

Portlaoise Institute



Policies

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Admissions Policy:

Admission to Portlaoise Institute take place in 3 steps.

Step 1 Application

Step 2 Provisional offer and acceptance

Step 3 Full Registration

General Entry Requirements

Unless otherwise stated the basic requirement for entry to all Further Education Courses is successful completion of the Leaving Certificate or equivalent. Students who do not have the above qualifications are also eligible to apply. All students must demonstrate a minimum level of Literacy. This will be assessed during the registration process by completing a computer based assessment. Some students will be required to demonstrate a minimum level of maths literacy for specific courses. This will also be assessed via a computer based assessment programme. Students must be capable of passing Garda Vetting to enable them complete mandatory Work Experience.

Step 1 Application

Students wishing to apply must complete the online application form which is available at [www.portlaoiseInstitute .ie](http://www.portlaoiseInstitute.ie).

To use this facility you must have a valid and current:

- PPS Number
- Email address
- Mobile phone number

Applications are open from February each academic year. (Please see website)

Closing Date for Applications

The closing date for receipt of applications for the first round of offers is in early June (Please see website) Applications received after this date will only be processed subject to places being available on your chosen course.

Once the application has been processed students will receive an acknowledgement of their application and be informed when provisional offers will be made.

Check [www.portlaoiseinstitute .ie](http://www.portlaoiseinstitute.ie) for important notices on course availability.

Applicants with a disability, significant health condition and/or a specific learning difficulty must complete the relevant section on the application form. It is the policy of Portlaoise Institute to endeavour to provide appropriate support and help within the limits of available resources. Applicants may not be able to commence a course if the supports are not in place. After course commencement students are asked to inform the Institute, in writing, of any changes in health and/or special needs.

Step 2 Offer and Acceptance

Places on Courses are offered on the following basis:

- Provisional offers will be made on a first come basis, and are subject to the applicants successfully fulfilling all of the entry criteria and successfully completing the registration process.
- Upon receiving an offer of a place students are required to pay a Student Service Charge of €200 in order to secure a place on your chosen course. Please note that this is non-refundable if the student does not take up a place. The Fee must be paid by the date stated on the letter of offer.

Step 3 Registration

For Full registration to take place a student needs to satisfy the following criteria:

- Provide the letter of provisional offer being made.
- Meet the entry requirements of the course.
- Provide documentation to support the application:
 - PPS No
 - Examination Results (where applicable)
 - Medical cards (if applicable)
- Complete the registration assessment.
- Demonstrate a minimum level of Literacy.
- Demonstrate a minimum level of Numeracy (for specific courses).
- Applicants may be subject to interviews where applicable.
- All students who are offered a place must pay the full fee by the date indicated on their offer letter in order to secure their place.
- Students will be fully registered on their chosen course, when all criteria have been satisfied.
- Students who do not meet the minimum literacy course requirements will be informed as soon as possible and refunded their fees.

General Information

- A student who does not pay the fee by the due date will surrender their place on the course.
- The student may reapply for the course as a late applicant and may be interviewed for a vacant place.
- No cash payments will be accepted.
- All payments must be paid on-line using a debit or credit card.
- Courses require adequate enrolment to run the course/programme.
- All course participants attend at their own risk, Portlaoise Institute or Laois & Offaly Education and Training Board do not accept liability for damage or injury to persons or property, while present in the Institute or on the grounds.

Garda Vetting

Garda Vetting is a requirement for all our Further Education students. During the Orientation Process all students will be supplied with a Garda Vetting Application Form and instructions on how to process this form. Failure to disclose a Garda Vetting issue may result in a student being suspended or expelled from a course. Please refer to Work Experience Policy.

FEES PAYABLE SUMMARY

1. No Fees are payable on Application.

2. Fees payable on accepting your provisional offer

Student Service Charge €200

3. Fees payable on Registration

QQI Examination Fee €50 (Exempt for Full Med Card holders)

Dept. of Education €200 (Exempt for Full Med Card Holders)

Upon receiving an offer of a place students are required to pay the Student Service Charge of €200 in order to secure the place on your chosen course. Please note that this is a non-refundable fee and must be paid by the date stated on your letter of offer. Full refunds are given to those who do not meet the entrance assessment requirements.

A QQI Examination Fee of €50 must be paid prior to course commencement. Current Medical Card holders are not required to pay the QQI Examination Fee.

Other costs (books, exams, equipment, professional membership fees, optional training etc) may also be payable. There are extra course fees for specialist courses eg Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing. Current formation on costs are provided under each course outline. See www.portlaoiselInstitute.ie

Following the 2013 Budget additional fees of €200 will be payable to the Department of Education & Skills. The contribution is an annual contribution. Eligible participants on Further Education courses of more than one year duration must pay the contribution for each year of that course.

- The following categories of participant are exempt from paying the contribution:
- Full medical card holders in their own right and their dependent children.
- Those who are eligible under the student grant scheme.
- Those in receipt of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) or Voluntary Training Opportunity Scheme (VTOS) allowances.

Students with Additional Needs

Portlaoise Institute is an equal opportunities Institute and welcomes and encourages applications from students with additional needs. It is Institute policy to attempt to provide appropriate support and help for students with a disability, significant health condition or specific learning difficulty within the limits of available resources. The Institute will inform the student of the accommodation it can provide. Should a student fail to notify the Institute of a specific need at the time of application, the Institute may not be in a position to assist at a later date. The Institute and Board of Management is aware that there may be occasions that the facilities, personnel or resources sought by the student seeking special accommodation may not be available. On such occasions the Institute would reserve the right to refuse admission.

International Students

Portlaoise Institute welcomes applications from international students. International students are asked to familiarise themselves with the information contained in the Further Education Admissions Policy, Admissions Procedures and Institute website. International students are asked to provide the Institute with copies of any previous educational qualifications including English. Students whose first language is not English must demonstrate to the Institute, by way of an assessment test, that they have the minimum standard of English required prior to being offered a place on a course. A place may be

withdrawn if, following the assessment test, a student is deemed not to have a sufficient level of English to complete the course. All Further Education courses are conducted through English.

Non EU Nationals are charged a tuition fee determined by the Irish Government. All course fees must be paid before a candidate can commence a course. These fees are non-refundable. All information and supporting documentation requested must be submitted to the Institute before a student can commence a course.

Course Content

- Students should note that modules on courses are subject to change.
- Courses commence subject to adequate enrolment. Laois & Offaly Education and Training Board reserves the right to cancel or discontinue courses.

Grants

The range of financial support available to students intending to attend Further Education includes:

Student Grant Scheme	Details available on website	www.susi.ie
Fund for Students with Disability	Details available on website	www.studentfinance.ie
Students Assistance Fund	Details available on website	www.studentfinance.ie
Back to Education Allowance	Details available on website	www.studentfinance.ie
Other Finance: Bursaries & Scholarships	Details available on website	www.studentfinance.ie

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Admissions Policy.

Attendance Policy

It is the policy of Portlaoise Institute to encourage full attendance by all students as it is felt that poor attendance is a major factor in students not achieving their full potential. All courses require both **participation** and the **submission** of work.

Students **are expected to be on time** for all timetabled classes and **not leave** before class finishes. A teacher has the discretion not to admit a student into their class if class has commenced and the roll has been taken for the class. Late students may be marked absent for that class.

Students are expected to attend all classes and all subjects unless they have written evidence of exemptions from particular subjects.

Attendance rolls will be taken in every class. If a student is absent for any class in the morning this is recorded as a partial day. If a student is absent for any class after lunch this will be recorded as a partial day. Two partial days are deemed to be a full day of absence.

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their own attendance.

The following procedures will apply where a student has been recorded as absent:

- **A student, having missed ten days/classes**, may receive text notification from the Portlaoise Institute. This is a warning. Students will be advised to make an appointment to see their Coordinator or class teacher at this time to discuss the reason for this missed time.

- **A student having missed twenty days/classes** will be deemed to have left the course of study. The student may receive text notification from the Portlaoise Institute and will later receive written notification from the School Attendance Officer or Principal. The student will only be re-admitted in consultation with the Principal and the Course Co-ordinator

and/or Attendance officer. **The Principal has the final decision in relation to admittance/exclusion from the course.**

Students Attending Three days a Week

Please note that Students attending 3 days a week will be treated proportionately for Attendance.

Extenuating Circumstances

Written evidence of extenuating circumstances i.e. bereavement, serious illness/ medical treatment may be accepted as a valid reason for poor Attendance at the given time in consultation with the Course Co-ordinator and the Attendance Officer. No other circumstances will be accepted as valid reasons for poor Attendance e.g. planned holidays, marriage leave or maternity leave. Ongoing continuous medical certificates will not be accepted by the Portlaoise Institute.

Capacity to Complete the Course

Students whose personal circumstances negates their capacity to complete their course may be asked to withdraw from their course.

Appeals

A student may appeal their 20 day expulsion from the course, to the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer and Principal will consider the student's Attendance, their performance on the course to date, work submitted, and the student's capacity to complete the course.

The decision of Portlaoise Institute may be appealed to Laois/Offaly ETB.

SUSI Maintenance Grants

SUSI Maintenance Grants are aimed to assist students in the attendance and participation of a chosen course of study. Payment of maintenance grants shall be made subject to the

satisfactory participation and attendance on the Further Education course. **For receipt of grants** a student must have an **80%** attendance record in a calendar month.

SUSI Maintenance Grants **will not** be paid to students who fall below this attendance quota in a calendar month. Students will not be paid their SUSI Maintenance Grant regardless of circumstances (i.e. inclement weather, serious illness, medical certificates, medical appointments, bereavement etc.) if their attendance falls below the satisfactory quota. There will be no exceptions to this. Please do not contact Laois and Offaly ETB in relation to not receiving your SUSI Grant for a particular month. For exam months ie December and May attendance at all exams is necessary to receive your grant for that month.

Work Experience

Students must have satisfactory attendance and participation in their chosen course of study to participate in the work experience element of their course. Students who show unsatisfactory attendance and participation will not be permitted to attend their work experience and may be asked to leave the Course. The school management will deem what is acceptable or unacceptable under this Attendance Policy.

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Attendance Policy.

Assessment of Learner Policy

ASSIGNMENTS

Projects/Learner Records/Collection of Work

DEFINITION

An assignment is an exercise carried out in response to a brief with specific guidelines.

PROCEDURE

1. Students will be given Briefs during the year for each assignment. This brief will outline the guidelines and requirements for the assignment, the issue and submission date for the assignment and the allocated percentage mark for the assignment.
2. If a student is absent when the brief is issued it is their responsibility to download and print the brief from their PLC Folder.
3. On the date of submission of the assignment, the assignment must be handed to the teacher during the timetabled class, which must include of the signed and dated brief
4. Class teacher will request each student who submits an assignment to sign the **Record of Assignment Submission**.
5. All assignment work submitted to Portlaoise Institute will not be returned to the students except from prior **written agreement** from the teacher.
6. Late submission of assignment work will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances (family bereavement, personal crisis, medical certificate). Students must complete the **Late Submission of Work Application Form** with any relevant documentation/certificates to the subject teacher.

SKILLS DEMONSTRATION

DEFINITION

A skill is an assessment of mastery of specific practical, organisational and/or interpersonal skills.

PROCEDURE

1. Students will be given Briefs during the year for each skills demonstration. This brief will outline the guidelines and requirements for the skills demonstration, the dates, times and locations of the skills demonstration
2. It is the responsibility of the student to be prepared with any relevant equipment, uniform and documentation in order to complete their skills demonstration.
3. Students will not be admitted to the skills demonstration room after 10 minutes from the commencement of the skills test
4. All students will sign a **Skills Demonstration Attendance Sheet** before commencing the skills test.
5. All relevant skills demonstration material with the signed brief must be handed to the class teacher.
6. Class teacher will request each student who submits relevant material for the skills test and signed and dated brief to sign the **Record of Assignment Submission**.
7. Late submission of skills demonstration work will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances (family bereavement, personal crisis, medical certificate). Students must complete the **Late Submission of Work Application Form** with any relevant documentation/certificates to the relevant subject teacher.

EXAMS

DEFINITION

A means of assessing a student's ability to recall and apply skills, knowledge and understanding within a set period of time (time constrained) and under clearly specified conditions.

PROCEDURE

1. Portlaoise Institute's Calendar identifies the dates of examination assessment during the academic year. These may be subject to change but students will be notified accordingly.
2. It is the students responsibility to familiarise themselves with these dates, times, locations and duration of examinations.
3. Students must familiarise themselves with the **Examination Room Regulations** prior to the commencement of exams. These rules will be available outside the exam centres and in the PLC Folders.
4. If students breach any of the examination room regulations it may result in the invigilator asking the student to leave the room immediately and subsequently the students examination been marked as zero. A report on the incident will be filed to the Principal and Examinations Secretary.
5. In extenuating circumstances (family bereavement, personal crisis, medical certificate) the student may complete the examinations on an alternative date which will be decided by the examinations secretary. The student must **apply in writing** to the **Examinations Secretary** seeking to sit the examination at an alternative date. If this alternative date is unsuitable for the student there will be no further available examination dates

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Assessment of Learner Policy.

Assessment Materials Policy

1. Work should be submitted in line the Assessment Briefs and teacher guidelines. (See Assessment Policy)
2. Work submitted for assessment becomes the property of the Institute.
3. Work submitted for assessment will not be returned to any student without the existence of a prior arrangement with the teacher eg Students' Art Portfolio work.
4. Students should keep a copy of the work submitted in the event that they need to use or reference their own work in the future.
5. No student should submit work to a teacher, who is not their programme teacher for that assessment, without prior arrangement.
6. All work submitted will be recorded by the programme teacher using the Official Assignment Submission record sheets.
7. Work not physically signed in by the student, will not be deemed to have been submitted for assessment unless by prior agreement with assessor.
8. No work for assessment will be accepted by another teacher without prior arrangement.
9. All work submitted to a teacher will be stored securely within the Institute prior to the IV and EV process.
10. Work should be presented by the teacher as required by the Institute for the IV and EV process.
11. After the EV process work will be placed in a secure location assigned by the Institute for review for the duration of the Appeals Process.
12. After the Appeals Process, work from that year will be sorted and made available for shredding no later than October of the next academic year by the teacher/assessor.
13. Any recorded data eg presentations will also be deleted off the main server, hard drives, and cameras by individual teachers, in line with data protection guidelines.
14. Student's personal exam information will also be shredded at this time.
15. In the event that a teacher is no longer working in the Centre, management will assume responsibility for the management of that examination material.

16. No work should not retained by the Institute for use as teacher's aids or examples without the prior agreement of a student.
17. Work to be retained for assessment in the next academic year will be stored in a secure location.
18. Deadline dates referred to on submission briefs refer to timetabled classes with that teacher on that date.

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Assessment Materials Management Policy.

Special Education Needs Policy

It is the policy of Portlaoise Institute to encourage full progression by all students. It is the ethos of the Institute to nurture and enhance an ethos of educational development and personal achievement within the time spent with us at Portlaoise Institute.

Students with special education needs commencing the academic year must follow the official procedure in order to capture the best opportunities for course completion and course success.

Procedure

1. At the time of application, the student needs to identify that they have special educational needs in the box provided on the on-line application form.
2. As part of course induction the course co-ordinator will read and explain to all their students the Special Educational Needs policy.
3. The student with special education needs must inform their course co-ordinator that they have a special educational need or requirement when they commence their course. There is an obligation or onus upon the student to inform the co-ordinator that he/she has special educational needs.
4. The student must submit written evidence such as a Psychological Report or Principal's Report from the previous school or Institute by the 15th September of the academic year. The deadline for disclosure is final, as this serves in the best interests of the student.

5. The student must submit the original documentation plus a copy of the documentation to their course co-ordinator. The original documents will be returned to the student when checked by the Special Education Support Officer.
6. The course co-ordinator will then submit this request and written evidence to Dolores O'Brien the Special Education Support Officer.
7. Following this, an assessment is completed by the Special Education Support Officer, Dolores O'Brien. Based on the result of this assessment, certain accommodation (s) may or may not be allocated to the student. In the case where students are under the age of 18 it is encouraged that the parent/legal guardian have a meeting with the Special Learning Support Officer before the student is assessed.
8. The student is informed of this decision of the assessment, and in addition all relevant teachers are also informed. In the case of students under the age of 18, a parent/legal guardian will be informed of the outcome of the assessment. Confidentiality and discretion are assured in these cases.

Accommodations

Special accommodations may include extra time for assessments, a spelling and grammar waiver, special centre for exams. Each case is individually assessed and no two cases are ever the same.

Project/Assignments Extra time maybe granted to the student with special educational needs for each assignment/project. Usually, a two week extension can be granted for each assignment/project throughout the year, at the discretion of the Special Learning Support Officer, Dolores O'Brien. Other formats of assessment like recording/video may be considered for assessment purposes.

Exams

- An extra 15 minutes per one hour is permitted for all exams.
- Rest periods may be granted to some students during the exam.
- Special centres, scribes and readers may be allocated to some students on the outcome of their assessment.
- Other formats of assessment like recording/video may be considered for assessment purposes.

The Institute may offer some assistive technology or specialised equipment subject to the resources available to the Institute in the academic year. However there is no guarantee that assistive technology is available or that lap tops are available.

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Special Educational Needs Policy.

Work Experience Policy

Work Experience is a mandatory part of all QQI Level 5 and Level 6 awards. It is also a mandatory part of the Work Experience component. The student cannot pass the Work Experience component without carrying out the required number of days in a work related environment and, therefore, cannot qualify for an overall award. The number of days required for work experience will be indicated on the programme.

Policy Content

Garda Vetting is required by all students who intend making application for work experience with a body or organisation where the student will have access to children under 18 years of age or vulnerable adults. Students over the age of 18 years and older can make application to Laois and Offaly ETB for Garda Vetting without the consent of their parent/guardian. Students between the ages of 16 to 18 years must include with their Garda Vetting application form a consent form signed by their parent/guardian.

Application for Garda Vetting

Garda vetting must be applied for using the Laois and Offaly ETB Garda Vetting Application form available from the Institute at the beginning of the academic year. Some work placements may require the student to apply for Garda Vetting with their organisation as well.

It is the students' responsibility to make an application at this time. Students who have previously completed a QQI Level 5 with Laois and Offaly ETB and who continue in the next academic year to progress to a Level 6 course can carry their Garda Vetting to use in that QQI Level 6 course. Students cannot participate in work placement without having received evidence from Laois and Offaly ETB of being vetted by the Gardaí.

Under no circumstance should a student make Application on their own through their Garda Station. All Applications for students attending Portlaoise Institute must be applied for using the official Application forms supplied by Portlaoise Institute on induction day.

Work Experience Folder

Students must be introduced to the 'Work Experience Folder' saved in 'PLC Folder' under 'My Computer' by the work experience teacher. This folder will contain most of the Work Experience forms and information required during the year. It will contain:

- Code of Conduct
- Attendance Sheet
- Placement Details form
- Thank You letter (Sample)

Work Experience Code of Conduct

Students must familiarise themselves with the Work Experience 'Code of Conduct' saved in the Work Experience folder. Two copies of the Work Experience 'Code of Conduct' should be downloaded. It is the students' responsibility to read this document, sign both copies, one being retained by the student as a reference document while on work placement and the second copy to be returned to the work experience teacher.

Hours for Student on Work Placement

Students on work placement must work the normal working hours of their employers business as negotiated with the work placement supervisor.

Student Application for Work Placement

Students making Application to prospective employers should include the following:

- Copy of Garda Vetting (where relevant and if available)
- References if available
- Students own Letter of Application as completed in Work Experience class
- An up-to-date Curriculum Vitae as completed in Work Experience class.

Step 1: Placement Details Form

When student receive a favourable reply from an employer they should complete a Placement Details form. This form should be filled in using block capitals and returned to their work experience teacher by the deadline date provided. When the Work Experience Co-ordinator receives these forms insurance cover will be processed. The student will receive a copy of the insurance policy before going on work experience.

Insurance

Laois and Offaly ETB have an Employers Liability Policy in place which indemnifies employers involved in the Work Experience programme. On receipt of the Placement Details Form the Work Experience Co-ordinator, Laois and Offaly ETB will register the insurance cover. Therefore, all Further Education students enjoy full insurance coverage while on work placement from Portlaoise Institute when they receive Garda Vetting and a favourable reply from an employer.

Step 2: Work Experience Package

Each student will receive a Work Experience Package from their Work Experience teacher. This will include:

1. Letter of Insurance
2. Attendance Sheet (where necessary)
3. Supervisors Report sheet
4. Laois and Offaly ETB Information Sheet for Employers
5. Letter from Work Experience Co-ordinator to Employers

ALL THESE FORMS MUST BE GIVEN TO THE EMPLOYER BEFORE A STUDENT COMMENCES EMPLOYMENT

Supervisors Report Sheet

This QQI report sheet must be completed by the employer as the end of the work experience period and returned to the work experience teacher. It is the student's responsibility that their employer fills out this sheet. A student's result in the work experience component is dependent on the return of this report. A student cannot pass the Work Experience module without the Supervisors Report Sheet. Work Experience is a mandatory module and without this module the relevant course would be failed.

Attendance: Work Experience Class

In conjunction with Portlaoise Institute Attendance Policy, all students must attend timetabled classes for their particular course. Work Experience is a mandatory module. Attendance is essential for preparation entering the workplace and for completion of essential documentation required for the module. If a Work Experience teacher reports unsatisfactory attendance of a student, Portlaoise Institute will not sanction permission/Insurance for that student to attend work placement.

Should permission not be initially granted the following procedure will be followed:

- The Work Experience teacher must report prolonged absenteeism from work experience class to the Work Experience Co-ordinator
- The Work Experience Co-ordinator will invite student(s) to an interview where they present their case.
- If a reasonable explanation cannot be given for absenteeism, the matter will be referred to the Principal.

Work Experience Completion

It is the students' responsibility to ensure that the employer/supervisor completes and returns the Supervisors Report Sheet. This Sheet is to be submitted to the work experience teacher for inclusion in assessment and marking for the Work Experience module.

All queries regarding work experience should be e-mailed only to the Work Experience Co-ordinator at Portlaoise Institute.

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Work Experience Policy.

Late Entrants

All students who start the course after induction will be informed by their course co-ordinator to read all the Institute policies in the PDF Folder.

Students who have special educational needs must inform the course co-ordinator immediately and provide the written evidence as outlined in procedure number 4 in this policy.

The Special Learning Needs Policy should enable the learner to learn and progress in a safe and structured environment. The Institute reserves the right to change this document at any time.

Students or Parents/Legal Guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Special Education Needs Policy.

Garda Vetting Policy

To ensure the welfare and safety of all students in Portlaoise Institute, Garda Vetting is required. Therefore, it is the Policy of Portlaoise Institute to subject all Further Education Students to Garda Vetting.

The Garda Vetting Process will commence on Induction day when students will be required to submit their Garda Vetting form. Presentations and assistance where required will be given on this day to assist students in completing forms. If errors are found this may result in delays and Co. Laois and Offaly ETB may miss its allocated processing window with the Garda Vetting Unit.

Students are required to bring all relevant information on induction day. (See list appendix 1).

Late applications should be given to the Work Experience Co-ordinator in person and will be processed as soon as possible. No Garda Vetting applications will be accepted after the annual deadline date set by the Institute. It is important that the information detailed on the Garda Vetting Application form is accurate.

Students under the age of 18 will be Garda Vetted with the consent of their parent or guardian. Parent/Guardian consent forms will be supplied by the Work Experience Co-ordinator, if required.

County Laois and Offaly ETB reserves the right to require that students be re-vetted for each course/each year attended. Any queries students may have in relation to the status of the Garda Vetting Applications should be directed to the Principal for referral to the Authorised Signatory. The HR Section of Co Laois and Offaly ETB does not deal directly with student inquiries.

Reports returned from the Garda Vetting Unit which require further investigation or clarification will be forwarded to the Principal from the HR Department of Laois and Offaly

ETB. The Principal will write to the student asking them to make an appointment to discuss the contents of the Garda Vetting Report. The details of the report should be verified with the student in advance of any decision being made which may affect them. If the student disputes the details of the report, the matter should be managed within the Garda Vetting dispute resolution procedure. The onus is on the student to contact the Garda Vetting Unit to rectify any discrepancies that may be on the Garda Vetting Form. It is the student's sole responsibility to ensure that the Garda Vetting Form is completed accurately.

If there is no challenge to accuracy of the report, the Principal will then consult with the student regarding the circumstances of the report content. Following a consultation meeting between the student and the Principal, the Principal will make a judgement as to the significance of the Garda Vetting Report in the context of the Institute. Should the Principal decide that the Garda Vetting Report is of a serious nature and poses a potential threat to students or staff of the Institute then the Principal reserves the right to suspend the student pending a meeting of the Board of Management of the Institute, where the issue will be considered. The Garda Vetting issue relating to the student will be dealt with in confidence and the subject will not be identified at any time to any Board member. The Board will then make a decision pertaining to the case. The Board of Management may choose to exclude a student from a course. The student will have the right of appeal the Board of Management Decision, by writing to the Principal/Secretary of the Institute within 14 days of the Board's decision.

Students, who are the subject of a Garda Vetting issue, will not be permitted to take part in any Work Experience relating to the Institute until the matter has been finalised. A report following the findings of the Board of Management meeting will then be forwarded to the CEO for their final determination.

Portlaoise Institute will endeavour to ensure all Garda Vetting disclosures will be managed within a Legislative, Human Rights and Natural Justice Framework.

Appendix 1: Items required for completing a Garda Vetting form

1. Black Pen Only.

2. Full addresses of all places you have lived in back as far as birth.

3. Relevant dates of the above addresses.

4. No gaps should be in the timeline for the Garda Vetting Form.

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Garda Vetting Policy.

Computer Usage Policy

Portlaoise Institute *Computer Usage Policy* is a contract between learners and the Institute on behalf of Laois & Offaly ETB. The following guidelines will inform the learner of the rules surrounding the correct use of the Internet in the Institute.

1. Learners will only access the system using their own login and password. This password will be kept secure by them at all times.
2. Learners will ask for permission from the teacher before connecting to the Internet.
3. Learners may only use the Internet facilities for relevant course activities and course research purposes
4. Learners are responsible for ensuring backup of their own work.
5. Learners will only e-mail people who are relevant to their course, course activities, course research purposes or those whom the teacher has approved.
6. E-mail messages sent by learners will be polite and responsible.
7. Learners may not use Social Networking Sites unless they form part of a lesson given by a teacher.
8. Copyright must be respected at all times by the learner.
9. Use of the Internet for personal gain, gambling, and political purposes or for personal advertisement is forbidden.
10. Learners will refrain from troubleshooting any hardware or software problems and will report any issues to the class teacher in the first instance.
11. Learners guarantee not to deliberately access obscene or inappropriate materials and will report any such incidences downloaded on their computer to the class teacher.
12. Learners are prohibited from downloading programmes, or any files without the authorisation of the class teacher.

13. Learners are reminded that possession of certain types of unsuitable material can lead to prosecution by the Gardaí.

14. Internet access is monitored within the Institute through dedicated software installed on machines. Teachers have the ability to view web access or other computer activity that learners engage in on computers located within Portlaoise Institute

15. Cyber bullying is prohibited. Once a learner activates their account by login, they are responsible for all activities that relate to their account. The Institute maintains the right to check computer files and monitor websites accessed by learners by regular random selection.

16. Breaches of this policy will result in the immediate withdrawal of learners' privileges in relation to network access, Internet and printing. In extreme cases, learners may be suspended or expelled.

PRINTING POLICY

Printing is available to all learners in the Computer Rooms at Portlaoise Institute subject to permission from a class teacher. The following guidelines will inform the learners of the rules in relation to printing within the Institute.

Printing Guidelines

1. All learners with a login account can print-out a hard copy of their work in Portlaoise Institute

2. A "Pay as You Go" printing system is in operation in Portlaoise Institute. Each learner will be allocated a number of free printing credits at the beginning of each academic year. Learners will then have the opportunity to "top-up" their printing allowance credits by the payment of a fee. Learners will manage their own print credits and will ensure that they have enough credit to print out their QQI work in time to meet assessment deadlines. The Institute will accept no responsibility whatsoever, for missed deadlines where adequate credits were not purchased by learners.

3. Learners will accept responsibility for material printed under their personal account.
4. To prevent wastage of printing resources, learners will use PRINT PREVIEW at all times and check printer settings before printing.
5. Before sending a task to the printer, learners will ensure there is sufficient paper loaded in the correct printer and that there are no warning messages on the printer.
6. Learners will submit the PRINT command only once to avoid printing multiple copies of a document. Each learner will allow adequate time to pass to ensure a successful print job before re-sending work to the printer.
7. All computer rooms in Portlaoise Institute have black and white (mono) printers only. All exams, assignments, skills tests and projects can be presented to class teachers in black and white unless otherwise requested by the class teacher.
8. The printing of internet web pages is strongly discouraged due to the waste of printer resources (unless they are specifically required for QQI work).
9. If printing problems occur, contact the class teacher immediately.
10. Material of academic relevance only is to be printed by learners within the Institute.

PRINTING DURING A CLASS PERIOD IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER AT ALL TIMES.

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Computer Usage Policy.

Tour Policy

The Board of Management, Principal and staff of Portlaoise Institute recognise Institute tours as an integral part of Institute life. These serve to enrich the academic curriculum taught in the classroom and socially and personally develop the students who participate in them. An Institute tour is defined as any group travel outside of the Institute for a full or partial Institute day or at least one overnight stay.

Approval:

1. The Tour Leader(s) must obtain permission from the Principal/Deputy Principal to take students on an Institute tour. A general outline of the tour, including travel dates, tour company details if relevant, travel insurance, the total tour price and the general tour itinerary, should accompany the request for permission.
2. Prior to seeking permission, the Tour Leader(s) must enter into discussions with the Principal/Deputy Principal to ensure that the proposed tour dates do not impinge upon the normal teaching routine of the Institute year.
3. All Institute tours must conform to the criteria as set down in the Department of Education and Science circular M20/04 relating to Educational Tours by School Groups (inside and outside of the State).

Tour Team:

1. A Tour Team, led by the Tour Leader(s) should be put in place as soon as possible. A reserve list is advisable in case a member of the team should subsequently be unable to travel
2. The Tour Team may come from different departments within the Institute structure. If a sufficient number of Team members are not available within the school, other adults

wishing to travel may come from outside the school. Tour Team members may include: (a) Teaching Staff (b) Special Needs Assistants (c) Secretarial Staff (d) Caretaking Staff

3. The Tour Leader(s) should meet the full Tour Team at the outset so as to discuss individual duties. Ideally all members of the Tour Team should be involved in organising the tour, taking up duties in one of the following areas.

(a) Tour Finances – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader (b) Group Passport – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader – for reasons of privacy some students may obtain their own passports. (c) E111 forms – any member of the Tour Team (d) The Tour Itinerary – cultural passes, internal tours – any member of the Tour Team (e) General needs – medical kit, home contact numbers, medical services' contacts in area to be toured etc. – any member of Tour Team.

5. Student Selection

Tours will be open to all students who do not have any significant behavioural incidences recorded against them or in the case of international tours any legal reasons under which they may not leave the state?

4. Student- Teacher Ratio

The accepted student- teacher ratio for most tours is 9:1. However, the student- teacher ratio might be expected to vary in certain circumstances:

-the age and maturity of the students involved

-the availability of alternative adult supervision

-the length of the tour

Tour Finances:

All income and expenditure related to the Tour should conform fully to the accounting practices of the school. A full account of income and expenditure should, at reasonable notice, be available to the Principal/Deputy Principal and the BOM. The Tour Leader is responsible for the following Financial Procedures:

- Collect the money in instalments, on specific dates. Money collected should be lodged to the Tour account (through the Office) as soon as possible after the different instalment dates. All money should be kept in the school safe, deposited there on a daily basis if necessary.
- Pay the deposit, other interim payments and the final payment, by the due dates.
- When on tour the Tour Leader should keep receipts of all money spent.
- If for whatever reason there is money left over at the end of the tour, it should be refunded to the students when they return to school. Students must sign for any refunded money and parents/guardians if the student is 17 or under must acknowledge receipt of the refund in question.
- On completion of the Tour and all associated financial transactions, the Tour Leader must provide the Principal/Deputy Principal and BOM with a complete Financial Statement if requested.

The cost of a tour should be agreed in advance and take into consideration the ability of students to pay.

Notice:

Once permission has been granted by the Principal/Deputy Principal the students in the target group should receive the circular.

The circular should specify;

- The objectives of the tour.
- The itinerary and duration of the tour.
- The full costs involved and the method of payment (deadlines etc.).
- Information regarding insurance and indemnity.
- The general rules of behaviour to be observed (detailed rules to follow).
- If the numbers are limited and a deposit is required to secure a place.

Students must also be made aware that it is their responsibility to inform tour leaders if there are any Health & Safety issues which might affect them while on tour.

The signed consent/permission of parents/guardians is an essential pre-requisite for the participation of any student on the tour if the student is 18 or under.

Where a student requires constant or regular medication specific written details must be given to the Tour Leader. Parents/guardians may request a private meeting at another time to inform the Tour Leader about the illness and the manner in which the medication should be administered if the student is 18 or under.

The Tour Leader should establish if a non-medical person can administer the medication.

Each parent/guardian/student if 18 or over must fill in a form which includes medical history, contact numbers, allergies and medication to be taken.

Contact Information:

The Tour Leader must ensure that complete contact information is submitted with tour details, for use in the event of an emergency. The list should include:

1. Names, addresses and home contact numbers of all those going on the Tour.
2. Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
3. A contact number, day or night, for the Tour Leader(s).

On Tour Supervision:

Prior to leaving each teacher should be assigned a small number of students and be known to the students as their Group Leader. If possible these groups should remain unchanged throughout the tour. It is the responsibility of each Group Leader to:

1. Call his/her group together at specific times in busy areas (bus depots, airports etc.)
2. Count the group members on and off planes, ships, trains, buses etc.

3. Arrange specific meeting points and times to meet students when on day tours (city landmarks, cafes, ski slopes etc.)

The Tour Leader should make students aware of the room/location of the tour leader overnight.

It is not recommended that personnel other than current school staff are engaged in chaperoning or supervising students in their overnight accommodation although in certain instances this may be necessary. If there are plans to use anyone other than staff personnel in this capacity, the Tour Team member will require Garda clearance to do so before the tour takes place.

Student Code of Behaviour:

The Code of Behaviour is to be observed by all students. The Code itself should be positive and consistent with the objectives of the Tour and with the age and level of maturity of the students involved.

1. Students must adhere to the Institute rules at all times where they are applicable.
2. Students must adhere to the Tour dress code as set down by the Tour Leader.
3. Students must follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
4. Students must be well behaved on public and/or private transport while on tour.
5. Students are responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
6. Students are responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy.

7. Students must adhere to the laws of the land in the region they visit.

The Tour Team should check all rooms before students have access to them and make a note of any damage done prior to their arrival. Vacated rooms should also be checked for damage.

Sanctions on Tour:

Should a student be guilty of minor misbehaviour, the incident should be dealt with in a swift and firm manner and a verbal warning may be all that is needed. The Tour Leader may however feel that specific sanctions are required such as:

1. The student missing a half-day's activities (not however an activity related to health and safety).
2. The student missing out on a specific activity e.g. Bowling.
3. The student missing an evening activity e.g. disco.

If a sanction is being imposed it must be made clear to the student why it is being imposed. A student prevented from attending an activity must be supervised by a teaching member of the Tour Team for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school e.g. the student may be banned from involvement in future Tours.

Where a student is guilty of 'serious misbehaviour' the Tour Leader may decide to phone the student's parents/guardians to provide them with details of the incident/s if the student is 18 or under.

In ongoing and extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour a student may be sent home.

In the event of this happening, the parents/guardians will be informed and if necessary a teacher will travel home with the offending student if the student is 17 or under. The Tour Leader will decide which teacher accompanies the student home in this case.

In the case of a serious/criminal incident (shop lifting, a violent attack etc.) the parents/guardians will be informed immediately if the student is 17 or under and the matter will be handed over to the local police authorities.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal on return to school.

Reporting Back to BOM/Principal/Deputy Principal:

Within two weeks of the Tour party's return, the Tour Leader should provide the BOM/Principal/Deputy Principal with a general, written report if requested outlining:

1. The achievements/success of the Tour.
2. A completed Financial Statement.
3. Details of any incidents which required the imposition of sanctions while on Tour.
4. An assessment of the School Tour Policy and suggestions for ways to improve or strengthen it prior to future School Tours.

Students or parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age have the right to appeal a decision in relation to the Tour Policy.