



# Learner Handbook 2026 - 2027





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# List of Useful Abbreviations

AEGIS	Adult Educational & Guidance Information Service
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
BTEA	Back to Education Training Allowance
CE	Chief Executive
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
LOETB	Laois & Offaly Education and Training Board
QQI	Quality & Qualifications Ireland
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications

## Welcome Message

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to LOETB Abbeyleix and to introduce our Learner Handbook for the academic year 2026/2027.

In LOETB Abbeyleix we are dedicated to facilitating learning, personal growth and critical reflection through a working partnership with learners and tutors. Enriching the quality of life for all and enabling participants to engage in life-long learning in an environment of mutual support.

LOETB Abbeyleix is focused on providing an environment of study that will enrich the quality of life for both learners and tutors. I hope you will all get involved in the Centre's activities as this participation is a great way of getting to know other learners in the Centre with similar interests.

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

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

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

I wish you every success in your studies.

*Helen Kavanagh*  
Centre Manager

LOETB Abbeyleix promotes a learner-centered approach and provides for a friendly and supportive learning environment. Our staff are a committed and professional team and we strive for excellence in all areas. We pride ourselves on the support we give to our students to help them in their personal development and their academic success, as they progress to employment or to third level education

**Abbeyleix FETC Mission Statement**

# Academic Calendar for Learners 2026 – 2027

*Details of mandatory induction can be found on the Induction Essentials page of our website.*

The calendar for LOETB Abbeyleix sets out the three teaching terms in the academic year\*

TERM 1	
Induction	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2026 Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2026 (Part-time)
Teaching Term	Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> September – Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2026
October Mid-Term	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2026
Christmas Holidays	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2026 – Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> January 2027
TERM 2	
Teaching Term	Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2027
February Mid-Term	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2027
Easter Holidays	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March – Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2027
TERM 3	
Teaching Term	Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> April – Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2027

**Additional Centre Closures:**

**St. Brigid's Day** Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2027

**St. Patrick's Day** Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2027

**May Bank Holiday** Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2027

**Attendance & Punctuality** Full attendance on your chosen course is required. It is important to notify your Course Coordinator, and teachers for that day, in the event of an absence(s). A photocopied Medical Certificate/Hospital letter must be provided and given to your Course Coordinator or sent by email. Please refer to the [Attendance Policy](#).

# Adult Educational Guidance & Information Service

AEGIS guidance counsellors will meet with all learners throughout the year on a one-to-one basis or group setting.

The following services are offered to learners:

- **Educational and Career Guidance Personal Support Assistance in completing CAO /SUSI applications**  
**Funding and grants information Appointments can be made by email or phone**
- **Phone: (057) 86 72963 Email: [guidanceinfo@loetb.ie](mailto:guidanceinfo@loetb.ie)**



# Books & Stationery

PLC Learners must provide their own books.

All Learners must provide their own stationery.

# Bus

The Centre bus timetable for 2026/2027 is available from the office from the 1st week in September. The bus leaves the Centre from Monday – Thursday at 3.30 p.m. and Friday at 1pm.

The bus services the following areas: Rathdowney, Mountrath, Portarlington, Mountmellick and Portlaoise.

Learners must register in advance for the bus. Spaces are limited

**Separate local bus services are provided by Town Link and M & A coaches.**

[www.slievebloomcoaches.ie](http://www.slievebloomcoaches.ie)

[www.mandacoaches.com](http://www.mandacoaches.com)

## Leap Card

Learners can apply for a national student travel and discount card for more information see [Student Leap Card](#)



# Car Parking

Learners may only park in the designated spaces available in the Centre car park. It is very important to leave access routes clear. Owners of illegally parked cars on the footpath outside of the Centre may receive a parking fine. Learners must provide car registration numbers to the Centre. If possible, reverse parking is preferable.

# CCTV

CCTV cameras are located throughout the buildings to maintain a safe and secure environment.

# Childcare

All learners may avail of the National Childcare Scheme. For more information on this scheme log onto [www.laoischildcare.ie](http://www.laoischildcare.ie)

# Code of Conduct

All learners will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct form which confirms that you will abide by rules laid out as stated in the Code of Conduct.

On Centre outings, learners are expected to represent the Centre in accordance with the Centre's Code of Conduct. Please refer to the complete [Code of Conduct](#) (Appendix 1).

# Communication

The main form of communication will be through text message and email. Please make sure that your phone number is up to date. If you change your phone number or address, please email [abbeyleix@loetb.ie](mailto:abbeyleix@loetb.ie) or phone the office on 057 8731127.

# Computer Usage Policy for Students

All learners should take note and abide by the terms of the [LOETB Digital Communication Policy](#) and [Policy for Computer usage by Students](#).

## Equality & Diversity

We are proud of the accepting and positive ethos within our centre. LOETB Abbeyleix fosters an environment where all learners and staff will be treated with respect and dignity regardless of gender, disability, ethnic background, sexual orientation, or religion. Any concerns a learner may have can be discussed in confidence with the Centre Manager or any other staff member.

## Food and Drink

We offer a tuck shop and barista coffees from the canteen at designated times. Card payments only. Learners have the use of a microwave and access to hot water for tea and coffee. We have a policy of cleaning as you go where canteen users are responsible for wiping microwave, disposing of rubbish, and clearing down tables after use. Learners must bring their own Travel Mug/Keep Cup.

## Green Centre

Across the Centre we must all play our part in reversing climate change and resource consumption, and protecting the environment for future generations to come. Learners are asked to use the waste segregation points.

Learners must provide their own reusable cups for tea and coffee in the canteen. A filtered water bottle filling station is located on the ground floor.

A bicycle rack is available for those wishing to cycle to the Centre.

Please be considerate of energy use and shut down PC's fully when not in use as well as printing only when absolutely necessary.

# Learner Support Service

This service supports all learners who require additional support with their academic studies.

For example, support can be provided in the areas of reasonable accommodations, study skills, academic writing and report structuring. This service is provided on a one-to-one basis. Contact your tutor or [the Learner Support Service](#) or book an appointment [here](#).

## Disability Related Supports

LOETB have a dedicated Access Service who can help guide you through the process availing of Disability supports. These disability supports are sometimes referred to as “reasonable accommodations”. These supports offer additional help to learners with a disability, including conditions such as:

- **Hard of hearing/deaf**
- **Blind/partially sighted**
- **Impaired mobility**
- **Learning difficulties**
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder**
- **Ongoing illnesses.**

## What types of disability supports are available?

Reasonable Accommodations are tailored to the individual learners needs but may include:

- **Additional time in exams**
- **Low distraction exam environment**
- **Reader/scribe**
- **Specialist software/hardware**
- **Accessible lecture notes/materials**

## How do I access support?

Speak to your course coordinator as soon as possible.



## What documentation is required to avail of reasonable accommodations?

Examples of supporting documentation include:

- **Medical Report**
- **Educational Psychologists Report**
- **Occupational Therapists Report**
- **LOETB Dyslexia Screening Test**
- **Proof of past Reasonable Accommodation e.g. letter from Dept of Education**

## Learner Committee

Learners from each course select a learner representative. The learner representatives form a committee, which meets throughout the year to plan events, discuss matters of interest to the learners and link with Centre Management.

## Letter Requests

Letters of evidence confirming your registration status as an LOETB Learner (for banks, social welfare purposes, grants, student cards etc.) must be requested via email to [Abbeyleix@loetb.ie](mailto:Abbeyleix@loetb.ie). Please allow 3 working days for all letter requests.

## Laptop Loan Scheme

Abbeyleix FET Centre operate a Laptop Loan Scheme. A limited number of devices are available to learners who are not in a position to purchase their own device (see section on I.T. Assistance Fund). Applications should be made to Helen Kavanagh, Centre Manager [hkavanagh@loetb.ie](mailto:hkavanagh@loetb.ie). If you would like some help completing the Application form, please contact the Guidance or Learning Support service.

# Library

The public library is on the Main Square in Abbeyleix (057 8730020). The library provides excellent study facilities and internet access. Membership is free and gives students access to a national catalogue of titles.

Opening hours:

- Tuesday 9:30am - 13:30pm – 14:30pm - 17:00 pm
- Thursday 9:30am - 13:30pm – 14:30pm -19:30pm
- Friday 9:30am - 13:30pm – 14:30pm - 17:00pm.



# Health & Safety

## Fire procedures

Please ensure to take note of 'you are here' signs on the back of classroom doors as well as assembly point sign. A fire drill will take place each term.

## First Aid

First Aid Boxes are located throughout the buildings. A Defibrillator is located at the front of the main building outside the Centre Manager's Office. In the event of an emergency in the Centre please call 999 or 112 and inform the office on **(057) 873112**.

## First Aid Responders:

Clare Cantwell, Briget Cantwell and Joleen Deering.

## Accidents

All hazards, accidents, unsafe incidents or near misses must be reported immediately to the Safety Officer and an **Accident Report Form** must be completed. This attitude of consistent reporting will help prevent accidents involving staff, learners and visitors to the Centre.

## Smoking/Vaping

LOETB Abbeylax is a smoke free campus. The use of any electronic smoking/vaporising devices is banned from LOETB buildings and grounds.

The applies to the entire LOETB Abbeylax building and grounds, including:

- Doorways and entrances
- Gardens and car parks.

## Use of Illegal Substances

Use of illegal substances is prohibited on Centre property and on all Centre activities. Breach of conduct in this regard is considered a serious offence.

## PEEP Plans

[Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans](#) may be required for learners who may need assistance in the event of an emergency.

## Medical Conditions

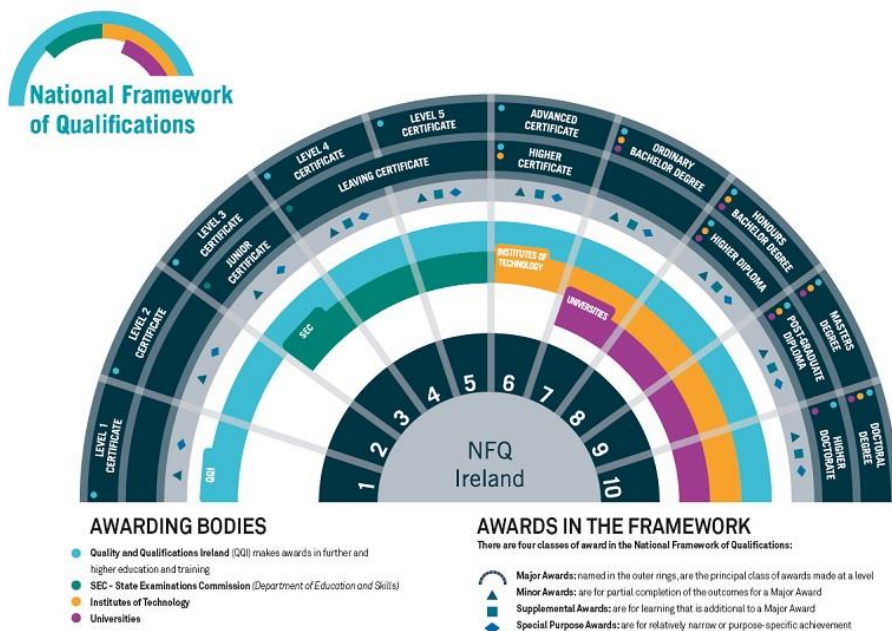
Should learners have a medical condition which may need intervention are asked to declare this at induction. Learners with anaphylaxis, epilepsy or similar conditions will be invited to complete an emergency medical action plan.

## Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited in class rooms/workshops. Please respect your tutors and fellow learners by switching phones to silent entering these areas. Persons outside of the Centre may contact learners with urgent messages through the main Office at (057) 8731127.



# National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)



For further information consult: [www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie) [www.QQI.ie](http://www.QQI.ie)

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The courses here at our Centre are linked to the NFQ. The NFQ shows you clearly the progression routes that are available to you as a learner and helps you to identify a pathway towards the qualification that you wish to attain.

The qualifications on the NFQ are recognised both here in Ireland and abroad.

On the National Framework of Qualifications:

QQI Level 4 is the equivalent  
of an Ordinary Level Leaving  
Certificate

QQI Level 5 is the equivalent  
of a Higher-Level Leaving  
Certificate

QQI Level 6 is the equivalent  
of a Higher Certificate

## Plagiarism

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

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

***Assignments are screened for the use of A.I software.***

# Quality Assurance Agreement



QAI AWARD

All our courses lead to QAI awards. These awards ensure that learners have met the nationally agreed standard for qualifications.

The QAI QA procedures developed by LOETB assure the quality of the programmes and services provided at the Centre.

LOETB Abbeyleix is registered to offer programmes leading to QAI Awards Levels 3-6.

## Sensitive Course Content

From time to time course content will cover sensitive topics that might upset or cause emotional distress for certain learners. In this event, the learner support staff are available to support you. You may leave the room if needed but please do not leave the centre without checking in with a staff member.

## Social Media

Learners are encouraged to like the LOETB Abbeyleix Facebook and Instagram pages as it provides information and important announcements. Learners are encouraged to engage with these platforms in a way which positively promotes the centre community.

Remember:

- **Think twice before posting**
- **Be respectful**
- **On personal sites identify your views as personal**

For the purpose of centre promotion, it has become customary to take photographs of learners engaged in learning activities and external excursions. Photographs may be published on our

website, brochures, our Facebook page and local newspapers. If you'd prefer to not be photographed please inform your teacher/tutor at the time the picture is being taken.

## Texting System

The Centre operates a texting system to communicate important information to learners e.g. Centre closures and class cancellations. For this reason, it is very important that learners provide the Centre with up to date mobile numbers. To update your details please email [abeyleix@loetb.ie](mailto:abeyleix@loetb.ie) or gefarrell@loetb.ie or contact the office by phone 057 8731127.

## Use of Personal Devices

If you intend to bring your own device to the Centre then you are solely responsible for the safe storage and care of your own device. All personal devices must be sanitised before bringing them into the Centre. The Centre will not be responsible for the care, storage or safekeeping of any personal device.

## Learner Declaration

Prior to commencing a course at LOETB Abbeyleix all learners must complete a declaration that they will adhere to our policies and procedures. This form can be completed via [this link](#).

# Appendix 1 LOETB ABBEYLEIX CODE OF CONDUCT

## LOETB ABBEYLEIX CODE OF CONDUCT 2025/2026

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

1. Staff and learners are expected to treat each other and property of the Further Education and Training Centre with respect. Acts of theft or unauthorised possession of property, vandalism, or significant damage to LOETB Abbeyleix property or the property of others or possession of weapons or dangerous instruments will be considered a breach of our code of conduct.
2. Bullying and/or discriminatory behaviour of any nature will not be tolerated. It is the aim of the Centre to ensure the learning environment provides freedom for all learners to conduct their studies without having to suffer harassment, bullying or intimidation. Any act of physical assault, fighting, or threats of violence against any individual will result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from the course.
3. Abbeyleix Further Education and Training Centre fosters an environment of co-operative and respectful learning. In this regard, it is at the discretion of each teacher to remove from the classroom any individual whose behaviour has a negative impact on the classroom learning environment. Noncompliance with reasonable instructions from staff will be deemed as a breach of this policy
4. Use of inappropriate language in the Centre will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
5. Full attendance is required i.e. learners are expected to attend all timetabled classes in the Centre and **remotely**.
6. Learners unable to attend the Centre during normal timetabled classes must notify the Course Coordinator or Centre Manager **and** the teachers of their timetabled subjects for that day at the earliest opportunity to explain their absence.
7. A medical certificate is required if a learner is absent for more than two consecutive days (this includes being absent on a Friday and Monday).
8. Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances. Participants may not attend classes under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances or misuse of controlled substances.
9. Each participant will take responsibility to ensure that the environment of the Centre is always kept clean and tidy. Individual's work area should be left clean and tidy at the end of each day. Wipes will be provided in each classroom/studio.
10. **Mobile phones must be on silent during class times.** Use of mobile phones for texting or accessing social media is **strictly forbidden** during class.

11. It is the learner's responsibility to care for books and equipment provided by LOETB and to return same at end of course. If a learner brings books/equipment into the Centre, they must ensure that these have been sanitised.
12. Learners must have an acceptable level of personal hygiene. All learners are expected to practice good respiratory hygiene when coughing and sneezing. Wash hands regularly and use hand sanitiser. (Please note hand sanitisers are provided throughout the Centre).
13. Any learner who has to leave the Centre during tuition hours must inform their course teacher/tutor,
14. The Centre Manager has complete authority on all matters relating to the running of the Further Education & Training Centre and her decision is final.

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

1. Verbal warning by the Class Teacher/Tutor
2. A written/verbal warning will be issued by the Course Co-ordinator
3. Further infringements will be referred to the Centre Manager

**Serious breaches are actions that significantly undermine the safety, well-being, or integrity of the learning environment at LOETB Abbeyleix. These will result in immediate and severe disciplinary action, including the potential for suspension or permanent expulsion.**

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

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

(Parent guardian Signature if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Centre Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 Computer Usage & Internet Acceptable Use Policy

An acceptable use policy is a contract between learners and the Centre acting for the education authority. This policy should be read in conjunction with the LOETB Computer Usage Policy.

The policy describes the ways in which the Internet can and cannot be used.

1. Learners will only access the system using their own login and password and it is the learner's responsibility to keep this login and password secure.
2. Learners are at all times responsible for data files created using computers.
3. Files should be saved into your One Drive and not on the desktop of computers.
4. LOETB has disabled the use of USB storage devices on all sites and learners should use OneDrive to store their files.
5. Any computer within the Centre may be wiped or upgraded at any stage and therefore it is the learner's responsibility to ensure they do not save any files onto the computer/Centre network. Please ensure as stated in No. 3 above, that files are stored onto your OneDrive.
6. Learners will ask for permission from the teacher before connecting to the Internet.
7. Learners may only use the internet facilities for relevant course activities/research purposes. Learners must clean each computer and keyboard down after use (Disinfectant wipes will be provided in the computer room for this purpose).
8. Learners will not copy information from the internet into assignments and if using information from such research must acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement). See our plagiarism policy.
9. Learners will only e-mail people that are relevant to their course activities/research purposes, or whom the teacher has approved.
10. All e-mail messages learners send will be polite and responsible.
11. Learners are not allowed to use Social Networking Sites unless part of a lesson given by a teacher.
12. Copyright and intellectual property must be respected at all times.
13. Use of Internet for personal gain, gambling and political purposes or to advertise is forbidden.
14. A learner is not to deliberately access obscene and inappropriate materials and is to report anything found accidentally to the class teacher.
15. Learners are prohibited from downloading/uploading programmes or software, material and any files without the authorisation from the class teacher.
16. A reminder that the possession of certain types of unsuitable material can lead to prosecution.
17. Computer activities and internet access are monitored within the Centre through dedicated software installed on all PCs. The IT administrator and teachers have the ability to view web access or other computer activity that students engage in, on all computers located within Abbeyleix FETC.
18. Breaches of this policy will result in the withdrawal of student's internet and e-mail privileges.
19. Cyber bullying is prohibited.
20. Once a learner activates their account by login, they are then responsible for all activities that relate to this account. The Centre maintains the right to check computer files and monitor the websites accessed by regular random selection.
21. Learners should only access the Computer Rooms when they are timetabled officially in those rooms.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3 Best Practice for Online classes when using MS Teams

For blended learning and in the event of Centre closures teachers will use MS Teams as part of their blended learning approach.

### **Student Guidelines when attending Teams class:**

- If you are unable to attend an online class, please let the teacher know you will not be attending.
- When attending an online class on MS Teams please make sure that you have access to the platform well in advance of the scheduled time.
- You will only be able to access the class through your LOETB account in Microsoft 365.
- Your teacher will email an invitation to the class before the start time.
- Make sure your device is fully charged.
- Please be sitting at your workstation and logged in at the designated time. A student logging in late disrupts the class.
- Make sure you are in an appropriate setting to attend a virtual class i.e. in a private area with no noise or distractions where you can turn on your camera when requested.
- Please mute your microphone on joining the class and follow the direction from the teacher as regards mute/unmute.
- Please turn on your camera if requested to do so by the teacher.
- Ensure that you have all resources that you may need for the class ready and by your side e.g. sketchbooks, textbook, notes, calculator etc
- Under no circumstances can any learner take videos, pictures or recordings of the online class.
- Please interact and engage with the class content when invited to do so by the teacher in a way which will contribute to the flow of the class.
- Complete any work assigned during the class to the best of your ability.

### **Students Please Note:**

- ❖ The following policies apply online as they do when attending on-site classes:  
Code of Behaviour/Attendance Policy/IT Acceptable Use Policy/Child Protection Policy
- ❖ Please be conscious of contacting teaching staff outside of Centre hours.
- ❖ The same standards of respect and dignity are expected online as they are in the classroom.

## Appendix 4 Printing Policy

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

### Printing Guidelines

1. All computer users with a login account can print-out a hard copy of their work on desktop computers in Abbeyleix Further Education and Training Centre.
2. To prevent wastage of printing resources, users should use **PRINT PREVIEW** at all times to check print settings before printing.
3. Before sending a print job ensure there is sufficient paper loaded in the correct printer and there are no warning messages on the print unit.
4. It is important that you submit the PRINT command **only once** to avoid printing multiple copies of a document. Allow adequate time to ensure a successful print job before re-sending.
5. All computer rooms will have black and white (mono) printers only. There is no requirement to print in colour for QQI submissions. If you want to print in colour you will have to make alternative arrangement to print your assignments/projects outside the Centre.
6. The printing of internet webpages is strongly discouraged due to the amount of wasted printer resources unless required for projects/assignments.
7. If you have any printing problems contact your class teacher immediately.
8. Only print materials of academic relevance.
9. Learners must collect their printout as they are printed and remove them from the printing area.
10. Please wipe down the printing area, printer and PC after use.

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