



# ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME (ALP)



# ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) was established on 1st July 2013 under the Education and Training Boards Bill 2012, as an amalgamation of County Dublin VEC and Dún Laoghaire VEC. The services provided include Primary level education, Second level education, Further Education (PLC) courses, Adult Education and Youthreach in addition to other community based education programmes and services. All services are delivered at local level.

Our mission is to be the leading provider of integrated services which enable children, young people and adults to fulfil their potential in a positive learning environment. We will promote equality, innovation and partnership in the delivery of our services.

The Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) is an initiative of the Youth and Sports Development Service. The programme commenced in 2012 and is operating from four sites within the DDLETB area; Balbriggan, Clondalkin, Tallaght and Dún Laoghaire.

The Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) has been developed by DDLETB in response to the recognition of the limited opportunities available to young people who are currently not engaged in formal education and who are below the age of 16 years. There are many and varied reasons which lead to a student leaving school early, often the current system cannot cater for the diverse needs of these young people.

The aim of ALP is to engage participants in an informal learning environment, to establish beneficial routines and positive social interactions. ALP fosters an environment of mutual respect, encouragement, inclusiveness and personal responsibility. Participants in the ALP are given an opportunity to research and access information on issues such as returning to school, educational progression, training and future career options and to develop the skills to sustain involvement in these areas. The programme relies heavily on the support of the Educational Welfare Service (EWS), school principals and parents/guardians.

The ALP uses a combination of local Youth Workers and Education and Training Board Tutors to deliver the programme. Currently run over 3 days per week and coinciding with the academic term, ALP is an interim educational programme designed to be as easy as possible for young people to attend. A variety of activities and lessons are provided by the tutor and youth worker and sessions typically include all participants. Through group work the programme places huge emphasis on building supportive, trusting relationships between participants and staff.

A new significant partnership has been developed with iScoil, an online learning community that offers an alternative path to learning, accreditation and progression. This partnership will offer young people an opportunity to gain certification through a recognised centre of education at QQI Level 3 which is equivalent to the junior certificate on the National Framework of Qualifications.

# THE 6 KEY AREAS

The structure of The Alternative Learning Programme is based on **6 Key Areas:**

1

## **Attendance:**

Regular and sustained attendance is vital to the personal development of the individual and a good record of attendance is important for successful progression.

2

## **Punctuality:**

Developing awareness of the importance and routine of punctuality while attending the programme and for future life.

3

## **Messaging:**

Communication with staff regarding attendance, lateness, upcoming appointments etc. Messaging is typically the responsibility of the participant i.e. text message to youth worker.

4

## **Participation:**

The young people are asked to participate in all activities provided.

5

## **Contribution:**

The attitude and effort made while participating in activities.

6

## **Checking and following instructions:**

Participants are asked to ensure they understand instructions clearly and to seek further clarification as required.

## THE 6 KEY AREAS (CONTINUED....)

The structure of The Alternative Learning Programme is based on **6 Key Areas**:

Individual participants attend an interview with the tutor and youth worker every 2 weeks where they are asked to evaluate their own record based on the **6 Key Areas**. This is usually achieved by a simple 1-10 marking system. The interview process allows time to reflect and discuss progress, achievements and any difficulties that may exist. Goals can then be established and recorded for the next interview date and participants are challenged to improve their record over that time. If the situation arises that a participant has declining marks with no effort to improve, a meeting may be arranged with their parents or guardians to discuss their participation on the programme. In certain cases a young person may be asked to re-apply for a place on the programme.

The **6 Key Areas** and the interview process are integral to the success of the Alternative Learning Programme. Participants are empowered to take responsibility for their own actions and are credited with self directed achievement and positive outcomes.

### ATTENDANCE

PUNCTUALITY

MESSAGING

PARTICIPATION

CONTRIBUTION

CHECKING AND FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS

## REFERRAL AND INDUCTION

When a person is referred to the ALP the application must be completed by the school principal or the Educational Welfare Officer (where no school place exists) and signed by a parent or guardian. All referrals must be supported by the Educational Welfare Officer.



The young person, with their parents/ guardians, is then invited to attend a meeting with the tutor and youth worker to discuss the programme and possible participation.

Usually a new group of participants will begin on the same date and a one term or six week induction will begin. This induction period allows for participants to become familiar with the programme, to get to know staff and fellow participants and essentially gives the time required to form a working group. During this time participants are asked to engage in a wide variety of activities as a group.

## INDIVIDUAL PLAN

Having completed the induction period individual participants meet with the tutor and youth worker to discuss their interests, needs, ideas and possible progression options.

The staff can then help the individual to create a goal and plan, while supporting them in achieving this.

Individual plans will vary greatly depending on the age, ability and interest of the participant and should be reviewed as necessary.

# SESSIONS

The working environment in the Alternative Learning Programme is flexible and provides for mixed ability groups and different learning outcomes.

The activities and lessons delivered by the ALP will depend on the tutor, youth worker and participants needs. The programme may cover a diverse range of subjects and topics but would typically fall within the following headings:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- ICT (I-Pads)
- Craft
- Art
- Physical Activity/Sport

On completion of each activity or session individual participants are asked to complete an **Evaluation** under the following headings:

- What I did
- What I learned
- What I liked
- What I didn't like
- Suggestions

The evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect on work done and to engage in critical analysis for both the tutor and participant. Evaluations are important to promote the realisation of value in a specific achievement and learning outcome.

# PROGRESSION



While attending ALP participants will be offered information about local youth services, training and other opportunities and events that may be available to them.

The ALP gives the young person an opportunity to build a record of participation. The programme facilitates the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and attitudes that will be beneficial when re-engaging in mainstream education, progression to Youth Reach, training centres, further education or employment. Participants may attend the Alternative Learning Programme until it becomes possible for them to return to main stream education or until they turn 16 years of age when other appropriate opportunities become available to them.

The Alternative Learning Programme utilises the resources of youth workers, local youth service and ETB tutors. This joint approach creates an holistic programme to meet the needs of diverse individuals in a specific target group. While the roles of both the tutor and youth worker are defined, regular meetings and clear communication between staff is essential. It is vital to the success of the programme that a strong working relationship exists and that the programme is delivered by a cohesive team.



# ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

## - TUTOR ROLE

- The day to day running of the programme
- To keep file management systems which includes – attendance records, individual learning plans/session plans, evaluation sessions
- Devising individual plans for each participant in conjunction with Youth Workers and ETB staff member
- To carry out assessments to gauge where participants are at
- Conducting fortnightly review meetings with participants
- Monitoring the progression of participants
- To attend weekly progress meetings
- Setting programmes/organising tutors/timetabling
- Reporting to the ALP Advisory Group
- Links with schools, EWO and Youth Service with regard to re-integration and additional supports needed
- Monitoring and evaluation of programme

# ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME

## – YOUTH WORKER ROLE

- To build capacity and confidence of young early school leavers
- To combat educational and other forms of disadvantage
- To engage with young people in a developmental process on the basis of their voluntary participation
- To enable young people take responsibility and become active in their own development and that of their community
- Follow up on absenteeism
- To attend weekly progress meetings
- Planning, developing and delivering programmes and activities in response to the issues for young people, their needs and/or their interests
- Developing and implementing developmental/educational programmes to meet the needs of early school leavers
- To collect data evaluate programmes and compile reports as deemed necessary
- To ensure a youth work approach and youth work methodologies are adhered to
- To link with appropriate initiatives that will enhance participants learning

# ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMME – REFERRAL FORM

ALP Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 1:

Date of Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male:  Female:

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Guardian Details:

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Young Person \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 2:SCHOOL HISTORY

### Current Enrolment (To be completed by School Principal)

*This section should be completed in full with most recent information available:  
(Where no school place exists, this section must be completed by the EWO)*

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this DEIS School:          Yes                    No         

### Attendance History:

Absences this term:          Number of Days school open         

Number of Days absent         

Trends of absence over last academic year:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Previous Schools Attended:

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION 3: DESCRIBE INTERVENTIONS ATTEMPTED (MUST BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL)

Education Welfare Service: \_\_\_\_\_

School Completion Programme: \_\_\_\_\_

Home School Community Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_

What resources have been allocated to meet pupils needs:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have parents engaged with any support/resources:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does this young person have a diagnosed Special Educational Need?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this young person been assessed (or assessment is pending) by the National Educational Psychological Service? \_\_\_\_\_

Reports:      Yes       No

### SECTION 4: REASON FOR REFERRAL

Please indicate:

Reason for Referral?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Length of time EWS is involved with child/family:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Efforts made to support school attendance:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 5: OTHER INTERVENTIONS

List agencies involved:

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Has Home Tuition been applied for?

Yes  No

Was it granted:

Yes  No

Was it availed of:

Yes  No

Was/Is Home Tuition:

Successful

Continuing

Broken Down

## SECTION 6: OTHER AGENCIES

Do you have any knowledge of other agencies involved with the family?

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Are you aware of any Child Protection or Welfare concerns?

Yes  No

Are you aware of any Child Protection or Welfare concerns?

Yes  No

Reports Included:

Yes  No

## SECTION 7: MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please provide any relevant medical information about the candidate below

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## SECTION 8: DECLARATION

In my opinion \_\_\_\_\_ would be a suitable candidate for the Alternative Learning Programme

Signature (Parent): \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (Principal): \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Application reviewed by:**

Educational Welfare Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# NOTES



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**For further information on the Alternative Learning Programme please contact**

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