



2015-2016

# ABBEYLEIX FEC

## LEARNER HANDBOOK



**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Laoise agus Uíbh Fháiilí  
*Laois and Offaly  
Education and Training Board*

## Mission Statement

The Abbeyleix Further Education Centre is dedicated to facilitating learning, personal growth and critical reflection through a working partnership with participants and tutors and to enrich the quality of life for all. To enable participants to engage in life-long learning in an environment of mutual support.



## Fáilte

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Abbeyleix Further Education Centre and to introduce our Learner Handbook for the academic year 2015/2016.

This Centre is dedicated to providing adults with further or ‘second chance’ education and training opportunities. Its ethos is consistent with the profile of its learner population, meaning that its emphasis is on the active participation of the learner in the decision making process. Abbeyleix is focused on providing an environment of study that will enrich the quality of life for both learners and tutors. It also concentrates on enabling learners to engage in life-long learning. I hope you will all get involved in the Centre’s activities as this participation is a great way of getting to know other learners in the Centre with similar interests.

You are all encouraged to be involved in accepting responsibility for your own learning. We are proud of our record of academic success, the support we give our learners, the progression rates to third level institutions and to employment and the excellence of the facilities available in the Centre.

The Centre operates under the auspices of Laois & Offaly ETB and in accordance with the regulations of SOLAS and the Department of Education and Skills.

Finally, do not hesitate to contact any member of staff if you encounter any problems or difficulties.

I wish you every success for the future.

*Helen Kavanagh*  
*Centre Director*

# Quality Assurance Agreement

The QQI QA procedures developed by Abbeyleix Further Education Centre and LOETB assure the quality of the programmes and services provided at the Centre.

Abbeyleix Further Education Centre is registered to offer programmes leading to QQI (FETAC) Awards Levels 4-6.



QQI AWARD

# Introduction

This handbook is intended to allow easy access to the information that you will need to complete your chosen course in Abbeyleix Further Education Centre.

Naturally it takes a while to adjust while returning to education and training. Study methods are likely to be quite different from what you have experienced before and many learners often wonder if they have made the right decision. Learners are faced with the challenges and the opportunities of adult education and are often unsure how they will cope. However, it is important to remember that help is on hand in such circumstances. It is essential to talk to returning learners who have faced the same challenges and experienced the same opportunities and have survived.

This handbook contains the information and regulations that you will need so please try to keep it in a handy place for reference.

The Abbeyleix Further Education Centre encourages you to get the most from your time as a learner and this handbook is designed with this aim in mind.

# Contents

## Section 1: General Information

|                               |      |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Attendance System.....        | 7    |
| Base Rooms .....              | 7    |
| Books & Stationery.....       | 7    |
| Bus .....                     | 7    |
| Canteen .....                 | 8    |
| Career Guidance.....          | 8    |
| Centre Calendar .....         | 8    |
| Certification Fees .....      | 8    |
| Childcare .....               | 9    |
| Computing Services .....      | 9    |
| QQI Exam Results .....        | 9    |
| Health & Safety.....          | 9-10 |
| Learner Activities.....       | 10   |
| QQI & ECDL Awards Night ..... | 10   |
| Library Facilities.....       | 11   |
| Office Staff.....             | 11   |
| Photocopying .....            | 11   |
| Medical Card .....            | 11   |
| Learner Committee .....       | 11   |
| Texting System .....          | 12   |
| VTOS FAQs .....               | 12   |

## Section 2: Centre Policies

|                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Accidents.....                    | 13    |
| Admissions.....                   | 13    |
| Attendance .....                  | 13-14 |
| Behaviour on Centre Outings.....  | 14    |
| Bullying & Harassment .....       | 14    |
| Cessation of study .....          | 15-16 |
| Compassionate Consideration.....  | 16    |
| Canteen Utensils .....            | 16    |
| Care of Property .....            | 16    |
| Car Parking .....                 | 17    |
| Change of Address .....           | 17    |
| Code of Conduct .....             | 17    |
| Designated Smoking Area .....     | 17    |
| Examinations.....                 | 17    |
| Food, Soft Drinks and Water ..... | 17    |
| Maternity Leave .....             | 17    |
| Medical Card .....                | 18    |
| Medical Certification .....       | 18    |
| Mobile Phone .....                | 18    |
| Plagiarism .....                  | 18-19 |

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| PLC Grants .....                                   | 19    |
| Portfolios .....                                   | 19    |
| Practical Computing Application Examination .....  | 19    |
| Practical Skills Demonstrations & Activities ..... | 19    |
| Printing.....                                      | 20    |
| Progression.....                                   | 20    |
| Repeat Assessment/Exam .....                       | 20    |
| Sensitive Course Content.....                      | 21    |
| Smoking .....                                      | 21    |
| Student Support.....                               | 21    |
| Submission of Work .....                           | 21    |
| Timekeeping .....                                  | 21    |
| Use of Illegal Substances .....                    | 21    |
| Use of Internet .....                              | 21    |
| Work Experience .....                              | 21-22 |

## Appendices

### List of Appendices

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Appendix 1 Internet Policy ..... | 23    |
| Appendix 2 Printing Policy.....  | 24    |
| Appendix 3 Code of Conduct ..... | 25-26 |

### List of Useful Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| AEO   | Adult Education Organiser                        |
| AEGIS | Adult Educational & Guidance Information Service |
| BTEI  | Back to Education Initiative                     |
| BTEA  | Back to Education Training Allowance             |
| CE    | Chief Executive                                  |
| PLC   | Post Leaving Certificate                         |
| ETB   | Education Training Board                         |
| VTOS  | Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme           |

## DISCLAIMER

The information given in this handbook is intended as a guide to students of the Abbeyleix Further Education Centre and shall not be deemed to constitute a contract or the terms thereof between the Centre and an applicant or any third party. The Abbeyleix Further Education Centre is not responsible for any error in or omissions from this publication.

## SECTION ONE

### **General**

#### **Attendance System**

The Centre uses a software solution which verifies a student's identity using finger scanning technology. This technology recognises the fingertip and confirms identity based on the enrolled finger. It is important to note that no actual fingerprints are stored in the system. The software uses measurements between points on the finger to join the dots in order to create a unique number that is accurate to approximately 1 in 500,000 people. Your fingertip scan is stored only in the box at the end of the corridor. It does not transfer to the software system. Biometric data processed by the system will be deleted once a student leaves the Centre.

#### **Base Rooms**

| <b>Course</b>             | <b>Room No</b>     |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Business Level 5 & 6      | Computer Room 1& 5 |
| Vocational Skills Level 4 | 8 & 9              |
| Art Level 5 & 6           | 2, 3& 4            |
| Leaving Certificate       | 6 & 7              |
| Healthcare Department     | 10                 |

#### **Books and Stationery**

PLC/BTEI learners must provide themselves with books, equipment and materials as required by the Centre. Book Lists are available from individual course tutors. Reference books are available for some courses but must remain in the Centre. A refundable deposit will be required by some courses.

#### **Bus**

The bus timetable for 2015/2016 is available from the office from the 1<sup>st</sup> week in September. The bus leaves the Centre from Monday – Thursday at 3.30 p.m. and Friday at 1pm (except during the Induction Period in September when the bus leaves daily at 1pm).

#### **Price of Bus Tickets**

Bus fees are set out below and paid in advance each month. Learners studying on the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme have transport fees deducted from their weekly payment.

| <b>Monthly</b>                    | <b>Fee</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Paid in advance each month</i> | €60<br>Please purchase tickets for September by Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> . Dates for Oct-May will be posted up around the Centre. |



## Canteen Facilities

The Canteen opens at 8:30am and closes at 2:30pm.

| <b>Morning Break</b>       | <b>Times</b>  |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Upstairs Classrooms/Prefab | 10.45 – 11.00 |
| Downstairs Classrooms      | 11.00 – 11.15 |

| <b>Lunch</b>               |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Upstairs Classrooms/Prefab | 12.45 – 1.15 |
| Downstairs Classrooms      | 1.00 – 1.30  |

## Career Guidance

The Career's Office is upstairs next to Room 6. Carmel Hoolan, Careers Adviser with AEGIS, is available at the centre one day a week.

## Centre Calendar

| <b>Term 1</b>                     |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Staff Meeting                     | Monday 31st August 2015   |
| Student Interviews & Registration | Tuesday 1st– Friday 4th September 2015                          |
| Induction                         | Monday 7th – Friday 18th September 2015                         |
| Teaching Term                     | Monday 21st September – Tuesday 22nd December 2015 <sup>1</sup> |
| Christmas Break                   | Wednesday 23rd December 2015 – 5th January 2016                 |
| <b>Term 2</b>                     |   |
| Teaching Term                     | Wednesday 6th January – Wednesday 16th March 2016 <sup>2</sup>  |
| Easter Break                      | Thursday 17th March – Friday 1st April 2016                     |
| <b>Term 3</b>                     |   |
| Teaching Term                     | Monday 4th April – Friday 1st July 2016 <sup>3</sup>            |

<sup>1</sup> October Midterm    Monday 26<sup>th</sup> (Bank Holiday) – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015(5 days)

<sup>2</sup> February Midterm    Monday 15<sup>th</sup> - Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016 (5 days)  
St Patricks Day    Thursday 17th March 2016 (part of the Easter Holidays)

<sup>3</sup> May Bank Holiday    Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016  
June Bank Holiday    Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016

## Certification Fees

Learners who hold a medical card or are dependent on a parent or guardian who is the holder of a current medical card are not liable for certification fees.

## Childcare

The Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) Scheme came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 to meet childcare needs of FE participants on VTOS and BTEI programmes. Under this scheme full time and part time childcare places are provided on a first come first served basis. The responsibility for securing childcare facilities rests with the applicant. There are 2 approved CETS crèches in Abbeyleix:

### 1. Jelly Tots

Abbeyleix Parish Hall, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois  
(local community crèche and is within walking distance of the Centre).  
Contact: Caitriona  
Telephone: 057 8731904

### 2. The Children's House

44 The Fairways, Ballyroan Road, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois  
Contact: Margaret Bergin  
Telephone: 057 8730001

The childcare facility will require a letter stating that the applicant is enrolled on a VTOS or BTEI course. This letter is issued when the Childcare Application Form (received at registration) is completed and submitted to the office.

## Computing Services

The IT Officer will provide all learners with a computer network account at the beginning of the school year. Each learner will be issued with their individual login ID and Password depending on course.

## QQI Exam Results

The QQI Examinations Results will be posted out to learners at the end of June 2016.

## Health & Safety Statement

### *Fire Drill*

There are two clearly signed assembly points– one at the green area in front of the Centre and the second in the car park at the back of the Centre. When an alarm is sounded, all staff, tutors and learners must:

- prepare to leave the building under the control of the tutor.
- proceed immediately to the class assembly point.
- learners not in class will immediately report to the assembly point themselves.
- leave in a calm and orderly fashion.
- not re-enter the building.

- obey the instructions of staff.

All learners must abide by the Abbeyleix Further Education Centrefire drill instructions.

## **Emergency Exit Points**

### **Main Exit (Front Assembly Point)**

The Canteen, Computer Room 5, Ladies' toilets and Staff room use the main stairway and Main Exit. Gents' toilets and the main Office use the Main Exit.

### **Back Exit (Back Assembly Point)**

The Career Guidance/Counsellor's Office, Classroom 6 and Classroom 7 use the back stairway and Back Exit. Pottery Room, Classroom 4 and the office use the Back Exit.

### **Side Exit (Front Assembly Point)**

Computer Room 1 and Room 2 (Art) use the Side Exit.

### **Prefab 1**

Classroom 8 and 9 use the Main Exit door and go to the Front Assembly Point

Classroom 10 and Computer Room 11 use their own emergency exits and go to the Back Assembly Point.

### **Prefab 2**

#### **Room 1**

Use the main exit door and go to the Back Assembly Point.

#### **Room 2**

Use the emergency exit and go to the Back Assembly Point.

### **Room 12**

Use the main exit door and go to the Back Assembly Point.

## **Fire Evacuation Practice Drill**

There will be a fire drill practice each term.

## **Learner Activities**

### **Art Exhibition**

The annual Art Exhibition takes place in the Dunamaise Theatre. It takes place in the final term. This annual exhibition offers an unparalleled opportunity for the Art, Craft and Design learners in the Centre to exhibit their work to the wider public.

### **Learner Awards Day**

The Learner Awards Day is a significant day in the learner calendar. It takes place in May. A limited number of awards are allocated for exceptional learners.

## QQI & ECDL Awards Night

In September each year the Centre acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of the learners who completed their studies in the Centre during the previous year. Students' families are invited to the ceremony and QQI Awards and ECDL. Certificates are presented to the learners followed by a reception.

## Library Facilities

The public library is on the Main Square in Abbeyleix (Telephone number 057 8730020). The opening hours are as follows:

### Opening hours

|           |                                      |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| Tuesday   | 9.30 am - 1.30 pm<br>2.30pm – 5.00pm |
| Wednesday | 9.30am -1.30 pm<br>2.30pm -5.00p.m   |
| Thursday  | 9.30am -1.30 pm<br>2.30pm -7.30p.m   |
| Friday    | 9.30am -1.30 pm<br>2.30pm -5.00p.m   |
| Saturday  | 10am -2.00pm                         |

## Office Staff

Geraldine Farrell is the Centre Administrator. Her office is located on the ground floor adjacent to the back door entrance.

### Office Hours

**Monday to Friday: 9.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.**

**Ph: 057 87 31127**

**Fax: 057 87 31864**

## Photocopying

Relevant course work photocopies are provided by each tutor. If copies are lost or mislaid, replacement copies are at the learner's own expense.

## Medical Card

Learners who are entitled to a medical card should apply early for one as medical card holders are entitled to exemptions for PLC Participant Contribution, Leaving Certificate and QQI Fees. **Learners are asked to check that their medical cards are valid throughout the academic year.** Valid medical cards, when requested, should be presented to the office to avail of fee exemptions.

## **Learner Committee**

Learners from each course select a learner representative. The learner representatives form a committee which meets throughout the year to discuss matters of interest to the learners. The learner committee organises a programme of activities within the Centre, e.g. fundraising events such as Christmas food appeal and raffle held every year for St. Vincent de Paul.

## Texting System

The Centre operates a texting system to communicate important information to learners e.g. centre closures, class cancellation. It is very important that learners provide the Centre with up to date mobile numbers.

## VTOS FAQs

If a learner is receiving Jobseekers Benefit from the Department of Social Protection and can only receive this payment for 15 months. The 15 months will be up before the end of the VTOS course – what happens in this case?

A learner in receipt of JB prior to joining a VTOS ceases to receive JB on commencement of the programme and instead, receives a training allowance. This allowance is equivalent to the maximum rate of JB, with increases for a qualified partner and dependent children, if appropriate. This allowance is paid for the duration of the course, so, if circumstances change, such as those mentioned above, there will be no adjustment until the learner has completed the programme. After the VTOS course is finished, it will be a matter for the DSP to decide on the person's entitlement.

If a learner was in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit before joining VTOS – are their stamp/contribution frozen – i.e. what is the position after completion of VTOS?

What will a JB participant be paid after 2 years on VTOS?

Periods on a VTOS course not exceeding 1 year in duration can be disregarded for the purpose of linking two Unemployment Benefit claims – the repeat claim for JB must be made within 13 weeks or less from the date of the last VTOS payment. In these cases, the participant may link back to his/her previous JB claim. S/he will then be entitled to receive the balance of his/her days JB less any days exhausted before s/he went onto VTOS.

VTOS learners on the programme for more than a year cannot link back to their JB claim.

Are VTOS Training Allowances paid during the summer holidays?

Yes, for all learners progressing to Year 2 of a VTOS programme. A learner must give a written undertaking that s/he intends to resume for the second year of the course. Learners will be asked to fill a form at the end of May/beginning of June.

What happens if a VTOS learner is in receipt of an allowance in lieu of JA/JB with an increase for a dependent child(ren) and the child reaches 18 years of age during the course? The VTOS allowance is based on a participant's social welfare entitlement (including any increases for dependent children) directly before commencing a course. A learner continues to get this full allowance for the duration of the VTOS course. This in effect means that a learner will retain the dependent rate for the duration of his/her course, even if the child reaches 18 during the course.

Can I work part-time while on a VTOS course?

VTOS is a full-time course. However, a learner may work part-time, provided the hours worked fall outside of the learners timetabled hours and does not affect class attendance in any way. The VTOS allowance is not means-tested, so s/he may work part-time or during the summer without affecting his/her payment.

## SECTION TWO

### Centre Policies and Procedures

#### Accidents

All hazards, accidents, unsafe incidents or near misses, however trivial they may appear, must be reported immediately to the Class Tutor/Course Co-ordinator and an Accident Report Form (Blank Forms folder in the Staffroom) should be completed and submitted to the office. This attitude of consistent reporting will help prevent accidents involving staff, learners and visitors to the Centre. Learners should not undertake a task if they feel it is unsafe. They should seek advice or assistance from a member of staff.

#### Learner Admissions Policy

Admission to a particular course or programme provided by LOETB is subject to:

- Places being available
- Applicants fulfilling the required criteria

##### **Admission is determined by three principles:**

- 1 That in the professional judgement of the Programme Coordinator / Centre Director and following an interview / assessment (where appropriate), the learner is suitable for a course / programme
- 2 That in the professional judgement of the Programme Coordinator / Centre Director the learner, because of previous education, training or experience, is considered likely to benefit from attendance
- 3 Participation by the learner will contribute positively to the course/ programme and will in no way infringe upon the opportunities or rights of other learners or staff

All disputes in relation to admission will be directed to the Director of Further Education Services.

Please see Centre website for admission procedures.

#### Attendance

Every course requires a full commitment to attend all parts of the programme on offer fully and punctually. Any learner unable to fulfil this commitment may be required to leave the course.

- Full attendance is necessary for the highest level of success which a learner can obtain within the Centre.

- Full attendance means attending the Centre every day at each of the learner's timetabled classes.
- Learners unable to attend the Centre during normal timetabled classes must notify the Course Co-ordinator or Centre Director at the earliest opportunity to explain their absence.
- In the event of illness of more than two consecutive days a Medical Certificate must be furnished within two working days. In the event of a learner caring for a sick dependent, a medical certificate must be presented.
- Where personal appointments have been unavoidably pre-arranged for during timetabled class hours, learners are required to inform their respective tutors well in advance and provide documentary evidence.
- **For unauthorised absences where the required notice and explanation (or medical certificate as the case may be) has not been provided as set out above, learners will receive two verbal warnings followed by a written warning regarding their absence and the consequences thereof. If, following such warnings, a learner is absent without providing the required notice and explanation or certification, their place on their course will be subject to review.**
- All tutors take a roll call at the beginning of each class which is checked against the fingerprint scanning system. Continued lateness will result in a verbal warning.
- Learners must sit all in-house and state examinations and class tests throughout the year.
- All candidates must log-in and log-out of the Centre on a daily basis; this is obligatory.
- All VTOS students must remain in the Centre until the last day of third term.

### **Behaviour on Centre Outing**

On Centre outings, learners are expected to represent their Centre in an exemplary manner. Directions from the person(s) in charge must be complied with at all times. All Centre rules remain in force. Learners not participating in the outing must inform the Centre Director of their non-participation.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

This policy is contained in the Centre's Health and Safety statement and is available on request.



## **Procedure for Cessation of Study**

### **VTOS Programme**

When a learner is leaving a course the following procedure should apply:

- The learner should meet with the Centre Director and complete an Early Leavers Form (Blank Forms folder in Staffroom) outlining the reasons for leaving the programme. This form should record the learner's intended finish date. The form will be placed on the learner's file.
- The VTOS Co-ordinator will write /email the local DSP office confirming the finish and final payment date of the student.
- The VTOS Co-ordinator will write to the learner confirming the finish and final payment date. This letter will only be issued when all books and equipment belonging to LOETB are returned.
- If applicable, the VTOS Co-ordinator will arrange for the refund of the book deposit (applies to Healthcare students) – refunded through the VTOS Schedule.
- If applicable, the VTOS Co-ordinator will write to the childcare provider confirming the learner's finish date on VTOS.

### **PLC Programme**

When a learner is leaving the course the following procedure should apply:

- The learner should meet with the Centre Director and complete a Cessation Form (Blank Forms folder in Staffroom) outlining the reasons for leaving the programme. This form should record the learner's intended finish date. The form will be placed on the learner's file.
- If requested a finish letter will be sent to the learner confirming their start and finish date on the course.

## **Cessation of Programme Record (letter)**

Any learner considering terminating their studies must inform the relevant course coordinator and the Centre director prior to finalising their decision. All course material held on loan must be returned at this meeting. Cessation letters cannot be issued until such items have been returned. A Cessation form must be signed by the learner as an official documentation of termination of study.

### **PLC programme**

Learners are asked to participate fully on their chosen course for the **duration** of the course. PLC students will formally finish their course on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016. Letters for the Department of Social Protection can be requested from the office from the previous Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Letters will record the official finish date of the course as 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016.

### **VTOS programme**

Learners are asked to participate fully on their chosen course for the **duration** of the course. VTOS learners will formally finish their course on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016. VTOS students are asked to participate fully in June Projects and Work Placements. June projects include valuable opportunities for additional training and certification.

If a learner secures employment following their QQI exams, but before the course officially finishes they should bring the offer of employment to the VTOS Co-ordinator to discuss the possibility of finishing early on the programme. Learners availing of the childcare (CETS) scheme should contact the supervisor at the childcare facility to discuss the possibility of finishing early. Most childcare facilities require a minimum notification period.

## **Compassionate Consideration**

LOETB will enable learners who have been prevented from undertaking a specific assessment activity or who feel their performance is seriously impaired because of exceptional circumstances to apply to defer their assessment i.e. to be allowed to complete the assessment activity on another occasion.

The following are examples of circumstances under which LOETB may consider giving compassionate consideration to the learner:

- a physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- a physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the learner.
- recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- severe accident
- domestic crisis
- terminal illness of a close family member
- other extenuating circumstances.

Any application to LOETB for compassionate consideration requires the learner to provide appropriate evidence/documentation e.g. a statement from a medical practitioner.

LOETB will consider the severity of the circumstances, the nature of the assessment activity and the quality of past achievement of the learner where appropriate in deciding whether to grant compassionate consideration.

## **Canteen Utensils**

**Under no circumstances** can cups be removed from the Canteen to any other rooms or recreational areas.

## Care of Property

All property must be treated with respect at all times. Personal property including cars brought to the Centre are at the learner's own risk. The Centre cannot compensate learners for property lost, damaged or stolen. Compensation for any damage to property will be the responsibility of the offending learner.

## Car Parking

You may only park in the designated spaces available in the Centre car parks. It is very important to leave access routes clear. Owners of illegally parked cars on the footpath outside of the Centre may receive a parking fine from An Garda Siochana. Learners must provide car registration numbers to the Centre.

## Change of Address

Learners are requested to notify the Centre Administrator **in writing** as soon as possible of any change in their address and/or telephone number(s).

LOETB will not be responsible for the consequences due to failure on the part of the learners to make the above notifications.

## Code of Conduct (Appendix 3)

All students are required to read this policy carefully. The policy must be signed by each learner and placed in their file.

## Designated Smoking Area

The designated smoking area is located in the staff car park and this is the **only** area at the Centre where smoking, including e-cigarettes, is accommodated. Learners are asked to adhere to this policy while also putting cigarette butts in the two disposal units provided.

## QQI Examinations

Learners will be notified well in advance of examination dates.

If a learner is absent for an examination without reason (please refer to section on Compassionate Consideration) then there are no opportunities provided to re-sit that examination in that assessment period. Provisions may be made to sit the missed exam in the next assessment period.

If the learner has made an application based on exceptional circumstances then the tutor/co-ordinator will, where possible, re-schedule the examination.

## Food, Soft Drinks & Water

All food, soft drinks, tea, coffee and water are prohibited from the classroom.

## Maternity Leave

When a learner is pregnant upon admission to a course in the Centre or become pregnant during the academic year 2015/2016, they are entitled to take maternity leave. The Maternity Protection Act 1990 and the Maternity Protection (Amendment Act) 2004 provide statutory entitlements in relation to maternity leave during the programme/course.

It is Centre policy that the learner informs in writing the Centre Director (as early as possible) details regarding the period of maternity leave the student wishes to take (start and finish date). Maternity Leave must start a minimum of four weeks prior to the learner's due date. Learners must also provide a letter from their GP, or hospital, confirming their due date.

## Medical Card

Learners who have a medical card are required to present it to the office. They are also requested to present the card to their Course Tutor. Students are asked to make sure their medical card is valid for the academic year. Otherwise students who would be exempt from QQI and Leaving Certificate entry fees will incur this cost.

## Medical Certification

Learners will not be penalized for late assignment(s)/project(s) if they can present medical certification covering the date of submission or the period directly before the submission date. A revised submission date should be agreed between the learner and the tutor as soon as the learner returns from the period of absence.

## Mobile Phone

The use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited in class rooms. Please **switch off** phones upon entering these areas. Persons outside of the Centre may contact learners with urgent messages through the main Office at **057 8731127**.

## Plagiarism

This policy applies to all learners of LOETB undertaking QQI accredited courses, at all levels.

*All learners must sign a statement on all work to be assessed stating that all projects, assignments, learner records and collections of work /portfolio work presented for assessment are their own original work, in their own words.*

**Plagiarism** is defined as deliberately representing someone's ideas or work as your own. It includes inadequate referencing, reproducing the work (even with small changes) of another taken from books, journals, articles, TV programmes, internet and class notes. It also includes copying another person's work, with or without his/her consent. Collusion is also considered as plagiarism – where a group of people collaborate or collude to present an assignment or a substantial part thereof, when the tutor required individual research and outcome.

### Normal use of other's work:

Learners are permitted and/or expected to use other people's work and ideas, for example, by reference to books, journal articles or use of computer programmes. However, learners must accurately reference all sources of information used.

## **Where Plagiarism is suspected:**

In the event that plagiarism is suspected, the learner will be requested to attend a meeting with the tutor and/or Principal/Centre Director.

- If the learner admits to plagiarism, a zero mark will be awarded for the assignment, or the part of the assignment that has been plagiarised, and a record of the incident will be kept on the learner's file, and made available to External Authenticator at certification stage.
- If the learner does not admit to plagiarism, a decision will be made by the Course Coordinator and/or Principal/Director, based on the evidence presented. The tutor will submit a report outlining the details of the suspected plagiarism. The learner will have an opportunity to be interviewed by the Course Coordinator and/or the Principal/Director, in order to ascertain if plagiarism has taken place. The learner may bring any evidence to support their work. The decision of the Course Coordinator and/or Principal/Director will be communicated to the tutor and the learner and a record of the investigation will be kept on the learner's file.

If two pieces of work that are submitted are identical, both learners will be interviewed. If one learner admits to copying (plagiarism), then the original work will be marked as normal and the copied work will be awarded a zero mark, or the part that is copied will be awarded a zero mark.

If neither learner admits liability, both learners will be awarded a zero mark for the copied work or copied section of work. A record of the incident will be kept on both learners' files and will be made available to QQI External Authenticators.

## **PLC Grant**

The PLC Learner Maintenance Grant is paid monthly in arrears. This payment is directly linked to satisfactory learner participation and attendance on a course. If a learner's attendance/participation is unsatisfactory (backed up by attendance/course participation records) their payment will be reviewed. Absence for reasons covered by a medical certificate fall outside minimum attendance requirements. Continually submitting medical certificates will result in a review of grant payments.

## **Portfolios**

All portfolios of assignments submitted for QQI certification through LOETB will become the property of LOETB. Written assignments submitted as part of QQI assessment are not returned to the learner. Learners should keep printed and electronic copies of their assignments. Any work referred to by LOETB as part of any communication will be fully acknowledged and referenced to the appropriate learner.

## **Practical Computing Applications Examination Policy**

During a practical computer applications test, in the event of a computer malfunction a learner must inform immediately the Invigilator by raising their hand. In such circumstances the time lost will be allotted at the end of the examination/test.

## **Practical Skills Demonstrations and Activities**

All learners are notified well in advance of any practical skills demonstrations or activities for assessment purposes. If a learner is absent for a practical skills demonstration or activity without reason (please refer to section on Compassionate Consideration) it is not possible to repeat such an assessment activity due to the nature of the activity and the practical and operational issues involved. If the learner has made an application based on exceptional circumstances then the tutor/co-ordinator will, where possible, re-schedule the demonstration/activity.

## **Printing Policy**

Learners are expected to read **Appendix 2** in order to discourage wasteful use of paper and printing supplies and to foster an environmentally aware Centre policy.

## **Progression Policy**

There is no automatic transfer from Year 1 to Year 2 on any programme in Abbeyleix Further Education Centre. All learners enrol on a course for one year and at the end of this year their progress is reviewed. A student who wishes to apply for a second year must go through the interview process at the end of the year.

When looking at the suitability of a student to progress from Year 1 to Year 2 of a course, the following will be taken into account:

- Tutor's progression report
- General suitability
- Satisfactory attendance record
- Commitment to the course
- Punctuality
- Meeting of assignment deadlines/homework submitted on time

## **Repeat of Assessment Activity**

Where a learner is unsuccessful on a first attempt in an assessment activity, LOETB will endeavour to provide learners with an opportunity to repeat the assessment activity to achieve a pass grade. Opportunities to repeat an assessment activity are dependent on the nature of the activity and the practical and/or operational issues involved.

## **Sensitive Course Content**

From time to time course content will cover sensitive topics that might upset or cause emotional distress for certain students. In this event students are advised and have permission to leave the classroom. Students are reminded of counselling support services available in Abbeyleix FEC.

## **Smoking**

The designated smoking area is located in the staff car park and this is the **only** area at the Centre where smoking, including e-cigarettes, is accommodated. Learners are asked to adhere to this policy while also putting cigarette butts in the two disposal units provided for them.

## **Student Support**

A Student Support Service is available at the Centre. This is a free and confidential service. Should any student have a matter that they need to discuss, the line of communication is Class Representative/Course Tutor, Co-ordinator and Centre Director. However, in extreme cases, the learner may discuss this matter with the person they feel most comfortable with.

## **Submission of Work**

Learners are accountable and responsible for their own work and are expected to adhere to agreed deadlines.

## **Time Keeping**

Learners are expected to be on time and to fully attend all classes. The Centre Director will be notified by the Course Tutor of continuous lateness or early departures by learners. Each class tutor will keep a daily record of class attendance and punctuality.

## **Use of Illegal Substances**

Use of illegal substances is prohibited on Centre property and on all Centre activities. Learners should not use illegal/addictive substances while attending the Centre. Breach of Conduct in this regard is considered a serious offence.

## **Use of the Internet (Appendix 1)**

All learners are to acquaint themselves with and sign the policy on use of the Internet. Internet use for non-academic purposes will result in loss of learner computing facilities in the Centre.

### **Work Experience**

- All learners undertaking a full QQI Level 3/4/5/6 award must complete the Work Experience module.
- Where required, Garda clearance must be obtained.
- A minimum of ten working days (60 hours) must be completed in order for the learner to fulfil the Work Experience module's requirements.
- Learners are encouraged to show initiative when sourcing work experience for their chosen course.
- Learners are indemnified by LOETB for the duration of work experience.
- All learners must produce a signed Supervisor's Report as documented confirmation of attendance on completion of work experience.
- In the event of a learner failing to complete the mandatory minimum ten days (60 hours), due to extenuating circumstances, the remaining days must be completed by March of the current academic year.
- All learners remain under the guidance and support of the Centre during their work experience. Any problems or issues which arise should be brought to the attention of the course tutors or Centre Director.
- While on Work Experience, learners are deemed to be representing the Centre and as such are expected to behave in such a manner that will not bring the good name of the Centre into disrepute.



## **Appendix 1 (Internet Acceptable use Policy)**

An acceptable use policy is a contract between students and the Centre acting for the education authority. It describes the ways in which the Internet can and cannot be used.

1. Learners will only access the system using their own login and password, which they will keep secret.
2. Learners will ask for permission from the tutor before connecting to the Internet.
3. Learners may only use the Internet facilities for relevant course activities/research purposes.
4. Learners will only e-mail people that are relevant to their course activities/research purposes or whom the tutor has approved.
5. All e-mail messages learners send will be polite and responsible.
6. Learners are not allowed to use Social Networking Sites unless part of a lesson given by a tutor.
7. Copyright and intellectual property must be respected at all times.
8. Use of Internet for personal gain, gambling and political purposes or to advertise is forbidden.
9. A guarantee from the learner not to deliberately access obscene and inappropriate materials and to report anything found accidentally to the class tutor.
10. Learners are prohibited from downloading programmes, material and any files without the authorisation from the class tutor.
11. A reminder that the possession of certain types of unsuitable material can lead to prosecution by the police.
12. Internet access is monitored within the Centre through dedicated software installed on all machines. Tutors have the ability to view web access or other computer activity that students engage in on all computers located within Abbeyleix FEC.
13. Breaches of this policy will result in the withdrawal of students Internet and e-mail privileges.
14. Cyber bullying is prohibited.

Once a student activates their account by login, he/she is then responsible for all activities that relate to this account. The Centre maintains the right to check computer files and monitor the websites by regular random selection. The class tutor retains the right to grant permission or refuse access to the computer room facilities to students outside their normal computer class schedule.

Signed: ..... Date:.....

## Appendix 2

### Printing Policy

Printing is available to all students in the Computer Rooms at Abbeyleix FEC subject to permission from a class tutor. The following guidelines have been developed:

#### Printing Guidelines

1. All computer users with a login account can print-out hard copy of their work on desktop computers in Abbeyleix Further Education Centre.
2. It is proposed to implement a “Pay as You Go” printing system in Abbeyleix FEC early in the current academic year. Initially each student will be allocated a number of free printing credits and after that students will have to “top-up” their printing allowance (buy credits) by paying a small fee. Further information will be available when the system is ready to roll-out to user accounts.
3. It will be up to each student to accept responsibility and to manage their own allocated print credits.
4. To prevent wastage of printing resources, users should use **PRINT PREVIEW** at all times to check print settings before printing.
5. Before sending a print job ensure there is sufficient paper loaded in the correct printer and there are no warning messages on the print unit.
6. It is important that you submit the PRINT command **only once** to avoid printing multiple copies of a document. Allow adequate time to ensure a successful print job before re-sending.
7. All computer rooms in the FEC will have black and white (mono) printers only. All exams and assignments/projects can be presented to class tutors in black and white. There is no requirement to print in colour for QQI submissions. If you want to print in colour you will have to make alternative arrangement to print your assignments/projects outside the Centre.
8. The printing of internet webpages is strongly discouraged due to the amount of wasted printer resources unless required for projects/assignments.
9. If you have any printing problems contact your class tutor immediately.
10. Only print materials of academic relevance or co-curricular significance.
11. Students must collect their printout as they are printed and remove them from the printing area.

Signed: ..... Date:.....

## Appendix 3

### ABBEYLEIX FURTHER EDUCATION CENTRE

#### CODE OF CONDUCT

The following are conditions for participation on all programmes in this Centre.

1. Staff and learners are expected to treat each other and property of the Further Education Centre with respect. Transgressions in these respects may lead to dismissal from the course.
2. Bullying and/or discriminatory behaviour of any nature will not be tolerated. It is the aim of the Centre to ensure the learning environment provides freedom for all learners to conduct their studies without having to suffer harassment, bullying or intimidation.
3. Abbeyleix Further Education Centre fosters an environment of co-operative and respectful learning. In this regard it is at the discretion of each tutor to remove from the classroom any individual whose behaviour has a negative impact on the classroom learning environment.
4. Full attendance is required i.e. learners are expected to attend all timetabled classes.
5. Learners unable to attend the Centre during normal timetabled classes must notify the Course Co-ordinator or Centre Director at the earliest opportunity to explain their absence.
6. A medical certificate is required if a learner is absent for more three or more days.
7. No alcohol or drug substances may be taken or brought into the FEC. Participants may not attend classes under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
8. Each participant will take responsibility to ensure that the Centre is kept clean, tidy and attractive at all times. Individual's work areas should be left clean and tidy at the end of each day.
9. No foodstuffs allowed in any classroom or workshop.
10. Smoking (including e-cigarettes) is confined to the smoking area only.
11. Mobile phones must be powered off during class times. Texting is **strictly forbidden** during class.
12. It is the learner's responsibility to care for books and equipment provided by LOETB and to return same at end of course.
13. Learners must have an acceptable level of personal hygiene.

14. Any learner who has to leave the Centre during tuition hours must inform their course tutor and then log-out using the fingerprint scanning system.
15. All learners must scan in and scan out every day, in doing so they are undertaking to attend all their classes.
16. The Centre Director has complete authority on all matters relating to the running of the Further Education Centre and her decision is final.

In the event that the above Code of Conduct is infringed, the following procedure will apply:

- Verbal warning by the Class Tutor
- A written warning will be issued by the Course Co-ordinator
- Further infringements will be referred to the Centre Manager / Director

In the event of gross misconduct and/or a serious infringement the matter will be referred directly to the Centre Manager / Director for possible suspension or exclusion from the centre.

**I have read and understood the above Code of Conduct and I accept the rules and regulations for participation on a course at Abbeyleix Further Education Centre as outlined in Abbeyleix Further Education Centre the LOETB Learner Handbook.**

Learner Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Course Co-ordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Centre Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_