

# Code of Conduct, Student Contract & Policies

## 2018 - 2019 Academic Year

For the students of Youthreach Ballina Further Education  
Centre



Further Education Centre, Ballina, Co Mayo

Tel no: 09671237 or 09671439

The reason for a code of conduct in Youthreach Ballina is to ensure that every participant in Youthreach has the right to their education/training in a fair and safe environment. In drawing up this code of conduct, great consideration has been given to the reasons why students leave second level schools and attend Youthreach. While recognising that each student has their own individual traits and some behaviour may be challenging it is important that every student and parent knows the kind of behaviour that is expected when they become accepted as students in Youthreach.

Students on the programme need to be able to be properly behaved to benefit fully from the course. Those not showing appropriate behaviour will be given an opportunity to change this behaviour. It is important for all participants who do not comply that Youthreach has a structured discipline policy. This policy is designed to give everyone a fair chance while at the same time setting guidelines for everyone to follow. If you do not agree with the code and refuse to sign the agreement form then unfortunately we cannot offer you a place on the programme. Signed Codes of Conduct must be presented to the centre Co-ordinator on the morning that you start or entry to the programme may be refused until such time as it has been presented.

The centre is prepared to give our students every possible chance and understanding but it cannot accept behaviour that is detrimental to those students who are willing to learn and behave appropriately.

The ethos of every person attending Youthreach should be to treat themselves, their fellow students, the staff, and the centre with respect.

**Youthreach Ballina 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.

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## Disciplinary Structure

There are seven steps in the code of conduct disciplinary structure.

They are as follows:

1. Verbal warning
2. Verbal warning and internal action\*
3. Final verbal warning. Parents notified and student put on report sheet<sup>#</sup>
4. Suspension for 1 day plus parent will be called in
5. Suspension for 3 days plus report sheet if appropriate
6. Suspension for 5 days
7. 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 Behaviour by the student will result in his/her immediate expulsion.

## How the Structure Works

A person misbehaving will be placed on the scale at whatever point the misbehaviour merits. If he/she continues to misbehave, he/she will accordingly move up the scale. Once the student reaches point 7 of this scale it will be time for that person to move on.

The nature of the misbehaviour will determine which point the student will be placed upon. In setting up this code of conduct we have given different grades to the type of behaviour that we would have experienced or might think that could happen. Obviously it is impossible to predict what might happen so therefore it may be necessary to take action that might not be written down in 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 by the student s/he will be stepped back from his/her current position on the disciplinary scale to the next lowest position. For e.g. after a student is placed on the scale after 20 days of attendance those points will be removed.

## Staff Responsibility for Centre Discipline

All staff are involved in a team approach to discipline of students on the Youthreach Programme in Kiltimagh. It is the duty of the staff to complete the disruption sheets regarding breaches of the code of conduct in side and outside of the classroom.

## **Types of Misbehaviour and what Grade they will have on our Disciplinary Structure**

### Classroom Disruption

In a case where a student is constantly disrupting the class the teacher responsible for the class will fill out the relevant paperwork after verbal warnings have been given.

### Timetabled classes

If you are timetabled for a particular class that is the only class you attend unless you are given permission by the management or teaching staff.

### Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse of a staff member is not acceptable or tolerated within this centre.

### Physical force

Physical force will not be tolerated in the centre and parents / guardians will be notified immediately. In the event of someone using physical force against another person they can be removed from the centre. Pending an investigation, suspension or expulsion may follow.

### Alcohol

In the event of anyone consuming alcohol during centre hours, their parent / guardian will be contacted and they will be immediately sent home.

### 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 utmost 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. If a student appears unfit for work in the centre a form of concern will be filled out and brought to the attention of the co-ordinator and resource person. This will then determine what appropriate action will follow for e.g. a 'with-cause' drug test may need to be carried out by a doctor.

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

- A number of staff have completed the 'form of concern' on the same day for that particular student
- Observed taking of illegal or non-prescribed drugs or volumes of alcohol which might cause the legal limit for driving to be exceeded.

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 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.

### Theft

Theft of any item is prohibited in the centre and will lead to a person being placed on the disciplinary scale.

### Bullying

Any form of bullying be it verbal or physical will not be tolerated in the centre. Bullying can be defined as a pattern of behaviour whereby persons with a lot of anger and aggression uses their anger and aggression on another human being. This can take the form of teasing, criticism, verbal abuse, physical violence, bullying by texting and extortion.

### Procedure for dealing with bullying

Students that feel they are being bullied or that they believe that someone else is being bullied should let staff members know. This can be treated confidentially and staff members will then inform the co-ordinator, who will then intervene.

If the alleged bullying persists, a written statement will be required from the complainant and an investigation will then take place with separate interviews with the complainant, alleged accused and other witnesses if appropriate. Parents/Guardians may also be involved.

A decision will be made based on the evidence which may result in disciplinary action.

### Internet

Internet use is a privilege and should be respected and should not be abused

### Leaving the Centre

If a student wishes to leave the centre for some particular reason they must first of all get permission from the management. If they fail to do so they will be placed on the discipline scale. Leaving early will affect the student's allowance.

### Carrying a Weapon

No student is allowed carry any item that might be perceived as a weapon eg knife, penknife, tools etc. In the event of any items being found on a person they will be confiscated.

### Mobile Phones/Headphones

Mobile phones are not to be used or visible in class for any reason whatsoever. Phones can only be used during official morning break and lunch break. Phones used outside the stated times will be confiscated by the teachers. Headphones are also not permitted in class unless otherwise stated. If contact is necessary a message will be taken by the co-ordinator and passed on when appropriate. Parents and guardians are advised not to contact their son/daughter during class times as it can cause them to be placed on the disciplinary scale. Ringing the centre is considered best practice.

### Computer Network & Internet Usage Policy

Users shall not use MSLETB or any of its centres internet access to download, create, save or transmit unauthorised software, games or other entertainment software, including screensavers or save offensive material including offensive content posted to personal social media platforms.

A full copy of the Computer Network & Internet Usage Policy can be viewed in the Co-ordinators office on written request.

### Smoking

The centre is a smoke free zone and anyone smoking in the centre will progress on the disciplinary structure.

### Language

The use of bad language or unacceptable conversation of an antisocial behaviour is not permitted. Students who persist in this type of behaviour will be warned by staff as to their conduct.

### Attendance

See Attendance policy attached

### Timekeeping

If a person is late without proper explanation he/she will lose part of their allowance money. If a person is running late with a suitable explanation they must ring and notify the centre as early as possible. Refer to the Time-keeping Policy.

### Damage to Property

Any deliberate damage to property must be compensated for by the person involved. The amount/value of the damage done will determine the point on the scale at which the person will be placed on.

### Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately in the centre. The wearing of inappropriate jewellery is prohibited i.e. large rings. Also, all students must wear steel toecap boots, overalls and any safety items that are appropriate in practical classes. Examples of inappropriate clothing are as follows: belly tops, hotpants, see through clothing, hoods up, caps and hats in the centres, unsuitable footwear for example stilettos or open toed sandals etc. are not allowed where they are considered a risk to health and safety within the centre.

### Unacceptable Behaviour

Students are asked to respect themselves, the staff and the centre. Students who engage in unacceptable behaviour will be placed on the discipline scale at the point which is deemed appropriate.

### Leaving Class

If a student wants to leave the class for a particular reason they must seek permission from the teacher in charge.

### Centre Trips

The Code of Conduct applies while on centre trips, be it day trips or overnight trips. Any student on the disciplinary scale may not be allowed on trips.

### Intimidation

Any intimidation shown by a student to another student or a staff member will not be tolerated. Depending on the nature of the incident will determine what point of the disciplinary scale the student is put on or possible expulsion from the centre.

### Vehicles

Students who bring their own car/vans to the centre may not use them from once they have signed in until they have signed out again in the afternoon without the prior knowledge of the Co-ordinator. At no stage must a car/van owner carry another student from the centre whilst on centre time. This is in the interests of safety.



### Co-operation

Students refusing to co-operate with a tutor will result in the student progressing to the next point of the disciplinary scale. Incidents like this would be:

1. Failure to do work in class
2. Failure to heed instructions from tutors

## 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
- 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 of an insolent and deeply offensive nature
- 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

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.

### 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:

- 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
- Using inappropriate language
- Throwing anything in the classroom or the corridors
- Taunting or pushing/horseplay
- Shouting each other down
- Eating or chewing gum 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.

**The point on the disciplinary scale that student is placed on will be determined by the perceived severity of the incident and is at the discretion of management.**

## Photographs / CCTV

### 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, social media, 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 Kiltimagh has provided CCTV cameras. The cameras are located throughout the centre, both externally and internally.

## Tours / Deductions from allowance

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 Kiltimagh.

## Grievance Procedure

If a student feels he/she has been unfairly treated, he/she has the right to air that grievance. The student will be asked to document the grievance and hand it into the co-ordinator within 3 days of the incident. The complaint will then be handled by the management.

In the event of a written complaint, the counsellor is available for consultation with both management and students.

All sides will be listened to before a final decision is made.

## Appeals

Students who reach point 7 of the scale have the right to appeal. This can be done by putting their appeal in writing and submitting it to the Chairperson of Youthreach Advisory Committee,. This must be done within 42 calendar days of the date of the decision made by the centre to notify the parents/student.

Appeals will be considered by the Chairperson of Youthreach Advisory Committee, c/o Mr. Pat. Howley AEO Acting, MSLETB, Castlebar, Co. Mayo which will make a report to the CEO with their recommendations. Following the outcome of the procedures outlined above the student/parents will be written to with the final decision of the ETB.

In the event you are not satisfied with the final decision of the ETB you may appeal to the office of the Ombudsman. Youthreach Kiltimagh 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.

## Attendance Policy

It is important that learners who enrol on the Youthreach programme make the most of their time here. In order to gain maximum benefit from the programme, it is important that learners attend the centre each day, and while in the centre that learners attend their timetabled classes. Learners also receive an allowance to attend and participate in the activities and courses that run in and out of the centre. The following policy outlines the rules and regulations in relation to you attending Youthreach Kiltimagh. A review of this policy will take place annually.

### Signing In & Out

- Learners are to sign in by 9.30am and sign out at 3.40pm each day.
- Any learner who does not sign in and/or sign out may not receive their full allowance.
- **It is the responsibility of the Learners to ensure that they sign in and out.**
- Learners must attend their classes during the day.
- Teachers will check their class roll list against the sign in sheet and will inform the Co-ordinator of absent learners (teachers will do a daily checkin on the server of students late for 1<sup>st</sup> class in the morning)
- Learners who do not attend timetabled classes without permission from management or the class teacher are subject to their allowance being deducted for that period.

### Absentecism

- If a learner is absent from the centre without permission for **9 days in a term or 3 month period they will receive a verbal warning.**
- If the learner continues to be absent from the centre and is **absent for another 5 days in a 5 week period** without genuine reason they will receive a written warning.
- If after receiving a written warning the learner **misses 5 more days in a 3 week period** without genuine reason the learner may be excluded from the centre

### Certified Sick Leave

Learners are required to submit a certificate from their doctor in respect of all illness-related absences if they cannot attend Youthreach Kiltimagh.

This certificate must be presented to the Co-ordinator or the Resource person to ensure that they are eligible to receive the allowance while off sick. (NOTE: Only 3 certified sick days are allowed in a 14 week period)

Certificates will be filed and available for inspection. For any certified absences in excess of this a deduction of the training allowance will be made.

## Timekeeping Policy

Youthreach students are required to be in the centre at 9.00am in the morning.

❖ **Late coming to the centre:** Students who arrive in late will be penalised by allowance money being deducted.

- An accumulation of 1.5 hours in the week, the deduction will be a half days allowance.
- An accumulation 3 hour in the week, the deduction will be a 1 days' allowance

❖ **Early leaving the centre:** Students who leave the centre early will be penalised by allowance money being deducted.

- An accumulation of 1.5 hours in the week, the deduction will be a half days allowance.
- An accumulation 3 hour in the week, the deduction will be a 1 days' allowance

A roll over system may be used where students are regularly late / leave early but are managing to keep these under the deduction times (fewer than 1.5 hours in the week) so as to avoid allowance deductions.

Leaving early and coming in late are calculated together in the week not in isolation

❖ **Student signing in and out:**

- Students must **sign in** each morning themselves and write down the time they arrive. They also must **sign themselves out** and note the time beside their signature.
- Students that are found to be signing in or signing out at the incorrect time will be dealt with using the code of conduct.
- If a student is running late for whichever reason they **must ring in** to the centre and inform why they are running late. Consideration will be given if the reason is genuine, provided they have rang in. (Anybody caught signing for somebody else will be penalised accordingly)

❖ **Late going to class:** Being late for class in the morning will result in the student's allowance been affected. When a student is late for class for a fifth time a meeting must be attended by the student with the co-ordinator to discuss the implications.

# Mobile Phone and Headphones Policy for Youthreach Ballina

## Background

This policy was formulated with the help of Staff and students of Ballina Further Education Centre. The purpose of this policy is to assist staff with the delivery of class content by creating a procedure for dealing with the interruptions caused by student's use of personal mobile phones and earphones during class.

## Earphones

Earphones are not permitted in any classroom or at any computer without the agreement of the teacher in charge of the class. Youthreach Kiltimagh will supply headphones for the main computer room but will only be handed out when the teacher is satisfied a student's work has been completed satisfactorily. Headphones cannot be taken from the main computer room and brought to any other computer room.

## Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones by students in the classroom is not permitted. Calculators are provided by the teacher if they are required. There are clocks in all classrooms for timekeeping and a class bell to indicate change of class times. If a student is observed with their phone out the following procedure will be followed

1. The student will be asked to put their phone away and not take it out during class.
  - If the student refuses to put their phone away they will be asked to go to the Co-ordinators office to discuss and solve the issue.
2. If a student takes a phone out for a second time they will be asked to turn it off and hand it up to the teacher in charge until the class is over.
  - If the student refuses to turn off and hand up their phone they will be asked to go to the Co-ordinators office to discuss and solve the issue.
3. If a student has been sent to the Co-ordinator because they refuse to abide by steps 1 & 2 the following action will be taken.
  - The Co-ordinator will remind the student of the policy that they have signed up to.
  - The student will be asked to turn off the phone and leave it in the co-ordinators office for the remainder of the day with the exception of tea break and lunch break.
  - If the student still refuses to comply and hand up their phone then it will be clear that the student wants to exclude themselves from the programme and the following action will be taken:  
If the student is under 18, a call will be made to their parent/guardian to see if any

**STUDENT CONTRACT**  
**YOUTHREACH BALLINA**

I \_\_\_\_\_, a student of Ballina Youthreach agree to keep the following rules in order to keep my place on the programme and receive a daily training allowance

1. Attend all training hours
2. Actively take part in all activities including assignment and other work requirements.
3. Keep all safety rules and comply with all health & Safety guidelines as directed.
4. Never attend the centre under the influence of drugs or alcohol
5. Treat everyone with respect – no fighting, abusive language or bullying is allowed
6. Meet with the centre Psychological Counsellor when requested
7. Agree to attend all Mentoring meetings with assigned Key-worker
8. Replace, repair or pay for any damage caused by my own action

I agree that I can be sent by staff to a Doctor if believed to be unfit for work.

If I don't keep these rules I may be suspended or asked to leave

Signed student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# YOUTHREACH

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the Code of Conduct for Youthreach Ballina and agree to abide by the rules and how it applies to me.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature (If under 18) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_