



'Limavady High School Youth Club is committed to providing a caring and friendly environment where young people learn to value and respect each other and are challenged to reach their full potential through active participation.'

POLICIES & PRACTICES

Limavady High School Youth Club
Irish Green Street, Limavady, BT49 9AN - T. 028 77763935

POLICIES & PRACTICES

Code of conduct

An orderly Youth Club is essential for efficiency in all its activities and for the mutual benefit of all its users. All members and staff must be treated with respect and courtesy. The Code of Conduct is based on the four 'C's' – cooperation with others, consideration of others, caring for others and courtesy towards others.

- Youth Club operating hours are 6:30pm – 9:30pm unless otherwise stated. There should be no loitering on school grounds outside of these hours. All areas of school grounds outside of the Youth Wing remain out-of-bounds during these hours unless accompanied by a member of staff.
- All members must be officially registered with the Club and pay the £2 admission fee each evening.
- All members should enter and exit Youth Club via the rear car park. No member should leave the building (once registered) except in an emergency situation or with the permission of a member of staff.
- Please use the litter bins provided.
- Appropriate dress and footwear should be worn at all times.
- Members of staff have absolute authority to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the safety of Youth Club members.
- All policies and procedures with regard to Youth Club and/or Limavady High School should be adhered to at all times. Members with persistent disregard for the aforementioned policies and procedures may be excluded from Youth Club.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT & DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Youth Club will seek to promote good behaviour of members in the following ways:

- Be providing a range of activities which members can enjoy and which are appropriate to their needs.
- By establishing good leader/member relationships based on mutual respect and a caring, firm and fair approach.
- Be ensuring that members are aware of the behaviour expected of them.
- By providing a pastoral care system in which leaders are available to advise and assist members experiencing difficulties of any kind.
- By promoting strong links with parents/guardians so that they can co-operate fully with leaders in ensuring members progress and happiness.
- By maintaining standard procedures for dealing with issues such as child protection, bullying, substance misuse and special needs etc.

Code of practice

The leader will have absolute authority and responsibility during a session in Youth Club and must take whatever measures necessary to ensure the safety of all its members:

- Must not escalate, encourage or condone matters by negative association.
- Will recognise conflict as an opportunity to address a problem.
- Must challenge already aggressive behaviour or heated situations using professional awareness and intervention.
- Must anticipate and so nip in the bud to avoid escalation.
- Should intervene or challenge in a positive manner.

Behaviour management

The behaviour of members is monitored and evaluated during each session by the staff responsible for each group and will follow the procedures set out below:

- If a member of staff becomes aware that a young person is experiencing difficulties, of whatever nature, then he/she will, in the first instance, offer support and counselling to the member. This may take many forms, ranging from an informal conversation to a more formal process which is closely monitored and recorded.
- During a short de-brief at the end of every session, views may be given on the general or specific behaviour of a group or individual to the Youth & Community Tutor.
- Parents/guardians will be kept informed at all times and their support sought.
- If the problem persists, depending on the nature of it, staff may continue the counselling process with the young person using a variety of educational methods and practices including targets, sanctions and rewards, to try to resolve the problem at this level. Whilst the problem may not require the intervention of the Youth & community tutor, they will be kept informed at all times.

Discipline policy

Serious, dangerous or persistent disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated and can be dealt with in the following ways:

- The young person may be excluded from taking part in the activity/event.
- A period of suspension may be sanctioned by the Youth & Community Tutor.
- An incident which is considered to be of a serious nature could lead to an immediate and direct referral to the Advisory Committee.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against the member and include a recommendation for them to be withdrawn, suspended and/or expelled from the Youth Club.
- Members will not be re-admitted to the Youth Club without a review of their behaviour by the Advisory Committee. This can include input from the members' parent/guardian and school if deemed appropriate.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

It is the policy of Limavady High School Youth Club to provide a neutral and harmonious leisure environment which is free from harassment and intimidation and in which members or visitors do not feel apprehension because of their gender, religious beliefs, political opinion, ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or race. Bullying is unacceptable and all members are expected to comply with this policy. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action which, where appropriate, may warrant the withdrawal of membership.

This policy addresses the following issues:

- To identify and classify what bullying is.
- To make our members aware that it is wrong to bully.
- To ensure that all members take bullying seriously and understand the policy.
- To encourage all members to feel comfortable to report incidents and that it is 'right to tell'.
- To put strategies in place so that all staff can deal with reported incidents.
- To log all instances of bullying.

All members and staff have a responsibility to ensure an environment in which the dignity of members or visitors is respected. They should be aware of the serious and genuine problems which bullying can cause, and ensure that their behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in anyway to be bullying. All staff should provide support to members who are being bullied, by encouraging them to disclose any problems that are making them uncomfortable. All staff should be responsive and supportive to any member who complains about bullying, provide full and clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality in all cases and ensure that there are no further problems after the complaint has been resolved.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt another and put them under stress.

The most common types of bullying are:

- Gesture bullying
- Verbal bullying
- Physical bullying
- Extortion bullying
- Exclusion bullying

Steps to be taken if bullying is reported:

- Staff should interview the victim and bully and seek to stop this behaviour at an early stage. The Youth & Community Tutor should be informed and all information logged on a 'Bullying Report Form'.
- Staff should monitor the situation on a regular basis and keep the Youth & Community Tutor informed. If the bullying continues, suspension may be applied.
- The parent/guardian of both bully and victim will be informed of all bullying incidences and action taken.

Monitoring & evaluating the policy

The success of the policy will be monitored and assessed in several different ways:

- By carrying out bullying surveys annually.
- By updating the policy regularly in keeping with current guidelines.
- By highlighting bullying during the planning of the programme for each group.
- An increased willingness of 'right to tell'.
- A reduction in the levels of reported bullying.
- A happier and more caring environment resulting in improved attendance and enhanced member achievement.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

As well as fulfilling its statutory duty, the Youth Club aims to enhance and safeguard each member's fundamental right to be protected from harm, in a secure environment. All issues will be dealt with following a clear set of procedures based on EA (Education Authority) guidance:

- By allowing a variety of opportunities for discussion among members of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance.
- By ensuring that all those who work within the Youth Club (including visitors) are appropriately vetted.
- By ensuring that all staff receive training in child protection and are well-informed about their duty of care and responsibility to report.
- By regularly reminding staff of the procedures for child protection and ensuring that they are aware of the names of Miss Fisher (Designated Officer) and Mrs Cartwright (Deputy Designated Officer) and their role in child protection.
- To ensure that this policy (in liaison with the Designated Officer) is in conjunction with that of Limavady High School.
- To promote co-operation with statutory agencies in the multi-agency response to child protection.
- By informing all interested parties about this policy.

Definition of child abuse

Children may be abused by a parent, sibling or other relative, a carer, an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms including:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- CSE

From the Children's Order 1995 (Northern Ireland), Guidance and Regulations, Volume 6, 'Co-Operating to protect Children'.

Child abuse can come to your attention in a number of ways:

- You may have concerns about a child's appearance, behaviour or physical condition.
- A child may volunteer information.
- Another child may tell you about what has happened to a friend.
- An adult may bring something to your attention.

Steps to be taken if child abuse is reported

- Act promptly
- Listen to what is being said and take it seriously
- Explain that you have an obligation to refer the matter in order to seek help.
- At the earliest opportunity, make notes, especially actual words used.
- Do not investigate
- Talk to the designated officer

Monitoring & evaluating the policy

- To ensure all staff, visitors, parents and members are aware of, and have access to, child protection procedures.
- To maintain a log of complaints of abuse
- To issue the child protection policy in summary to parents every 2 years

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

It is the aim of Limavady High School Youth Club to make our facilities as accessible as possible to members with special needs, within available resources. No member should be prevented from accessing appropriate facilities owing to his/her disability. We also believe that wherever possible, members with disabilities should be given the necessary support to participate fully in Youth Club programmes. Consideration will be given to accessibility of new activities to disabled members, both in relation to programme design and to the approval of patterns of provision.

Definition of disability

The definition of disability/special needs is as laid out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995:

- A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- Physical disability includes hearing and visual impairment.
- The term 'mental impairment' is intended to cover a wide range of difficulties related to the way the mind works, including learning disabilities.

INTERNET USAGE POLICY

Information Technology has become a commonplace feature of young people's lives. There are many educational benefits and advantages to be derived when used appropriately and responsibly. Limavady High School Youth Club will endeavour to utilise these opportunities for the Personal and Social Development of young people by making available access to computers, the Internet and other technology in the delivery of its programmes and services. Limavady High School Youth Club is also aware of the potential risks involved with such technology and it is our aim to protect young people from danger by providing as safe an environment as possible.

We will endeavour to do this by:

- Providing clear guidelines for what is acceptable and unacceptable use.
- Providing filtering software (Net Nanny) on each computer.
- Supervising access and usage.
- Raising awareness among staff and members of the potential risks associated with Internet use.
- A member of staff will be responsible for overseeing Internet security and dealing with issues related to acceptable use and behaviour.

In common with other media such as magazines, books, video etc. some material available via the internet is unsuitable for young people. However, it is not possible to guarantee that undesirable material will never appear on a computer. Limavady High School Youth Club cannot accept liability for the material accessed or consequences thereof.

Users must at all times conduct themselves responsibly and honestly when accessing the Internet or e-mail facilities. They must accept that a member of staff may check individual websites visited or computer files belonging to an individual.

They must ensure that their actions do not:

- waste time or resources
- cause offence

Procedure for reporting inappropriate use, sites and behaviour

- Members and/or staff who encounter unsuitable sites must report this immediately to the Youth & Community Tutor.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

It is the aim of Limavady High School Youth Club to provide and maintain as far as possible:

- A safe and healthy place for all
- Safe working procedures
- Safe equipment

Statutory responsibility

- All staff are provided with regular training that will assist them to work safely.
- All staff holds appropriate qualifications both to run a session and use the necessary equipment.
- That an inspection of premises and equipment be carried out at least once a year.
- That all defects and hazards are reported to the responsible officer in the Board.
- That all equipment purchased or acquired is suitable and safe for the intended use.
- The prompt and efficient maintenance of all equipment and non-structural repairs.
- That adequate arrangement exists for carrying out regular fire drills and that all staff participates in and are aware of such arrangements as per Limavady High Schools fire drill policy.
- Report all accidents to the Youth & Community Tutor and ensure that accident report forms are completed.
- A competent electrician will examine electrical appliances and certify that they are in safe working order at least once every 5 years.
- WELB is responsible for the routine maintenance of fire extinguishers and they will be inspected once every 12 months by a board appointed person.

Accidents

Members involved in accidents should initially be looked at by a qualified first aider if necessary to decide on the best course of action. The youth & Community Tutor should be notified so that the parent/guardian can be contacted and informed of the incident and the action taken. The Youth & Community Tutor in consultation with the parent/guardian will decide if the member should go home or not. It is important that all accidents are reported through the completion of an accident report form, thoroughly investigated and where necessary, action taken to prevent reoccurrence.

First aid

A first aid box containing only first aid requisites must be provided for use and must be readily accessible. All staff should be aware of the location of the first aid box and the person in charge.

Special cases

Each year brings with it new members with new special medical needs. Their names and the specific protocol for dealing with them will be listed with the Youth & Community Tutor. All staff working with these particular individuals must have a copy of the protocol and familiarise themselves with the correct procedure for dealing with them.

Fire drill

On hearing the fire bell:

- Staff should escort the members of their group and any strays they pick up along the way to the designated assembly point.
- The Youth & Community Tutor will bring roll sheets and hand them out to the designated leaders.
- The Youth & Community Tutor should be informed once everyone has been accounted for.
- The Youth & Community Tutor remains in-charge overall and will be the person to speak to the fire department when they arrive.

Outings & visits

All trips from Youth Club must have:

- The Youth & Community Tutors approval
- Parental permission
- A risk assessment

School minibuses

- The Youth Club at present has access to the school minibuses.
- The upkeep and day-to-day routine maintenance of these vehicles is the responsibility of Mr H McElwee (Technology Technician).
- Each bus must be booked by filling in the appropriate booking sheet.
- The bus logbook must be filled in after each trip so that any problems brought to the attention of Mr McElwee can be fixed promptly.

For insurance purposes all drivers must:

- Be over 23 years of age
- Have a full and current driving license
- Be without penalty points or endorsements on their license
- Have permission from the Youth & Community Tutor to drive the bus.

COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Limavady High School Youth Club is committed to listening to views about its services and will do its best to enable those wishing to feel confident to raise issues and concerns in the appropriate manner. Comments/complaints will be considered following a clear set of procedures based on WELB (Western Education & Library Board) guidance. These procedures will be made clear to anyone making a complaint. The Youth & Community Tutor will try to resolve a complaint as informally and quickly as possible and always make clear what action, if any, is being taken. The Advisory Committee will then consider complaints where it has been impossible to resolve them at management level. If a complaint is brought to the attention of an individual member of Advisory Committee, they should make sure that the complaint is dealt with under the correct complaints procedure adopted by the Youth Club.

Definition of terms

- A *customer* is the term used to define those who avail of Youth Club services and support.
- A *customer base* is defined as schools, parents, pupils, and public representatives, voluntary and statutory agencies, business community and the Youth Service.
- A *comment* is a statement on the part of the customer, either verbal or written which tell the staff when you think they are doing things right.
- A *complaint* is an expression of dissatisfaction which requires a response or may lead to an investigation. It may also be a perceived injustice/failure of reasonable expectations on the part of the customer about a specific issue or issues.

All anonymous complaints will be treated as comments on the basis that the Youth Club has no recourse to a complainant. However, if the comment has potential implications for future criminal investigations relating to the individual concerned, the Youth & Community and Advisory Committee will take appropriate action which may involve the WELB and/or other bodies. There are already formal/statutory appeal procedures in place to address customer grievances in many areas of the Board's responsibilities. The Board has a statutory duty, where relevant, to inform its customers of the existence of those procedures. The Comments/Complaints Policy does not affect those rights.

Principles

This Comments/Complaints Policy aims to facilitate the Youth Club in the pursuance of its commitment to provide services to the highest standards:

- Reflect the values associated with the Youth Club.
- Be simple, speedy, accessible, and respect confidentiality.
- Treat everyone with openness, honesty, courtesy, equality and inclusiveness.
- Identify and respond to the needs of our customers.

- Provide a mechanism within which any issue identified by customers can be quickly and effectively addressed.

Purposes

- Address all issues arising from a complaint in a fair and confidential manner within the time-scale set out in the Policy.
- Inform the complainant of progress and the final outcome of the investigation.
- Enhance customer confidence and satisfaction.
- Provide guidance and protection for staff, parents/guardians and members of the public.

Time frame for dealing with complaints

- Acknowledge written and email generated complaints within 5 working days. In the event of a complaint not being acknowledged within the time-scale, the Youth & Community Tutor will investigate the particular circumstances relating to the delay.
- Respond to the complaint within 3 weeks (15 working days). If this is not possible the complainant will be informed within 15 working days as to when a response might be forthcoming.

Who deals with comments and complaints?

- A formal complaint should be made in the first instance to the Youth & Community Tutor.
- All other staff or members of the Advisory Committee approached by a complainant should refer them to the Youth & Community tutor.

Responding to a comment/complaint

- All points and issues raised in a complaint will be addressed.
- Written replies will be in a jargon-free language.
- If the Youth & Community Tutor does not hear from the complainant within 3 weeks (15 days) of the date of the issue of the latter, the matter will then be deemed closed.

Complaints involving other agencies

A complainant may involve the Youth Club and/or one of more agencies. If the Youth Club, as the lead body, subsequently identifies that the complaint is the responsibility of another agency, the complainant will be formally transferred to that body and the Youth Club will undertake to inform the complainant.

Complaints relating to child protection

The Youth Club acknowledged its responsibility, under the Children (NI) Order 1995 to work in partnership with other statutory bodies to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. This partnership is facilitated by the Board's Child Protection Service. When the Youth Club receives a complaint/concern, which may be a Child Protection issue, the complaint/concern will be dealt with under the Youth Club's Child Protection policy. Depending in the nature of the complaint, it may be passed to the Board's designated officer who will decide on the appropriate course of action. Such complaint/concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the guidance issued by the Western Area Child Protection Committee (1998) and the Department of Education (1999).

Access to the policy

The policy is available in the Youth Club upon request.

Monitoring the policy

The Youth & Community Tutor will monitor complaints received and report to the Advisory Committee on an annual basis on the implementation of policy and procedures. This will give details of:

- The number and types of complaints
- The average time taken to respond
- The number of satisfied customers

Confidentiality

All concerns and complaints will be treated with discretion. It is vital that parents/guardians feel confident that their complaint will not penalise their child. However, a complainant will need to be aware that some information will have to be shared with those involved in order that the complaint can be investigated.

Why we like to hear from you?

Comments/complaints are useful to the Youth Club because they allow it to monitor, evaluate and review its services in pursuit of continuous improvement.

Unresolved complaints

If the complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction by the Youth & Community Tutor and/or Advisory Committee, the complaint can be referred to WELB. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, he/she can complain to the Commissioner for Complaints at:

- Office of the Ombudsman, Progressive House, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6HN

The Commissioner for Complaints is independent and investigates complaints of maladministration against public bodies. The Commissioner will normally expect complainants to have made full use of the procedures set out in the Youth Club's comments/complaints policy before carrying out any investigation.