LIBERTY College

Learner Behaviour Policy

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Introduction

This policy sets out the Code of Behaviour which Liberty College expects all learners to follow. It also sets out the procedure which will be followed if the Code of Behaviour is broken. This code applies to all Liberty learners.

The staff team will ensure that the policy is implemented equally in all cases, without regard to ethnic origin, cultural differences, gender, disability, or sexuality. They will ensure that learners are listened to and that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

At Liberty, we believe that good behaviour is founded upon good relationships, clear expectations and an understanding of individual learners needs. We promote good behaviour by creating a happy, caring environment where everyone feels valued, respected, safe and free from anti-social behaviour. We believe that every learner and member of staff is responsible for promoting good behaviour.

Our aim is to encourage self-awareness, self-discipline, emotional regulation and mutual respect, to help our learners prepare for adult life and the workplace. For this reason, this policy is set out using terminology that would be used in a workplace policy.

Code of Behaviour

Learners are expected to:

- Always show positive behaviour whilst at Liberty College. This includes attending all lessons and activities and engaging positively in everything. We expect our learners to always try their best.
- Attend their lessons and activities on time and stay for the whole lesson.
- Actively participate in lessons, ensuring they give the lesson their full attention without distractions, such as using their mobile phone (other than for participating in the lesson or listening to music).
- Treat others with kindness and respect at all times, keeping the Liberty ethos, following Liberty's Core Values and following British Values and the Equality Act. This includes letting other learners learn without disruption.
- Follow all Health and Safety rules, policies, and procedures, following the instructions of staff.
- Wear their ID badge visibly so that they can be identified as part of our Visible ID and Safeguarding Policies.
- Respect their environment and resources by treating everything with care, both on-site and while on off-site activities. Our learners should never intentionally cause any damage.
- Support staff and other learners in keeping their environment clean and tidy.
- Complete their work and activities to the best of their ability.
- Respect Liberty's zero tolerance to weapons, alcohol, and drugs, never bringing them on-site, or to off-site activities, or attend whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Always act lawfully and professionally, as they would be expected to in a work environment.
- Understand that their parents, carers, guardians, and appropriate professionals may be informed of concerns and involved in discussions around how to support them.

Should a learner fail to follow these expectations, they may face disciplinary action from Liberty which could put their place with us at risk. The following sections are examples of negative behaviour which may result in disciplinary action being taken against learners.

Celebration of Good Conduct

Good behaviour is celebrated through regular praise and encouragement and is part of the Liberty ethos. We also have an achievement points system to encourage positive behaviour by following the Code of Conduct which recognises individual achievement and progress.

Rewards may include:

- Certificates of Excellence
- Learner of the Week Certificates
- Learner of the Term Certificates
- Head of College Award Certificates
- Attendance Progress Certificates
- Individualised certificates e.g., Top Team Player, Most Considerate Learner
- Sweets and snacks
- Achievement points which can be exchanged for a number of awards or prizes.

Class budgets can be used to purchase other small awards and prizes.

Attendance
Achievement points and certificates will be given out as follows

- 100% attendance certificates (termly)
- Attendance Progress certificates – for learners with improved attendance, stating the percentage improved e.g. was 12% last term is 50% this term, so 38% improvement is written on the certificate.
- Achievement points can be awarded for learners who attend on time and remain in each session (10 points for each session).
- A £50 voucher will be awarded for learners who achieve 100% attendance for the whole year.

Graduation

- Additional certificates and prizes will be awarded at Graduation.

Achievement Points
Learners will receive achievement points throughout their time at Liberty. These will be awarded by the tutor for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Being on time and remaining in lessons
- Good attendance
- Hard work
- Producing good pieces of work
- Good effort
- Acts of kindness
- Going above and beyond for someone
- Improved behaviour
- Teamwork

This is not an exhaustive list. *(That means it gives examples but does not show every single thing that could be on the list.)*

Misconduct

Misconduct includes any of the following:

- Any breach of the above Code of Behaviour.
- Not following the reasonable instructions of a member of staff.
- Poor attendance or timekeeping without good reason.
- Cheating or plagiarising (copying) the work of other people.
- Smoking or vaping outside of the designated smoking areas (both at Liberty and at off-site premises).
- Disrupting lessons or any other Liberty activity.
- Using mobile phones in lessons (other than when directed to do so for research or linking to the interactive whiteboard, or to listen to music with one ear bud in so you can hear instructions).
- Using abusive language or behaving in an offensive way.
- Behaving in a way that would be considered inappropriate in a workplace, such as kissing or overly tactile behaviour (being too touchy-feely with someone).
- Causing damage to Liberty property or any property of others, deliberately or by gross negligence (being very careless). Those that do will be expected to fix the damage themselves (where appropriate) and pay for the repairs or replacement of the damaged item.
- Interfering with software or data belonging to, or used by, Liberty or using unauthorised software on Liberty equipment or introducing any virus (or other corruption/interference to equipment or software).
- Using the internet inappropriately, either on Liberty equipment or on your own equipment (i.e., mobile phone, tablet) whilst at Liberty or on off-site activities.
- Taking part in any theft of property or any other dishonest acts.
- The use, possession or supply of any illegal substance or alcohol on Liberty premises or during any activity associated with Liberty. Anyone attending Liberty or an off-site activity that appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including smelling of them, will be sent home and will face the disciplinary procedure below.
- The possession of weapons on Liberty premises or during any activity associated with Liberty.
- Consistently failing to meet deadlines to complete work without good reason.
- Bullying, intimidating, or harassing any learner, member of staff or visitor to Liberty, or any members of the public while on Liberty activities.
- Behaving in a way which is (or can be interpreted to be) sexually or racially offensive or which is offensive to those with learning and/or physical disabilities or impediments or is in any other way discriminative.
- Behaving in a way which could damage Liberty's reputation.
- Any illegal act which may negatively affect Liberty or other learners.

This is not an exhaustive list. (That means it gives examples but does not show every single thing that could be on the list.)

Gross Misconduct

Any serious cases of misconduct or negative behaviour may be treated by Liberty as gross misconduct. For example, any misconduct involving violence or a serious threat of violence, deliberate damage to property, endangering the health and safety of others, or any criminal activities affecting Liberty or other learners (or which could damage Liberty's reputation) are likely to be treated as gross misconduct and could lead to exclusion. Where appropriate, the matter will also be reported to the police.

Disciplinary Procedure

At Liberty, we understand that inappropriate behaviour may be a result of emotional anguish, personal issues, or concerns, or due to miscommunication or lack of understanding that may lead to frustration.

Our disciplinary procedure is designed to be supportive wherever possible, but our learners must understand that sanctions may be necessary and that if this procedure is followed in full, it could lead to the learner losing their place at Liberty. This is because Liberty must maintain a happy, safe, and respectful environment for everybody, keeping everyone safe from harm.

Any learner who is upset, distressed, or acting in an unsafe manner will have the opportunity to move to an empty room such as the Zen Zone to allow them to calm down and regulate their emotions. Staff will offer individual learners the opportunity to talk about their concerns or worries or will work with them to regulate their emotions if something has upset or angered them, but staff will respect their need for space when requested.

Where the behaviour is the result of staff actions e.g., a task was explained using language that the learner did not understand, it is the duty of the staff member to reflect on this and implement strategies to adjust their practice to meet the leaner need wherever possible.

If a learner does not follow the expectations in the Code of Behaviour, Liberty will follow the disciplinary procedure below:

Step One: Verbal Warning & Improvement Plan

If a learner gives a member of staff a cause for concern, that member of staff or the learner's tutor will have a conversation with the learner. In this meeting the member of staff will outline the cause for concern, discuss any possible reasons for the unwanted behaviour and suggest strategies for additional support, setting improvement targets through a Learner Improvement Plan. The aim at this stage is to help the learner to understand why the behaviour is not appropriate, and to help the staff understand any factors that may have caused the behaviour. A formal verbal warning will be issued.

Step Two: Written Warning (SLT involvement)

If the learner's behaviour does not improve or should the breach of the Code of Behaviour be a re-offence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will have a conversation with the learner, where they will discuss any reasons for the unwanted behaviour and suggest strategies for additional support and improvement targets and outline the consequences of continued disregard of Liberty's behaviour policy and the Code of Behaviour. The member of

staff from step one may also be present in this meeting. A formal written warning will be issued. If the offence is serious enough, or if it is more appropriate to do so, the member of staff may move straight to this step and skip step one.

Step Three: Final Written Warning (Involving parents and/or guardians)

If the learner's behaviour continues to breach Liberty's behaviour policy and/or the Code of Behaviour or should the breach to the Code of Behaviour be a continued reoffence, a meeting will be arranged with the learner and their parents/guardians and/or appropriate professionals. This may take place either face to face or by phone/video call, as soon as possible. A final written warning will be issued. If the offence is serious enough, or if it is more appropriate to do so, the member of staff may move straight to this step and skip step one and two.

Stage Four: Suspension (Remote learning)

Following step three, should the learner's behaviour continue to breach Liberty's behaviour policy and/or the Code of Behaviour or should the breach to the Code of Behaviour be a continued reoffence, the learner will be directed to work from home during a period of investigation, with immediate effect. The learner will be sent home and Liberty may request a parent or guardian to collect them for their own safety and the safety of others. Investigations will be carried out by a member of SLT and/or the safeguarding team. During this time, Liberty will investigate the circumstances and, if necessary, consult with the local authority or the police to decide the most appropriate course of action. Outcomes may include, but are not limited to:

- mediation meetings
- written contracts for the learner to agree to on their return
- continued home study
- exclusion from activities and trips
- termination of their placement.

The learner and parents/guardians (where appropriate) will be notified of the outcome via a decision letter.

Step one will be followed in the first instance unless the complaint against a learner is sufficiently serious to move straight to Step 2, 3 or 4. This decision will be made by the SLT.

Anti-violence, Aggression and Anti-social Behaviour

We believe that our learners should be treated as adults to prepare them for the outside world. It is therefore Liberty College's policy not to use physical contact or force to control or restrain learners in order to prevent personal injury, damage to property or the prevention of a criminal offence being committed.

If situations such as these arise, learners and staff will be moved to a place of safety and the police will be contacted. However, Liberty staff are trained in conflict management, self-defence, and breakaway techniques to ensure their personal safety and that of other learners and may implement these techniques in extreme circumstances.

We work hard and aim to create and maintain a safe and secure college environment where violence, threatening behaviour or abuse to any member of the college community is not tolerated.

We will not tolerate any of the following threatening behaviour and will consider prohibiting any person who does so:

- shouting at a member of the college personnel in person;
- using aggressive hand gestures;
- invading a person's personal space;
- physically pushing and hitting;
- spitting directly or indirectly;
- shouting at a member of the college personnel over the telephone.

We will do everything reasonably practicable to reduce risk and to work hard to gain the necessary external support for those learners who have been identified with mental health issues.

We have a duty to ensure that no member of the college personnel should ever have to work in fear of violence or harassment, either in college, outside of college, or online. We want to work in harmony with all stakeholders, but all threatening behaviour, harassments or physical attacks will be dealt with severely.

Alcohol, Drug abuse and Prohibited Items

Liberty College also recognises that alcohol and drug abuse can have a detrimental effect on behaviour, and the company has a health and safety responsibility to its staff and learners to ensure that this risk is minimised.

References are made to “drugs”. This means any medicine or other substance which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body. This includes illegal drugs, prescription drugs not prescribed to the user by a medical doctor (e.g. prescribed to another person and given to the user), and solvents.

Learners and staff should be aware of the following restrictions:

- Alcohol and illegal drugs/paraphernalia are not permitted on any of Liberty’s premises or while out on activities as part of a Liberty College course.
- Learners attending college under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be sent home, parents/carers will be informed, and the behaviour policy will be followed.
- Learners aged under 18 cannot legally buy alcohol and any alcohol found at the premises will be immediately confiscated and destroyed. Parents and carers will be informed, and the behaviour policy will be followed.
- Learners over the age of 18 are legally allowed to purchase alcohol but will not be permitted to bring any alcohol on site or buy for learners under the age of 18. The behaviour policy will be followed.
- Any learner thought to have been involved in the sale or purchase of drugs will be subject to the behaviour policy and the Safeguarding Team and Police will be notified.
- Any learner involved in the sale or purchase of alcohol for underage learners whilst at Liberty will be subject to the behaviour policy, and the police will be notified.
- If a learner is suspected of having smoked cannabis and appears to be under the influence they will be sent home, and parent/carers will be notified. We understand that the environments of some learners may be influenced by recreational smoking and the use of cannabis may be used in their home which could be the cause of residual

cannabis odours. If we feel this is the case and learners do not appear to be under the influence, learners will be asked to spray with body spray provided or sent home to change clothes. Authorised staff have the power to search the learners to ensure they have no illegal substances on them.

- Persistent issues of suspected or known drug use will result in a meeting with the learner and their parent/carer to discuss concerns and offer support.
- DUST referral and drug and alcohol abuse support will be offered for learners with persistent concerns.

Prohibited items include knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, fireworks, pornographic images, any item that could be used to commit an offence or personal injury or damage to property. Any learner found in possession of them will face disciplinary action.

Liberty staff have the statutory power to search learners or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the learner may have a prohibited item.

Unacceptable Conduct Outside of Liberty

Maintaining a strong partnership with the local community is extremely important at Liberty College. We expect our learners to take responsibility for their actions outside of the college.

All unacceptable behaviour and instances of bullying occurring anywhere outside of the college, which have been witnessed by a staff member or reported to Liberty, will be dealt with according to this policy.

This will include any unacceptable behaviour when a learner is:

- Taking part in any activity organised by Liberty.
- Travelling to and from Liberty.
- In some other way identifiable as a learner of Liberty.
- Poses a threat to another learner or member of the public.
- Could negatively affect the reputation or running of Liberty.

Appeals

The learner will have the opportunity to appeal against the decision of the Senior Leadership Team if this decision has not been directed by the local authority or police, and this appeal will escalate to Michelle Smith, Director of Liberty College. All appeals must be made in writing to Liberty College, Unit L2, Enterprise Road, Westwood Industrial Estate, Margate CT9 4JA or via email to michelle@libertygroupltd.co.uk within 5 days of receiving the decision letter.

If an appeal is lodged within the time allowed an appeal interview with Michelle Smith will be scheduled to take place within 10 working days of the appeal being received. The learner will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the time and place of the appeal interview and will be entitled to be accompanied by a parent/carer or fellow learner (but not by a legal or other professional adviser unless Liberty otherwise agrees, having been given reasonable notice before the day of the hearing). A legal or other professional adviser will be permitted only if Liberty intends to have an external adviser present. Any documents considered during the decision-making process will be available for the purposes of the appeal, together with the notes of any relevant meetings.

Should the learner fail to attend the hearing meeting on the date and time provided without good reason or cancel two arranged hearing meetings without cause or within more than 24 hours of the arranged meeting, they will revoke the right to appeal.

At the appeal interview, the learner will be invited to explain the grounds of the appeal and state their case.

The manager who made the decision to exclude will be asked to respond to the appeal and explain the reasons for the recommendation.

Michelle Smith may ask questions of the learner and the manager and will then consider whether to allow or dismiss the appeal.

Witnesses will not normally be asked to attend except in relation to any relevant new evidence which has come to light.

In order to protect learner witnesses from fear of recrimination, any evidence given by a learner will have the identity of that learner obscured/deleted from any copies given to the learner against whom the disciplinary action is being taken.

If the appeal is allowed, management may decide that disciplinary action lesser than that recommended by the manager should be taken.

If the appeal is dismissed, the recommendation of the manager will stand.

Within 5 working days of the appeal interview, the final decision by the Senior Leadership Team will be confirmed, in writing, to the learner and where appropriate the parents/guardian.

There is no right of appeal against this decision.