

Youthreach Ballina Admissions Policy (2025)

1. Policy Statement

Youthreach Ballina provides inclusive, flexible, and learner-centred education and training to young people aged 16–20 who have left mainstream education early. This Admissions Policy ensures that enrolment is fair, transparent, and in line with national directives and funding parameters.

2. Admission Criteria

A young person is eligible for admission to Youthreach if they:

- Are between 16 and 20 years old at the time of application.
 - Have left school early or are at risk of early school leaving.
 - Do not hold a full qualification at NFQ Level 4 or higher.
 - Are legally resident in the Republic of Ireland and eligible for publicly funded education.
 - Admission of a 15-year-old is considered if requested by an Education Welfare Officer.
-

3. Priority Criteria

Priority will be given to applicants who:

- Have received the least educational opportunities.
- Have no formal education qualification.
- Belong to groups at risk of social exclusion (e.g. those experiencing homelessness, early parenthood, in care or leaving care, substance misuse).
- Have been referred by agencies such as Tusla, probation services, Garda Diversion Programmes, or youth services.

In the case of all other factors being equal, applicants may be chosen by raffle to determine who will fill available spaces.

4. Application Process

1. Referral or Expression of Interest

Applicants may be referred by:

- Secondary schools

- Youth services or social services
- Family support services
- Or they may self-refer.

2. Application Form

All applicants must complete an application form and provide:

- Proof of age
- PPSN
- Emergency contact details
- Previous school history (if applicable)

3. Interview and Assessment

- A meeting is held with the applicant and, if under 18, a parent/guardian.
- An initial assessment of literacy, numeracy, vocational interests and needs assessment is carried out during the first month to identify support needs and programme fit.

4. Induction

- All enrolled learners will complete an induction session during their first week of attendance, which includes:
 - Centre rules and Code of Conduct
 - Child protection and safeguarding awareness
 - Attendance expectations
 - Counselling and support service overview

5. Enrolment

A learner is considered officially enrolled once:

- The application and interview stages are complete
- Required documentation is submitted
- They are added to the programme participant list and reported to MSLETB systems

6. Attendance Commitment

Youthreach is a full-time programme. Enrolled learners must:

- Maintain minimum 90% attendance as per the Youthreach Attendance Policy
- Engage with assigned learning plans and reviews
- Commit to and comply with the Youthreach Ballina Code of Conduct

7. Appeals Process

Unsuccessful applicants may submit a written appeal to the Centre Coordinator within 10 working days of the decision. A response will be provided within 15 working days. A second-level appeal can be made to the MSLETB AEO (Adult Education Officer) if required.

8. Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually and updated in accordance with new Department of Education circulars or MSLETB guidelines.
- Feedback from learners, referrers, and staff will be considered in each review.