



Valley College

## LEARNER CONDUCT POLICY FOR VALLEY COLLEGE

Covid-19 Addendum March 2021. This policy has been reviewed September 2021 and it is felt that this addendum remains appropriate:

We know that some learners will return to college having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns and some learners, particularly vulnerable groups such as those with a social worker, previously looked-after children who left care through adoption or special guardianship, and young carers, will need additional support and access to services such as social workers and counsellors. Additionally, provision for learners who have SEND may have been disrupted during partial college closure and there may be an impact on their conduct.

Valley College leaders will work with staff, learners and advocates to ensure that conduct expectations are clearly understood and consistently supported, taking account of individual needs. Extra time will be given for regulation activities to support learners.

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to inform and guide Valley College staff members in teaching and rewarding appropriate learner conduct that supports learning, progress, achievement and enjoyment of college life.

Our aim is that all learners should be able to achieve their potential in a safe and happy environment; wherever possible, acquire the self-discipline that will make them good citizens of the future; and lead satisfying and fulfilling lives.

This policy is based on the principle that all learners and staff throughout the college are valued members, and productive relationships are central to our ethos and approach.

This policy should be read in conjunction with those policies listed below:

- Health and Safety Policy

- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Staff Conduct Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Restrictive Guidelines Practice and Policy

## **Valley College Context**

As a college for learners with learning disabilities and difficulties we have a wide range of abilities to cater for. Many of our learners are intellectually immature and as such expectations regarding their conduct must be modified.

Some young adults have learned to express themselves through inappropriate conduct and in these cases the careful management of their conduct is essential.

In other cases, abler learners with moderate learning difficulties can display willful behaviour that requires a consistent approach. Conditions such as ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Conditions, mental health conditions or the impact of medication need to be taken into account regarding the expectations of a learner's conduct and our reactions to this.

### **A note about 'behaviour'**

At Valley College, 'behaviour' refers to the way we interact and respond to people, objects, situations and events we find ourselves in. Behaviour is anything we do or say which other people can observe and as such can be positive, neutral and negative. It is also context specific, for example, behaviour appropriate at home or in a social setting might not necessarily be appropriate for the college environment. Similarly, particular behaviours may be informed and impacted by a learner's disability, learning difficulty or personal circumstances. Consequently, this policy refers to learner conduct.

We should, therefore, resist using the term 'behaviour' to describe negative or inappropriate actions.

Where a young adult's conduct interferes with their learning or the good order of the Valley College, we must support them to develop and find more socially acceptable ways in which to conduct themselves.

### **Learning Environment Management**

It is the expectation that staff will constantly reinforce, remind and refer to conduct expectations. These will be taught, sometimes specifically and sometimes (due to a learning difficulty or disability) through experience and consistent staff responses. We wish to support the learners, to take ownership of their own conduct and to understand the importance of choice. We aim to support learners to make appropriate choices.

Our Valley College staff approach includes:

- treat learners consistently whilst maintaining an awareness of individual needs; plan whilst taking into account all aspects relating to each individual including their disability or learning difficulty;
- communicate effectively to learners in ways appropriate to their individual needs;
- staff must also view a learner's conduct as a form of communication and as such endeavour to understand the intention of this communication whether it be concerned with task avoidance, attention, boredom, anxiety or a reaction to an event that may or may not be understood by the college staff.

The importance of providing a relevant and stimulating curriculum is crucial. We differentiate according to learner's abilities, realising the frustration that can be caused when work is too easy, too difficult or inappropriate. Learning and training need to engage and support the College's aspirations. Personal and Social Development permeates throughout the Valley College curriculum.

Where an individual learner's conduct is an on-going priority, an Individual Risk Assessment will be completed. A multi-disciplinary meeting will be held to discuss and finalise the risk assessment and if required develop a Conduct Support Plan.

### **Positive Reinforcement**

This must be appropriate to the individual learner and take account of a number of factors that include, ability (including their learning difficulty or disability) and context. It is vital for Valley College staff to provide cognitive appropriate positive reinforcements that support the learner in understanding what is expected of them.

### **Distraction/Diversion Techniques**

If a learner has displayed inappropriate conduct the college will employ a wide variety of diversional techniques to encourage improved conduct or deal with a specific problem regarding their conduct.

- Diversion/distraction techniques such as giving a learner a task that breaks a developing pattern of conduct or simply asking the learner to take 'time out'.
- restorative approaches where a learner takes responsibility for their conduct and is able to make an apology or reconcile with a colleague;
- a meeting with the learner and their advocates may be convened;

### **Exclusions**

As a last resort and in rare cases, exclusion will be used as follows:

- exclusions from college whereby the learner is not permitted back into college for a fixed period of time; this will only be used in cases of very serious misconduct which is deemed willful on the part of the learner (i.e. where it has been decided that the learner is capable of understanding the context of their conduct); examples include:
  - aggression toward other learners or staff;

- persistent serious disruption to the learning of others and the safety of the college environment;
- serious damage to college property or that of learners, staff and visitors;
- illegal actions involving theft, drugs, alcohol, pornography or other such serious misconduct.

It is possible that a learner may be excluded as a last resort whilst resources are put in place to provide appropriate support to make that person and other members of the college community safe from harm and free to learn.

In all such cases the decision to exclude a young adult will only be made by the Head of College.

In all cases of exclusions, the Local Authority, Directors and advocates will be informed immediately and where relevant a learner's social worker will be involved.

Learners and advocates have the right to make representations to the Directors about an exclusion and have a right of appeal.

### **Anti-bullying Policy**

Valley College is totally opposed to bullying in any of its forms and it will not be tolerated in college. We have a comprehensive anti-bullying policy which operates within Valley College. All learners are taught what to do should they feel they are being bullied.

We are committed to providing a safe, caring environment for all learners so they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment (see Anti Bullying Policy).

### **Sexism, sexual harassment and sexual violence.**

The college has a zero tolerance approach towards sexual harassment and violence, and all concerns raised or incidents reported will be dealt with in accordance with the safeguarding procedures in place within college.

### **Roles and Responsibilities including College Support Systems**

- The staff in our college have high expectations of the learners with regard to their conduct, and they strive to ensure that all learners work to the best of their ability.
- The staff treat each learner fairly, showing respect and understanding of individuals.
- The staff will liaise with external agencies, as necessary, to support and guide the progress of each learner.

The role of the Head of College:

- It is the responsibility of the Head of College, to implement the college Conduct policy consistently throughout the college, and to report to the Executive Principal/CEO of the Trust, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy.

It is also the responsibility of the Executive Principal/CEO of the Trust to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all learners in the college.

- The Executive Principal/CEO of the Trust /Head of College support the staff by implementing the policy, by setting the standards for conduct, and by supporting staff in their implementation of the policy.
- The Head of College will keep records of all reported serious incidents.

### **Consultation, monitoring and evaluation**

The Head of College monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and also reports to the Directors on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.

The Head of College will review this policy every two years. The Directors may, however, review the policy earlier than this if they receive recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

	<b>Name/Initials:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Written By:</b>	LAP	Sept 2018
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	SJ	Mar 20
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