admitted, the probationary period will be for thirty working days. During this period, any unjustified absences or breaches of the Code of Conduct by the student will result in his/her immediate expulsion.

Other Rewards for Good Behaviour

Students may be further rewarded for good behaviour by being granted extra privileges. Examples of these privileges are: permission to leave the centre during lunch-break, inclusion in centre trips and sporting activities, access to hairdressing services etc.

Bullying

Staff, students, parents/guardians are being made aware of our centre's anti-bullying policy. This is available on our website: www.youthreachballinrobe.net. Everyone is required to support this policy. Incidents of bullying will be dealt with seriously and as quickly as possible.



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Substance Misuse/Abuse

A drug is considered to be a substance people take, other than food, to change the way they think, feel or behave. When a reference is made to a drug or a substance the list can include medicines, nicotine, alcohol, solvents, illegal drugs and this list is not exhaustive. There is an obligation on Students or parents/ guardians to inform the centre co-ordinator if Students are taking prescribed medication which could affect their ability to learn. The use, possession or trafficking of illegal drugs is against the law and will be treated by all staff as such.

All drug related incidents will be treated with upmost confidence; however limits of confidentiality need to be taken into consideration with regard to legal considerations and the health and wellbeing of the student. In order to ensure that students and staff are in a safe learning environment, 'with-cause' drug testing may be carried out. This means that a drug test will be carried out if there is a Health and Safety concern and/or if the student appears to be under the influence of an intoxicant and therefore falls into the criteria for 'with-cause' testing.

The judgement as to whether 'with-cause' testing needs to be applied can be based on a number of factors including the following:

- Apparent disorientation
- Unsteadiness
- Slurring of words
- Smell of alcohol
- Admitted or observed taking of illegal or non-prescribed drugs or volumes of alcohol which might cause the legal limit for driving to be exceeded
- Unusual or abnormal behaviour

In all cases, prior to a student being requested to undergo 'with-cause' testing, more than one staff member will have submitted an opinion as to the existence of circumstances or conditions sufficient to warrant testing. Normally, one of these would be the centre co-ordinator.

If a student is under the age of 18, parental/ guardian support will be sought in relation to any tests that may have to be carried out. A parent/ guardian will be asked to accompany their child to an external competent source. The



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type of test to be administered will be decided by the external competent source.

By signing this code of conduct, students who are 18 years of age and over and also parents/guardians of students who are under the age of 18, are giving their consent to 'with-cause' drug testing. A student or parent/guardian will be made aware of the concerns regarding the student's behaviour and the reason for the test. Students or parents/guardians must co-operate with this process if the student wishes to continue their training here. The results will be notified to the student and the parents/guardians where appropriate.

If the 'with-cause' drug test proves positive, the student will be given the full support of the centre co-ordinator and the support of all the staff in the centre. Students will be asked to seek professional addiction counselling services with an agreed external source and to co-operate with these services as required. Students will be free to return to the centre once they show they are drug-free and provide evidence that they are co-operating with the agreed addiction counselling service.

Attendance

Learners are required to clock-in by use of finger print before 9.30 a.m. and sign out by the same means at 4.30 p.m. each day.

In the event that a learner leaves training without permission, a parent/guardian will be informed by a text message and/or phone call. At this point, Youthreach Ballinrobe is no longer acting in 'loco parentis'.

Before the learner can return to training, an interview will be held with the learner and a parent/ guardian and Co-ordinator to find out why the learner left and to decide on how to proceed.

Out of Centre Activities

When transferring to and from Youthreach to Sport Centres etc. students are to travel in a group accompanied by Staff. Students are reminded that the Code of Conduct operates for all Youthreach activities including Sports, Day Trips, Tours etc.



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Transport

All passengers travelling on the Centre Bus must wear seat belts while the bus is moving. In addition, students must obey safety instructions from the Bus Driver while they are on the bus. Food and drink cannot be consumed while travelling on the bus. There is no smoking allowed on the bus. Failure to observe safety rules could result in an accident and breaches of these rules will be regarded as a serious offence and will be dealt with as such.

Dress Code

Students must dress in a manner that is appropriate whilst attending.

Examples of inappropriate clothing include:

- Hotpants
- See through clothing
- Hoods up in class (earphones)

Failure to co-operate with this can result in a step up on the Code of Conduct. Students can be asked to change clothing before attending.

Mobile Phones/other Electronic Devices

Students may be asked to hand up their mobile phones/ electronic devices in a class. The item can also be confiscated for a period of one week. If a student needs to be contacted for emergencies, this may be done through the centre landline phone, 094-95-41117 or mobile, 087-2605823. Inappropriate use of mobile phones/electronic devices is listed as a minor offence and is subject to the normal sanctions as listed in this Code of Conduct.

Examples of Inappropriate uses of mobile phones

This includes but is not limited to:

- Taking pictures for Social Media
- Texting
- Answering phone in class
- Recording
- Disturbing classes to get chargers/headphones/earphones
- Checking the time



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Photographs of students

Youthreach maintains a database of events held over a number of years. It has become customary to take photographs of students engaged in activities and events in the interest of creating a pictorial as well as historical record of life at the centre. Photographs may be published on the Youthreach website or in brochures, newsletters, local and national newspapers and similar centre-related productions. In the case of website photographs, student names will not be recorded with the picture. If you wish to have your photograph removed from the centre website at any time, a student or parent/guardian should write to the centre Co-ordinator.

CCTV

In line with the necessity to maintain a safe and secure environment, Youthreach Ballinrobe has provided CCTV cameras. The cameras are located throughout the centre, both externally and internally and on our centre bus.

Administration Charge

Due to the increased cost of photocopying and printing, students will be charged €10 per term, (Three terms: September to Christmas, Christmas to Easter & Easter to summer) towards the cost of their photocopying and printing and other administrative expenses. This charge does not cover the task folders for LCA. This charge is payable at the beginning of each term and can be deducted from the training allowance. This charge can be paid directly at the centre, e.g. if you are under 16 years and do not receive a training allowance. Students are liable for the costs associated with any unnecessary printing and photocopying.

Deductions from Allowances/Savings for Tour or Equipment etc.

In the event that a student leaves or is asked to leave the centre, any outstanding monies owing on equipment will have to be paid before the equipment can be released.

Any non-refundable deposits that have been given to any third party will not be paid back to the student. When a student leaves or is asked to leave the Centre they are no longer covered by MSL ETB Insurance and therefore cannot be accommodated on any trip organised by Youthreach Ballinrobe.



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Dealing with Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Circular Letter M33/ 91 require that sanctions applied under the Code of Conduct must be appropriate to the severity of the offence. Accordingly, breaches under this code are divided into two categories: Serious and Minor Offences.

Serious Offences

These are offences that threaten, endanger or actually harm students, staff or property.

The following are examples of serious offences

- Threats to staff or damage to their property
- Bullying, fighting or physical assault of peers/teacher/staff
- The carrying of dangerous weapons into the centre environment
- The sale or possession of banned or dangerous substances in the centre environment (See 'Substance Misuse/Abuse' above)
- Deliberate endangerment or deliberate breaches of health and safety rules
- Open defiance
- Using foul or obscene language with no regard for boundaries
- Remarks to staff of an overt sexual nature
- Serious, malicious damage to centre property or other property connected with Centre business
- Any form of theft
- Attempts to fraudulently claim payment from MSL ETB, the Youthreach Centre or any individuals or organizations acting on their behalf, e.g. submitting a false work experience form for payment or signing in but not in class

The above or similar offences will result in the immediate suspension of the student(s) involved, pending an investigation by centre management and, where appropriate, An Garda Síochána.



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Minor Offences

These are offences which, in themselves are not of an extreme nature but which, if repeated persistently can seriously disrupt the learning environment and deprive students of their right to learn. Consequently, although they are categorised as minor, with repetition their impact becomes serious and will attract sanctions of appropriate severity under this code. The following are examples of minor offences:

- Stopping others from learning
- Non-stop talking
- Coming late for class
- Ongoing failure to bring relevant class materials
- Constantly challenging teacher authority
- Refusal to follow instructions or to comply with requests
- Refusal to do class work
- Using inappropriate language
- Throwing anything in the classroom or the corridors
- Taunting or pushing/horseplay
- Shouting each other down
- Eating in class
- Using mobile phones/ electronic devices in ways and at times that are inappropriate

Sanctions for the above or similar offences will be applied under the Code of Conduct. It should be remembered that repetition of minor offences will lead eventually to suspension or even exclusion.



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Appeals

Students or parents/guardians may appeal any decision made by Centre Management under this Code of Conduct by writing to: The Chairperson of The Youthreach Advice Committee, c/o Mr. Pat Howley, MSL ETB, Newtown, Castlebar.

Youthreach Ballinrobe as part of Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim ETB is now under the remit of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can, examine complaints in relation to the "administrative action" of our appeals procedure from 1st May 2013.

Grievances

Students or parents/guardians who feel that they have a grievance may inform the centre Co-ordinator. If the student or parent/guardian is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process, they may formally and in writing, set out the grievance to the centre Co-ordinator. If they feel that a satisfactory solution has not been reached, they can outline in writing their grievance to: The Chairperson of The Youthreach Advice Committee, c/o Mr. Pat Howley, MSL ETB, Newtown, Castlebar.

Review of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed by Centre staff within one year of its approval by The Youthreach Advice Committee. (Last reviewed, June 2016). In the event that amendments are made to it, it will be sent to The Youthreach Advice Committee for re-approval.

I have read the Code of Conduct and I wish to accept a training place in Youthreach Ballinrobe as offered.

Signed _____
 Student

Date: _____

Signed _____
 Parent/ Guardian

Date: _____

