

Youth Work Ireland Laois – Policy Document

Title: Youth Cafes & Youth Clubs Code Of Conduct / Behaviour Policy

Document No: 110

Version: 02

Effective Date: 27.04.2020

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I have read, understood and agree to abide by policy document:

Youth Work Ireland Laois, Code of Conduct / Behaviour Policy

Signed:

Date:

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The team at YWI Laois, their groups and Clubs would like everyone who attends YWI Laois Youth Cafes and Youth Clubs to be happy, enjoy the activities, learn, achieve and to have a good time. In order for everyone to do that, a Code of Conduct/Behaviour Policy must be in place. This is a way for all of us (young people, visitors, staff and volunteers) to act in the correct manner. YWI Laois Youth Cafes and Youth Clubs provides a safe and stimulating environment for children, young people, staff, volunteers and visitors from different groups, including: ages, abilities, cultures and gender. All of the people who avail of and work in YWI Laois Youth Cafes and Youth Clubs should be able to enjoy and participate in activities provided without fear of negative behaviour from anyone. It can be a place where young people can be themselves amongst peers and with committed adults, a place where they can develop their social and life skills in a secure environment.

This policy applies to everyone who attends any YWI Laois, Group, Club and/or Cafe:

- Members of YWI Laois Youth Cafes and Youth Clubs
- Visitors to YWI Laois Youth Cafes and Youth Clubs
- Staff & Volunteers of YWI Laois Youth Cafes and Youth Clubs

The following are the examples of behaviour which we (children/young people/staff/volunteers) would consider unacceptable at the centre:

- Using your power, strength or authority to intimidate others around you.
- Abusive language.
- Racist, homophobic, transphobic or sexist language.
- Possession of and taking of drugs or any illegal substances.
- Possession of and drinking alcohol on the premises. If a person enters the centre under the influence of either substance they will be asked to leave.
- Smoking is unacceptable.
- Fighting and violent behaviour.

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- Disrespectful behaviour towards anyone at YWI Laois, Groups, Clubs / Cafes
- Physical contact and horse play.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Carrying / Possession of weapons
- Use of weapons as a form of intimidation to others.

The above list can be added to by anyone who attends YWI Laois, Groups, Clubs and / or Cafes. If you think something has been left out, come and see us. The code is here to help us and we welcome your views.

The children, young people, staff and volunteers have set up the ground rules and follow a “colour code” system where **GREEN** relates to positive behaviour and **RED** relates to behaviour that is unacceptable and actions are in place should **RED** behaviour occur.

GREEN

This is the type of behaviour that we would promote, praise and accept at YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes. It includes the following:

- General positive behaviour around YWI Laois, Groups/Clubs/Cafes.
- Respect for others at the centre – peers, staff, volunteers and visitors.
- Respect for the property, resources and equipment that is used.
- Being a role model to others at YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes, giving encouragement and assistance when and if needed.

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RED

It should be made clear that the exclusion of an individual would only be used as a very last resort. It should also be noted that if the staff feel that any person at YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes is in extreme danger they will not hesitate to call for assistance from the parents or the Gardaí. All available ways to deal with the issues/concerns would be tried first before we exclude anyone from YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes, for example, call the parents.

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive Organisation, which attempts to give all people entering the building equal opportunities and chances.

The above **RED** behaviour would, unfortunately, mean exclusion for the person(s) involved. The time limit of the exclusion could be from one day to the maximum; permanent exclusion (this has never been the case, as yet).

RED behaviour includes:

- People who have not complied with the **GREEN** stages of behaviour policy and still persist in negative, unacceptable behaviour.
- Parents/carers/ guardians have been informed on more than one occasion but behaviour still persists.
- Behaviour that is a danger to the person involved and to others at YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes.
- This behaviour could also have a damaging effect on others who attend the centre, and in turn influence them to act the same way.
- If a person repeatedly ignores advice/ help being given to them by the staff/volunteers, exclusion is the only outcome, they would be informed of this and the reason for the exclusion. All information would be kept confidential and on file.

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Depending on the reason for the exclusion from YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes, we would then review this, as a staff team, after a period of 3 months. It may be necessary to continue the exclusion for a further period of time, for example, if the person has persisted in attempting to gain access to YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes, even though they are excluded. If the staff team decide to allow the person back into the centre a formal written contract (known as a “Behavioural Contract”) will be devised. This contract would focus on the person conveying positive behaviour and giving the person the opportunity they deserve.

Procedure for dealing with behaviour:

When our ground rules for behaviour at YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes are not followed, the following step by step guide applies:

- The young person shall be taken to one side.
- For child protection and safety reasons there should always be two members of staff/volunteer available. If this is not possible you should either: a) be within listening range and sight of another member of staff/volunteer or b) if possible, wait until two members of staff/volunteer are available to talk to the young person.
- Depending on the behaviour, you may not be able to wait for another staff/volunteer member; therefore, the situation will have to be dealt with immediately, but also taking into consideration point (a) above.
- The staff/volunteer will listen to both sides of the complaint from the young person(s).
- We would encourage young people to resolve their own problems, where this is not possible staff will talk through the issues and offer alternatives to the negative behaviour that is displayed.
- If the issues/concerns cannot be rectified and the behaviour is persistent after staff/volunteer involvement, then the following procedure would come into practice:

Children/young people will receive 3 warnings in relation to their behaviour.

- a) The first would be a verbal warning where the child/young person would have the chance to speak to 2 members of staff/volunteer in relation to the specific behaviour. This would give the young person the opportunity to express themselves away from their peers and give reasons why they may be behaving in a negative way. The staff/volunteer would guide and advise the young person in positive behaviour at the centre, referring them to our “Ground Rules”.
- b) The parents/carers/guardians would not be contacted at this point but a record of the discussion would be kept on file.
- c) The second warning would again involve discussing the situation with the young person. At this point we would involve the parents/carers/guardians in the discussion, preferably in person. We would inform them of the behaviour that has resulted in us contacting them

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and notify them of the fact that the child is now on their 2nd warning. This consultation would be recorded and kept on the person's file.

- d) The final warning would be a meeting where all the parties (child, parents/carers, staff and volunteers) would be present to discuss implementing an individual behaviour contract, drawn up to cater specifically for that young person. Agreements would be made between the parties to try and ensure that the behaviour is kept within an acceptable level and the child/young person is able to keep the contract that is made. If the child/young person breaks their behaviour contract, they will be excluded from YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes for a fixed period that is deemed appropriate by the staff, as they will already have received their final warning.

Ground rules for the YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes:

- Please treat others as you would like to be treated – Staff and Volunteers to lead by example.
- Please throw your litter in the bins provided.
- Please walk when inside the building.
- Look after and respect YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes
- Everyone should be treated fairly and equally.
- Please respect other people's privacy.
- Please try and use good language at all times.
- Staff/Volunteer will treat all children and young people fairly at all times.
- Please tidy away things you have played with.
- Please remember Fire Exits are to be used in emergencies only.
- Please do not hurt each other in any way.
- YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes are non-smoking environments.
- We are all different, please respect each other; we will not tolerate any form of discrimination such as bullying or racism.

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Staff/Volunteers and members of YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes have come up with these rules together and we have all agreed to follow them.

GREEN RULES – The way we expect everyone to behave at all times. If you break these rules and get 3 warnings from any staff/volunteer; you may have to do work around YWI Laois Groups/Clubs/Cafes as a penalty, or be banned depending on the seriousness of the situation. The staff/volunteer team will decide on which course of action to take.

RED RULES – If you break any of these rules you will be banned automatically; there will be no warnings. We may also have to contact your parents and/or the Gardaí.