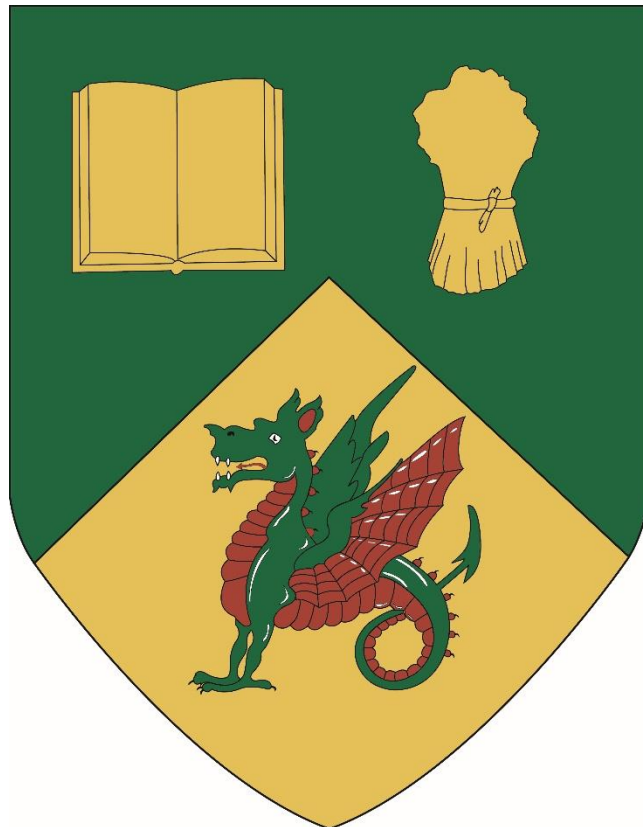


Gurteen College



Learner Handbook 2025 - 2026

Table of Contents

1.0	Gurteen College Vision and Mission Statement	8
2.0	Teagasc Charter of Learners Rights and Responsibilities	8
2.1	Teagasc Mission.....	8
2.2	Academic Calendar	9
2.3	Issuing QQI Certificates	9
2.4	Mentoring System	9
2.5	Additional Learning Support	10
2.6	Learner Representation.....	10
3.0	Code of Conduct for Learners	10
3.1	Purpose of the Code of Conduct for Learners.....	10
3.2	General Principles.....	10
3.3	Time and Attendance	11
3.4	Learner Responsibility	12
3.5	Breaches of the Code of Conduct.....	13
3.6	Serious Misconduct	13
3.7	Disciplinary Procedures	14
3.8	Implementation of Formal Disciplinary Procedures.....	15
4.0	Child Safeguarding and Infant Care	17
4.1	Teagasc Child Safeguarding Statement.....	17
4.2	Infant Care	18
5.0	Learner Equality and Welfare Guidelines	18
5.1	Learner Equality.....	18
5.2	Dignity and Respect.....	18
5.3	Bullying/Intimidation and/or Sexual Harassment	18
5.4	Learner Welfare.....	19
5.5	Learner Support.....	21
5.6	Teagasc Customer Charter	21
6.0	Health and Safety	21
6.1	Introduction.....	21
6.2	Gurteen College H&S Specifics	22

6.3	Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures.....	23
6.4	First Aid.....	26
6.5	Medical Services.....	26
6.6	Use of Vehicles	28
6.7	Transport for visits / field trips.....	29
6.8	Biosecurity.....	29
6.9	Use of Computers/Printers.....	29
7.0	Teaching and Learning	30
7.1	Teaching Methodologies	30
7.2	Skills Training and Assessment.....	31
7.3	Blended Learning.....	31
7.4	Recording of Learner Activities and Presentations for Course Delivery and Assessment	31
7.5	Practical Learning Period.....	32
7.6	Field Trips	32
7.7	Learner Responsibilities	32
8.0	Teagasc Student Maintenance Grant Scheme	33
9.0	Teagasc Education and Training Promotion	33
10.0	Data Protection Statement	34
11.0	Assessment Regulations for Teagasc - Programmes Leading to QQI Awards	34
11.1	Assessment and Practice.....	34
11.2	Written Examinations.....	34
11.3	Online Assessments.....	36
11.4	Practical Examinations	36
11.5	Written Coursework (Assignments/Projects).....	36
11.6	Repeats Assessments	37
12.0	Penalties for Breaches of Assessment Regulations	38
12.1	Compensation policy.....	39
12.2	Assessment Appeals.....	39
12.3	Results	40
13.0	QQI Certification	40
13.1	Access, Transfer, Progression and Higher Education Link Scheme	41
14.0	Recognition of Prior Learning	41

14.1	The Purpose of RPL.....	42
15.0	Services for Learners	42
15.1	College Facilities / Residential Accommodation	42
15.2	Lockers.....	42
15.3	Lost and Found	43
15.4	Notice Boards	43
15.5	Parking.....	43
15.6	Post.....	43
15.7	Reception / Secretary's Office.....	43
15.8	Chaplain.....	44
15.9	Night Supervisors	44
15.10	Welfare Team	44
15.11	Catering	44
15.12	Laundry facilities.....	45
15.13	Security / CCTV	45
15.14	Site layout and maps	46
16.0	Student Fees Policy and Refunds	46
16.1	Fee Payment Information.....	46
16.2	Withdrawing from Course	47
16.3	Converting from a Residential to a Non-residential Student	47
16.4	The process of refunding fees	48
16.5	Complaints and appeals concerning refund application.....	48
17.0	Accommodation and Conditions of Residence	48
17.1	Legal status.....	48
17.2	Conditions of Residence	48
17.3	Accounts	49
17.4	Allocation of rooms	49
17.5	Responsibility	49
17.6	Room Inspection.....	49
17.7	Security.....	50
17.8	Visitors.....	50

17.9	Overnight Guests.....	50
17.10	Parties and Gatherings	50
17.11	Damage.....	50
17.12	Defects / Repairs	50
17.13	Pets	51
17.14	Fire Prevention	51
17.15	Fire Safety Equipment	51
17.16	Electrical Appliances, heaters, etc.....	51
17.17	Television and Radio.....	51
17.18	Room Cleaning.....	52
17.19	Inventory	52
18.0	Students Under 18 Years of Age (Parent / Guardian should also read)	52
19.0	Information for Parents / Guardians	53
20.0	Directions & Maps	54
21.0	Important Contacts	55
22.0	Other Relevant Policies	55
23.0	Learner Handbook 2025-26: Agreement	56

WELCOME

Dear Learner,

You have enrolled on a Gurteen College course in conjunction with Teagasc and as principal of Gurteen College I welcome you on behalf of all the college staff.

We hope that you will find your studies interesting, challenging and rewarding. Your course leads to a widely recognised award.

You may find the course and the new surroundings a little daunting at first. This is only natural as it takes time to adapt to a new location, to new ways of learning, to new friends, and to becoming a more independent person. Indeed, the aim of all Gurteen College courses is to assist people to become independent learners who are capable of identifying their own education and training needs. It is our role to help you through this transition process. One of the strengths of most courses offered by this college is that learners can progress “up the ranks” right to degree level and beyond.

If you work hard and satisfactorily complete all the requirements asked of you, you should pass your assessments. We hope that you will be successful and be well qualified to pursue a worthwhile career of your choice.

Finally, I wish you well during your time with us. I hope that you will benefit from and enjoy your course and time spent at Gurteen College.

Yours faithfully,

Jon Parry

Principal

Purpose of the Learner Handbook

This Learner Handbook has been produced for the benefit of, and to support all learners enrolling on Teagasc courses - it contains information you may need to refer to throughout your period of study at Gurteen College.

The handbook provides important guidelines for learners regarding code of conduct, assessments, practical learning period, health and safety, bio security, college facilities, learner welfare and support.

If you have any issues or concerns, please make sure you bring them to the attention of your course co-ordinator, a member of the student welfare team, or college management.

1.0 Gurteen College Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

Learning and working together to enhance life in rural communities.

Mission Statement

In a practical environment, our mission is to provide education and training which meets the highest international standards in order to empower all students to fulfil their potential, achieve their goals, implement social responsibility concepts, and develop an enthusiasm for lifelong learning.

2.0 Teagasc Charter of Learners Rights and Responsibilities

2.1 *Teagasc Mission*

Teagasc is dedicated to providing the highest quality education and training that is accessible to learners in a manner that meets their needs.

Teagasc is committed to providing learners with:

- An environment and resources that supports and stimulates learning and enables learners to realise their full potential
- High quality courses
- Accurate information about all programmes and expectations
- Assessment of learning that is fair, valid and timely
- The opportunity to provide feedback on teaching and course quality in confidence
- A skilled, qualified and supportive staff who will treat all learners with dignity and respect and be responsive to learner needs and concerns
- A fair and consistent enforcement of all rules and regulations
- A healthy and safe environment that promotes a positive learning experience.

Teagasc expect learners to:

- Take charge of their own learning and produce work to the best of their ability
- Participate actively in all learning situations
- Make effective use of the facilities and services provided
- Comply with assessment regulations and use assessment feedback to guide their continued learning
- Provide honest and constructive feedback within the opportunities provided
- Support and respect the rights of fellow learners and staff
- Abide by all rules and regulations and guidelines stated in the Learner Handbook

- Take responsibility for their own health and safety; be conscious of the safety of others and to fully comply with college/centre health and safety requirements.
- Comply with the safety requirements while undertaking a practical learning period with a host.

2.2 Academic Calendar

As part of your course induction, you will be provided with an academic calendar which will specify details of:

- Course commencement date
- Bank holidays and mid-term breaks (if relevant)
- Dates for work experience (PLP)
- Last day of lectures date
- Dates for repeat exams
- Results approval and external authentication dates
- Date for graduation

2.3 Issuing QQI Certificates

Learners who successfully complete Teagasc programmes will receive a QQI certificate. QQI Certificates are issued on six defined dates each year. Teagasc has no influence on these dates. You should also be aware that provision must be made for repeat exams and that all results must go through internal and external quality assurance checks prior to submission to QQI. As a consequence, there will be a time delay between the end of course work and the issuing of certificates by QQI.

You need to be aware of the QQI certification timeframes particularly if availing of DAFM or Revenue schemes/reliefs as a trained farmer.

Additional information on certification dates will be provided as part of course induction.

2.4 Mentoring System

At the beginning of each year, full-time learners (Level 5 and Level 6) are assigned a member of staff as a personal mentor by the Course Co-ordinator. For part-time and distance education courses a mentor may be assigned where a need arises. The mentor is responsible for supporting a learner's academic performance and welfare during their time spent at the college. It is important to maintain contact with this mentor throughout the year.

The agenda for mentor meetings will include a review of some or all of the following items: academic progress, attendance record, practical learning period, projects and assignments.

In addition to timetabled mentor meetings, it is possible to meet a learner mentor informally to discuss any issues of concern. It is recommended that your mentor is advised of relevant issues that might have implications for your welfare, and/or academic work, particularly with respect to attendance and completion of projects/assignments.

2.5 Additional Learning Support

Teagasc is an equal opportunities organisation and actively encourages applications from all sections of the community. Teagasc is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to support student learning. Learner support is available, your course co-ordinator or Access Officer can provide details. Additional information is also available at **Section 5.5** of this Learner Handbook.

2.6 Learner Representation

Gurteen College has an Academic Council which works in partnership with college management and staff for the benefit of all involved in the programme. The council helps to build relationships and provide a forum for discussion with the aim of enhancing the learner experience for all. Learners from all courses at Gurteen College are represented on the Learner Representative Committee. A schedule of formal meetings is managed by the college principal or course director where topics including teaching, assessments, learner support, work practice, policies and facilities can be discussed. The Academic Council meets at least twice over the duration of a Teagasc programme.

3.0 Code of Conduct for Learners

The Teagasc Code of Conduct for Learners is a set of principles and expectations that Gurteen College has for learners. It promotes a positive learning environment and sets out standards of conduct expected from learners. Failure to comply with these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action by the college. This code applies to all learners, whether full-time or part-time and at all times, whether or not during normal teaching times.

3.1 Purpose of the Code of Conduct for Learners

- To set out a code of conduct to which learners are expected to adhere to in return for being admitted to the college and provided with educational and other services and facilities.
- To set out the procedure which should be followed where the code of conduct is breached. A breach of the code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action being taken against a learner and repeated breaches or a single serious breach may result in a learner being suspended or expelled from a course.

3.2 General Principles

Staff and learners are expected to behave responsibly at all times, to observe and abide by the Code of Conduct for Learners and not to engage in any activity which might bring the college/centre into disrepute.

Learners are required to attend regularly and punctually all timetabled activities including classes, practicals, work practice, assessment, field trips and to conform to the directions of staff.

Should any learner, during any timetabled activity, be responsible for a breach of the Code of Conduct, or fail to obey instruction from a staff member, the staff member may require the learner to withdraw from the particular timetabled activity and bring the matter to the notice of the Course Co-ordinator for appropriate action to be taken.

Covert Recordings of Learning Activities

Teagasc has a [Recording of Learning Activities Policy](#). This policy states that learners may not record any class or other teaching activity. Covert audio and/or visual recording of teaching activities is strictly prohibited. Unauthorised recordings constitute a breach by the learner of privacy and data protection law and will be treated as a serious breach of the Learner Code of Conduct.

Personation

Arranging with or conspiring with another person to personate or represent you in connection with course attendance, assessment, academic attainment, awards or otherwise will be treated as serious misconduct.

Only learners who are registered on Teagasc Programmes or persons approved to supply learner support may be admitted to classes and assessments at the college and or centre.

Damage to Property

Learners are required to make good, to the satisfaction of the college, any damage or loss which they intentionally cause to any property of the college or for any such loss or damage which arises as a result of their being reckless or negligent. Learners are similarly required to make good any damage or loss which they cause to the personal property of any other learner or member of staff.

Use of Mobile Phones

Learners may be required to use a mobile phone to:

- Register their attendance
- Receive emails
- View exam results
- Complete surveys

Learners may also be required to use a mobile phone during classes or practicals.

Where a staff member request that phones are not to be used during class or practicals, learners are required to put their phone on silent. Failure to follow such a request or other inappropriate use of a mobile phone is a breach of the Code of Conduct for Learners which may lead to disciplinary sanctions.

3.3 Time and Attendance

Learners must attend classes/practicals and other scheduled events regularly and punctually. This is a requirement for all learners on Teagasc courses. Attendance records are an essential management resource to support:

- Duty of care to minors
- Health and Safety management
- Learner mentoring (attendance patterns)
- Student Maintenance Grant payments

Notification of Absence/Illness

Learners absent for course work for more than 2 days due to illness, are required to present a doctor's certificate to the college office on their return. This is required to facilitate:

- Granting of extensions for the submission of assignments
- Examination deferrals
- Student maintenance grant payments

Where a learner is absent in excess of 10 consecutive days without explanation the college principal/course director will inform the learner of the possible consequences of poor attendance on their course.

Time and Attendance Recording

For college full-time, distance education and part-time courses, time and attendance will be recorded using SEAtS Attendance Management System. Attendance data is considered necessary for the purposes of monitoring learner's time and attendance and is also required by Teagasc to facilitate duty of care to minors, health and safety management and learner mentoring. Teagasc requires accurate records of learner attendance for the purposes of confirming learners' attendance for maintenance grant payments. Personal data collected through the SEAtS Attendance Management System will not be processed for any other purposes, unless necessary for lawful reasons under data protection legislation or in circumstances where Teagasc is compelled to do so by law.

The information collected through the use of the SEAtS Attendance Management System is your personal data and will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Teagasc is the data controller in relation to this personal data.

Your personal data is retained as outlined in the Teagasc data retention policy. Teagasc Data Protection information is available on the Teagasc website at the following link, <https://www.teagasc.ie/about/corporate-responsibility/data-protection/> . Data is cleared from the system by August each year or earlier if the learner doesn't progress. Your personal data will not be retained for a longer period of time unless necessary for lawful reasons under data protection legislation or in circumstances where Teagasc is compelled to do so by law.

For further information, please contact the Teagasc Data Protection Officer at Data Protection Officer, Teagasc, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co Tipperary, E41 AK, or by email to dpo@teagasc.ie

3.4 Learner Responsibility

Learners must:

- Conduct themselves, both inside and outside the college, in a manner which will maintain the good name of the learner and the college.
- Act at all times with due regard for their own safety and that of others.
- Engage in scheduled programme activities.
- Inform the college office as soon as practicable if for any reason they are unable to attend a class/practical or other scheduled event.
- Respect the property of the college and of its staff, other learners and visitors.

- Support staff and other learners in the maintenance of a clean and tidy environment throughout the college.
- Adhere to regulations regarding bio-security measures for the control of animal diseases.
- Report at once all accidents to the Hospitality Co-ordinator or Farm Manager.

Out of Bounds:

Students are not allowed in the following areas of the college without permission:

- Staff and Administrative Offices
- College Kitchen
- College Canteen (outside mealtimes)
- Print Room
- The Farm and Equine yards or buildings without proper reason

3.5 Breaches of the Code of Conduct

The following sets out a non-exhaustive list of examples of behaviour, which constitutes a breach of the Code of Conduct for Learners and may result in disciplinary procedures under this Code:

- Breach of any of the general principles set out in Section 3.2 above (General Principles).
- Obstruction of any member of staff or learner in the performance of duties, work or other Teagasc activity.
- Conduct which is disruptive or which may affect teaching, work practice or study
- Failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff.
- Smoking, including vaping, in non-smoking areas.
- Unduly noisy or any unruly behaviour or the use of foul or abusive language.
- Causing damage to, defacing or misusing any college property or the property of others.
- Failure to observe parking regulations.
- Operating machinery or equipment without permission and supervision.
- Acts or omissions by learners while outside college engaged in field trips, work practice, or club activities, organised by the college or while representing the college which would breach the Code of Conduct if committed in the college.
- Permitting access to residential areas of a college by non-residential learners after specified hours.
- Incitement or encouragement of any other person or persons to do any of the aforementioned things.
- Any other form of misconduct not listed above.

3.6 Serious Misconduct

The above breaches of conduct may, when necessary, be treated by the college as serious misconduct.

Further examples of serious misconduct include the following:

- Assault, threat of violence or physical abuse of a learner or staff member of the college.
- Endangering the health or safety of self or others.
- Behaviour which is racially or sexually offensive or which is offensive to those with learning and/or physical disabilities or impediments.
- Breaching assessment regulations including plagiarism.
- Dangerous or careless driving.
- Use, possession or supply of alcoholic drinks or illegal substances within the college or on any activity associated with the college.
- Furnishing during a course of study any false or misleading information calculated to deceive or mislead the college or work practice host.
- Dissemination of pornographic material.
- Deliberate breach of college guidelines relating to bio security issues.
- Theft or any criminal activity.
- Reckless or negligent behaviour that results in damage or loss to the college or to any learner or staff member including damage to property.
- Covert or unauthorised recording(s) of any aspect of a course including attendance on a practical learning period with a host.
- Unauthorised posting of material on social media in breach of the Recording of Learning Activities Policy.
- Unwarranted interference or tampering with college safety equipment, firefighting equipment, security systems or alarm systems.
- Unauthorised interference with software, IT equipment or data belonging to or used by the college.
- Setting of fires.
- Use of or possession of any offensive weapon while engaged in any course activity
- An illegal act which may have an adverse effect on the work of the college or on other learners.
- Any other form of serious misconduct not listed above.

3.7 Disciplinary Procedures

Any act or omission, which adversely affects the rights of any staff/learner, or which disrupts the orderly and responsible conduct of any college activity, or which violates the Code of Conduct for Learners, shall constitute a breach of discipline. Disciplinary action may result in a verbal warning, a written warning, and suspension from course work for a fixed period or expulsion from the course.

The examples of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Learners, outlined above, are non-exhaustive and demonstrative and in no way prevents the appropriate member of staff from considering and adjudicating upon the conduct or action of any learner which is thought to constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct for Learners.

Informal Disciplinary Procedure

Cases of minor breaches of discipline may be treated informally by staff or others acting on behalf of the college. However, if it is not appropriate to deal with the matter informally or if an informal approach fails to resolve the issue, the procedures set out below will be followed.

Formal Disciplinary Procedure

There are four stages to the formal disciplinary procedure, and it is usual to progress sequentially through the stages. However, depending on the seriousness of the allegation the early stages of the formal disciplinary procedure may be omitted, and the disciplinary process accelerated.

Stage 1: Official Verbal Warning

Where the breach of discipline is considered to warrant formal treatment, the learner may be given an official verbal warning. The official verbal warning will lapse after a period of 6 months.

An official verbal warning will be recorded on a **Learner Incident Report Form** (Appendix 1).

Stage 2: Formal Written Warning

Where the conduct complained of is of a more serious nature or where a further breach of discipline has occurred after an official verbal warning, the learner may be given a formal written warning. The formal written warning will lapse after a period of 9 months.

Stage 3: Suspension from Course

Where the conduct complained of is of a serious nature or where a further breach of discipline has occurred after a formal verbal or written warning, a learner may be suspended for a fixed period.

Stage 4: Exclusion from Course

Where the conduct complained of is of a particularly serious nature or where a further breach of discipline has occurred after a period of suspension from a course, a learner may be excluded from attending a college.

3.8 Implementation of Formal Disciplinary Procedures

Before imposing any disciplinary sanctions, an appropriate investigation of the relevant facts will be conducted. The purpose of an investigation is to establish the facts in relation to any allegations made against (or suspicions existing in relation to) the learner before considering whether or not to impose disciplinary sanctions. The extent of investigation will depend on the nature of the allegation(s) or suspicions and will vary from case to case.

At every stage in the formal disciplinary procedure, the learner will be furnished with details of the allegation(s)/complaint(s) made against them and will be given the opportunity to respond fully to such allegation(s)/complaint(s) before any decision is taken.

Disciplinary Meeting

Cases of serious misconduct, which could lead to a suspension or exclusion from course work, will involve a disciplinary meeting. The college management decides, who on behalf of the college, will conduct disciplinary meetings.

In such cases, the college will write to the learner setting out:

- The allegation(s)/complaint(s) in relation to them
- The basis for the allegation(s)/complaint(s)

A learner may be suspended pending an investigation or disciplinary process where the college has reason to believe that the learner has committed an act of serious misconduct or has ignored a previous written warning. Suspension pending a disciplinary interview or other disciplinary process is a holding suspension and is not an indication that a decision has been made that misconduct has occurred.

The learner will be given written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary meeting. The meeting will be held as soon as reasonably practicable; having regard to the learner's entitlement to assess the allegation(s)/complaint(s) made against them and prepare their case. The meeting will take place at a time and place at which it is reasonably practicable for the learner to attend, and the learner must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. A learner may be accompanied by a friend, learner representative, or relative at the meeting.

As soon as practicable, after the meeting, the college management will notify the learner in writing of their decision, together with details of

- Any disciplinary sanction imposed on the learner
- The reason for the sanction
- The behaviour which requires improvement
- The consequences for repeated breaches of discipline.
- The learner's right of appeal.

Right of Appeal

A learner has the right of appeal against formal disciplinary sanction. This right of appeal must be exercised in writing to the Teagasc Head of Education setting out the grounds of appeal. The appeal must be made within 5 working days of the date of receipt of notification of the sanction. Appeals will be considered by an Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will not include any person that has had any

previous involvement in the issue under consideration. Having considered the appeal, the Appeal Panel may confirm the original sanction, revoke the original sanction or impose an alternative sanction.

Wilful damage to Property

Where a learner has caused wilful damage to property the learner will be required to pay the cost associated with making good such damages.

Criminal Offences

Where any member of staff has reason to believe that a learner may have committed a criminal offence, the college may refer the matter to the Gardaí.

4.0 Child Safeguarding and Infant Care

4.1 Teagasc Child Safeguarding Statement

Teagasc is committed to the safeguarding of all children (persons under 18 years of age) participating in Teagasc education and training programmes. Teagasc's Child Safeguarding Statement is prepared in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidance together with other legal provisions. It sets out the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child availing of Teagasc's services is safe from harm. Some of the aims of the Teagasc Child Safeguarding Statement include (but are not limited to) the following:

- To create a safe environment for children in their interactions with Teagasc and minimise the possibility of harm, either deliberate or accidental.
- To encourage safe practices for those who work with children.
- To set out appropriate responses and procedures to adverse events or disclosures.

Teagasc has assigned staff to act as a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) in keeping with best practice in child safeguarding. The DLP and Deputy DLP are the contact persons for any children protection concerns within Teagasc.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is:

Mary O'Shaughnessy - mary.oshaughnessy@teagasc.ie / +353 46 9026702

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is:

Karen O'Connell - karen.oconnell@teagasc.ie / +353 23 8832518

Each college also has designated liaison staff. For Gurteen College the designated liaison persons (Welfare Officers) are currently:

- Day: Hugh O'Brien, Maura Campbell, Stephanie Scully, Rev. Stephen Foster
- Night: Brendan Molloy

Please check the Notice Board at the entrance of the College Canteen to view names, photos, and profiles of current Student Welfare Officers.

The Teagasc Child Safeguarding Statement is available [here](#).

4.2 Infant Care

To support learners in balancing their educational and parental responsibilities while attending Teagasc Training Programmes:

- Learners should discuss their infant's needs with the Course Coordinator in advance of course commencement.
- Babies/infants and children are not permitted in face-to-face timetabled activities, including lectures, practical sessions and assessments.
- Breastfeeding and infant care facilities will be made available at colleges/centres (subject to prior discussion and availability).
- A dedicated carer must be present to supervise the baby/infant while the learner attends timetabled activities.

5.0 Learner Equality and Welfare Guidelines

5.1 Learner Equality

Teagasc is committed to providing equal access to all learners. If any learner feels that they have not been treated equitably they have the right to raise concerns, or lodge a complaint, with a Student Welfare Officer of Teagasc Dedicated Liaison Person without fear of victimisation through the recognised complaint procedures under the Teagasc Customer Charter (contained within this handbook).

5.2 Dignity and Respect

Teagasc is committed to the promotion of an environment for work and study which upholds the dignity and respect of the individual and which supports every individual's right to study and/or work in an environment, which is free of any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying. This [policy](#) applies to the behaviour of learners and staff of the college and others on business or engaged in activities relating to the college or providing services to the college.

Dignity and Respect issues should be reported to a welfare officer or mentor, the designated liaison person or to someone of trust on the staff.

5.3 Bullying/Intimidation and/or Sexual Harassment

All learners and staff are entitled to be treated with respect and their learning/work environment must be such that learners and staff are free to perform their studies/duties in a climate free from intimidation/bullying from fellow learners, staff members, or others. Intimidation/bullying are repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or a group against others.

The college environment is such that all learners and staff are free to perform their studies/duties without sexual harassment from fellow learners, staff members, or others. Sexual harassment includes any single serious incident which the recipient finds offensive or repeated and/or unwanted verbal or physical advances which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient or which cause discomfort or humiliation or which interfere with the recipient's study/job performance.

The prevention of bullying, intimidation and sexual harassment is an integral part of the college/centre ethos, which is covered by a [Bullying, Intimidation and Sexual Harassment](#) Policy.

The policy seeks to:

- Promote an ethos which encourages learners and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable conduct with college management, staff, learners, parents/guardians.
- Implement procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Provide information and organise active consent workshops.
- Implement procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Offer a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and sexual harassment and for those involved in bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Review the effectiveness of the college measures on anti-bullying behaviour.

Incidents of bullying/intimidation and sexual harassment should be reported to a welfare officer or mentor, the designated liaison person or to someone of trust on the staff.

5.4 Learner Welfare

The welfare of learners is important to Teagasc and Gurteen College. It involves management, administration, catering, teachers, technicians, farm staff, house staff, PLP hosts, learner clubs and societies - all of which support the total wellbeing of the learner and help build up a sense of community.

Personal Safety

The safety and security of learners is of paramount importance to Teagasc. Teagasc requires you to cooperate fully with safety requirements and comply with all safety precautions while attending your course. Specific safety requirements are in place for residential students.

Outside of the college campus, we can only provide advice to enhance the safety of our learners. We advise the following precautions:

- Don't walk anywhere alone, particularly at night. If walking after dark, avoid dark/isolated areas.
- Avoid becoming isolated from friends or fellow learners on nights out.
- If consuming alcohol, drink responsibly.
- Practice safe driving and comply with speed limits and the rules of the road.
- Be aware of your responsibilities as a driver if carrying passengers in your vehicle.
- Look out for the safety and welfare of fellow learners.

Resilience and Mental Health

If something is bothering you, no matter how big or small, you should raise it, sooner rather than later with a friend, family member or a college staff member. You can also contact the Student Assistance Programme (SAP).

Additional information on mental health issues will be posted on college social media platforms or notice boards from time to time.

There is also a student counsellor and College Chaplain available to all students by appointment. Should you wish to avail of this service please speak to Maura Campbell. This service is available to any learner experiencing difficulties, in addition to the Student Welfare Team.

Alcohol, Illegal Substance and Smoking

The use or possession of alcoholic drinks or illegal substances within the college or its grounds is prohibited. Disciplinary action will be taken against Learners who breach this regulation. If you have anxieties about someone using illegal substances or have personal concerns, talk to a staff member in confidence. It is important to know that substance use is prohibited and illegal.

Smoking is prohibited throughout college buildings. Designated smoking areas are provided. It is essential that there is no smoking anywhere in the vicinity of kitchen areas. This is to comply with food hygiene regulations.

Student Assistance Programme (SAP)

The Student Assistance Programme (SAP) is a free confidential counselling, support and information service. All learners on full time, part time and distance education programmes are eligible to access the SAP service.

The Student Assistance Programme (SAP) provides you and your family with emotional and practical support for concerns big or small. The SAP is available 24/7, 365 days a year covering areas such as:

- Health and Lifestyle
- Emotional and Mental Wellbeing support
- Career Support
- Life Coaching
- Legal Assistance
- Financial Assistance
- Consumer Advice
- Non-Irish National Support

The service is totally confidential and can help you or your family with problems you may experience in your own life.

Please note that the Student Assistance Programme is provided by an external service company. The contract provider may change over the duration of your studies. Should this happen, up-to-date information and contact details will be made available to all learners.

Details of the current provider will be made available as part of your course induction.

5.5 Learner Support

Teagasc provides a range of supports for learners throughout their studies. Whether you need additional assistance due to a disability or you require academic support Teagasc will endeavour to provide the supports that you need.

Gurteen College has an Access Officer who will support learners. Where appropriate and feasible, Teagasc / Gurteen College will provide reasonable accommodation to support learning.

Learner support is confidential.

For learners unable to complete a mainstream training programme, Teagasc provides an alternative training programme the Teagasc Applied Programme (TAP). While this is not an accredited QQI programme, learners who successfully complete the programme can benefit from DAFM and Revenue schemes and reliefs available to Young Trained Farmers.

5.6 Teagasc Customer Charter

The Teagasc Customer Charter outlines the level of service that Teagasc aim to provide to our customers. The Customer Charter is available [here](#) and it also is accessible at learner information points in college.

The steps in addressing education customer complaints (excluding assessment appeal procedures) are:

1. The learner raises their complaint with a local staff member. Every effort will be made by parties to mutually resolve the issue at this stage.
2. If not satisfied with the response you receive, you can make a written request for a review of your complaint to the College Principal/Regional Manager. Again, every effort will be made by parties to mutually resolve the issue at this stage.
3. If, having gone through the review process, you are not satisfied, you can contact the Teagasc Quality Customer Service Officer on **059 9170200** or email qcs@teagasc.ie to request a review by an independent Teagasc staff member.
4. If you are not satisfied that the Teagasc Customer Complaints process has adequately resolved your complaint, you can contact the Ombudsman, or the Ombudsman for Children if you are under 18.

6.0 Health and Safety

6.1 Introduction

Health, safety and welfare at work affect everyone. Brief lapses of care and attention can cause injuries, damage health and damage property which takes their toll both in human and monetary terms.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 Act, Teagasc has a duty to provide learners with a safe environment, safe equipment, adequate safety information, instruction, training and supervision and adequate welfare arrangements.

The Learner should bear in mind they have a duty under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to assist Teagasc in maintaining a safe place for training and a specific legal duty not to interfere with anything which may compromise safety management at the college.

A Safety Management System operates at the Teagasc colleges. Relevant elements of the Safety Management System will be communicated to learners as part of your course induction and at on-going training activities.

Additional health and safety information is available on request from the Course Co-ordinator. Your course may contain instruction and practice elements pertaining to machinery, field trips, animals, laboratories, computing and information technology. Tutors will provide you with information, instruction and training which will allow for a safe system of work within these areas. Colleges will require you to wear high visibility clothing in designated areas of the college.

Any act which may compromise safety management will be treated as a serious offence by Teagasc and may be subject to disciplinary action.

6.2 *Gurteen College H&S Specifics*

In addition to the above, please take note of the following points:

- Remember that the effects of alcohol and other intoxicants can last for many hours, well into the next day, and that people with 'hangovers' can be just as dangerous to themselves and others as people who are drunk. Safety around machinery and animals requires a clear head. If a learner is not in a fit state to attend a practical class, they will be sent away.
- It is dangerous to use CONTACT LENSES when welding, so users of contact lenses should also bring a pair of glasses.
- Boiler suits are the permitted type of working overall. Long coats, anoraks with drawstrings, and other loose clothing are dangerous and must not be worn.
- Students must wear overalls, a hi-vis vest and steel capped wellies/boots for all practicals. You will not be allowed to take part in practicals unless you are dressed appropriately. If in doubt about any instructions given to you, please ask for more detail. Health, safety and disease control guidelines must be observed at all times.
- Students are not permitted to use at home their wellingtons / college farm footwear at weekends or at holidays, because of the risk of disease transmission from college to home or vice versa.
- Hand hygiene is an important part of Health and Safety at the college. It is essential that the disposable gloves provided are worn when taking part in practicals, doing farm work, on duty etc. and that hands are washed thoroughly once practical work is completed and before mealtimes / before handling mobile phones.

Safety Committee

We welcome student representatives on the college Safety Committee - management, staff and students all have an important role to play. Contact Maura Campbell if interested.

Gurteen College Safety Code

The college actively promotes Safety. Learners should make themselves aware of our full Safety Statement which is available in the Student Section of our computer network system, or otherwise on request. These points are to be used as guidelines:

- Safety equipment must be worn or used as directed and whenever necessary.
- Safe work practices must be followed at all times, as outlined by staff and in the course materials.
- All persons are entitled to refuse to operate unsafe work practices or equipment, or to work without adequate protective gear.
- Interference with safety equipment and appliances is strictly forbidden.
- All persons must immediately report any unsafe machinery, equipment or hazardous situation to a member of staff.
- All accidents causing injury, near-misses, and accidents causing damage to property must be reported to either: Maura Campbell (Hospitality Coordinator) or Ken Flynn (Farm Manager).

6.3 Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures

Evacuation Routes

Buildings are sign-posted indicating the direction to the nearest exit point. Exits are individually sign-posted.

Please note the following if the fire alarm sounds:

1. Walk (don't run) to the nearest exit point.
2. Do not delay to pick up personal belongings.
3. Close doors (where appropriate).
4. On arriving at the designated fire assembly point(s) please comply with the requests of staff.
5. Do not re-enter the building until authorisation has been given.

Any Person discovering a fire shall:

- Activate the alarm at the nearest Break Glass point to warn others (use a shoe or covered elbow, rather than a bare hand).
- If you have a safe and clear escape route and there is no risk to yourself: select the appropriate type of fire extinguisher and try to put out the fire.
- Do not persist if the fire continues to spread – evacuate immediately.
- Avoid smoke: some types of smoke can kill in a few seconds.
- Close doors behind you to slow the spread of fire and smoke.
- Even if the fire seems to be extinguished, ensure a staff member attends to make the decision that they're happy the fire is fully out (sometimes fires can reignite).

Alarm

The Fire Alarm sound is a **continuous loud bell**. If you hear the Alarm proceed immediately to the Fire Assembly Point notifying others on your way.

If the alarm sounds:

- Walk (don't run) to the nearest exit point.
- Do not delay to pick up personal belongings.
- Close all doors behind you (where appropriate).

AT NIGHT

- Bring warm clothes.
- Check the room either side of yours.
- Go straight to the Assembly Point.
- Do not go back for anything.

BY DAY

- Go straight to the Assembly Point.
- Do not go to your room.

AT THE ASSEMBLY POINT:

- On arriving at the designated assembly point(s) please obey the requests of staff.
- Do not re-enter the building until authorisation has been given.

Please note that the college has five separate alarm systems: main college building, Gurteen House, the Sports Hall, the Demo Building, and McKinney Hall. When the alarm sounds in any one area, it only sounds in that area – so if the alarm goes off in Gurteen House (for example) make sure staff in the main building know about it.

Assembly Points

The Fire Assembly Point is in the car park in front of the Sports Hall main doors - it has a designated sign, like this:



Evacuation Routes

There are a number of exit routes throughout college buildings and these routes are clearly marked.

Emergency Exits

NEVER block an emergency exit or leave anything (bags or equipment) that could obstruct an emergency exit or normal entry / exit points of any building / shed / car park.

Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting is provided and will switch on in event of fire.

Break Glass Units

Break Glass points are strategically located near exits. Breaking the glass will sound the alarm and alert all occupants. Glass will break easily and should be broken with the heel of a shoe, a covered elbow, any small implement or a covered fist.

Never set off a false alarm. It is a **criminal offence** to tamper with fire safety equipment.

Fire Drills

If you hear the alarm always treat it as a real event, even if you suspect it is a drill.

Firefighting equipment

Fire Extinguishers are strategically placed throughout the building. Familiarise yourself with the different types of extinguishers, and their different uses.

Colour of Label	Type	Notes
RED Label	Water	Do not use on electrical fire Do not use on flammable liquids Suitable for wood, paper textiles
BLUE Label	Dry Powder	Suitable for electrical fires, flammable liquids, wood, paper textiles
BUFF / CREAM Label	Foam	Do not use on Electrical fires Suitable on flammable liquids, wood, paper and textiles
BLACK Label	Carbon Dioxide	Suitable for electrical fires, flammable liquids, wood, paper and textiles

Room Notices

There are Fire Safety Notices in every room. Please familiarise yourself with the information on this notice - it details the action to be taken on discovering a fire or hearing the fire alarm.

6.4 First Aid

All on campus accidents and injuries (no matter how small or insignificant they might seem) must be reported to a trained first aider so that injuries can be assessed, medical attention arranged and to ensure that accidents are prevented in the future.

Gurteen College's trained First Aiders are listed on the college notice boards; if in doubt, ask the nearest member of staff and they will help / direct you.

Gurteen College also has an AED / Defibrillator onsite located at the back door to the main college building. This is in an alarmed cabinet, and can absolutely be used in the manner it is intended to be used. Please do not tamper with this device – it is there for life saving purposes, and to tamper with it could cause it to malfunction when it is most needed.

6.5 Medical Services

Learners requiring a doctor or pharmacist, while attending timetabled activities, should contact a member of staff. Costs for all medical services are the responsibility of the learner.

Local hospitals are as follows:

- Nenagh Hospital 8am – 8pm 7 days per week, Tel: 067 422 46
 - for broken bones, dislocations, sprains, strains, wounds, scalds and minor burns that are **unlikely to need admission to hospital**
 - Eircode: E45 PT86
 - Internal Directions: pass main reception and turn left; the service is located on the ground floor, beside the Medical Assessment Unit

- Tullamore Hospital, for A&E

Local Doctors Surgeries may be contacted directly by students but please note they may not be able to accommodate requests (always phone first):

- Borrisokane Surgery: Telephone 067 27106. Surgery Hours: 9am – 11.15am & 2.15pm – 4.30pm. Charges for a visit to be paid by the student at the time of the visit.
- Cloughjordan Surgery: Telephone 0505 42129. Surgery Hours: 9am – 12pm. Afternoons by appointment only. Charges for a visit to be paid by the student at the time of the visit.

Emergency Numbers

In event of a real emergency ring 112 or 999 (for fire / ambulance / gardai) and be prepared to answer a series of questions about what service you need, where you are located, what has happened and the status of the person requiring medical attention.

<p style="text-align: center;">Gurteen College Eircode E53 TP93</p>

GP Out of Hours Service can be accessed via: Shannon Doc (Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary). Shannon Doc is open each weekday evening 6pm - 8am, and 24 hours on Saturday, Sunday, and Bank Holidays. Telephone: 1850 212 999. Website: www.shannondoc.ie.

Pharmacies:

There are many Pharmacies in Birr Town:

- Haven Pharmacy: 057 912 0189
- David O'Meara's: 057 912 5560
- Mulholland's: 057 912 0063
- Total Health: 057 912 0063

And one in Borrisokane:

- O'Meara's Pharmacy: 067 27300

Learners with a medical condition should inform their Course Co-ordinator - such information will be treated in strict confidence. Please be advised that courses may include handling farm livestock, soil, animal feeds, fertilisers, machinery, farm equipment and other materials. If you have concerns that such activities may compromise your health, it is recommended that you consult with your medical practitioner and college course co-ordinator for advice.

6.6 Use of Vehicles

Many learners use private vehicles to commute to and from their college. Drivers should be aware of specific risks associated with travelling to or from a college such as:

- Inexperience drivers
- Visitor unfamiliar with the campus
- Walkers and members of public visiting the campus
- The movement of livestock on college farms
- The operation of slow-moving farm machinery

The college is committed to an environment which ensures the health and safety of all staff, learners and visitors. To achieve this objective, certain rules apply to the use of vehicles at the college. We require the full co-operation of our employees, learners, contractors and visitors with these rules.

Incidents of dangerous driving are treated as serious misconduct and will be dealt with under the Formal Disciplinary Procedure outlined above; you need to be aware of your additional responsibilities as a driver if carrying passengers in your vehicle.

Please note that Teagasc accepts no liability in the event of accidents or damage to personal vehicles used by learners in connection with their studies for reasons of personal convenience. Learner's cars must be parked in the designated parking areas.

Please take a few minutes to become familiar with these rules and observe them at all times for your health and safety.

- There is a general speed limit of 20 Kph throughout all college grounds.
- Learner's cars (and visitors of learners) must be parked in the designated parking areas (in the car park beside the Archway, in front of the Sports Hall or on the unsurfaced area behind the dining room). Cars parked elsewhere may be clamped or barred from campus.
- Arrangements for visitors' cars can be made with Hugh O'Brien before 5.00pm. All visitors' cars must leave the campus by 11.00pm. Residents and visitors should note that the security gate closes at midnight.
- Do not leave valuables or personal documents in your car.
- Learners are required to register details of vehicles used in the college with the college Secretaries (whether requested on a form or through the student portal).
- Unauthorised vehicles are not allowed to enter restricted areas e.g. the college farmyard, or the farmyards of farms being visited unless prior authorisation has been given.
- Only vehicles displaying authentic permits can park in designated disabled parking areas.

The college reserves the right to prohibit the keeping of a vehicle at the college where individuals fail to co-operate with these regulations.

6.7 Transport for visits / field trips

College staff will arrange for the provision of adequate transport for excursions/field trips in connection with the course. For reasons of personal safety and biosecurity, learners are not allowed use personal vehicles for such trips unless specifically approved and in such instances learner cars must be parked in the designated parking areas. Teagasc accepts no liability in the event of accidents, personal injury or damage to personal vehicles used by learners in connection with their studies for reasons of personal convenience.

6.8 Biosecurity

Biosecurity refers to measures taken to prevent the introduction of infections which can affect livestock or humans. For learner safety, and biosecurity on your home farm, the college farms and visited farms, the following precautions should be taken:

- Provide a clean set of Wellingtons, solely for the use on farm visits/college farm activities.
- Disinfect these Wellingtons at the entrance and when leaving visiting farms.
- Wear and/or use personal protective equipment provided while on farm visits.
- Follow instructions and visiting protocols.
- Follow any bio security regulations in place at the college. In the event of a notifiable animal or plant disease occurring at the college, in the college area, on your home farm or in your home area, you may be requested to comply with more detailed bio security procedures.

6.9 Use of Computers/Printers

The college aims to promote an environment which is supportive of and conducive to the training and the personal development of all learners and staff. Computer facilities play a very important role in this development. All learners enrolled will be allocated an individual password for computer access.

Acceptable Usage

Teagasc has an Acceptable Usage Policy which states the practices a user must agree to access the network, resources, services and the Internet. The learner specific items given here are only part of the overall policy.

- Users must log on to the computer network system using their own username and password.
- Passwords are confidential and must not be made known to others.
- Learners must not interfere with the IT systems, or computer settings.
- Accessing another learner's computer account is strictly forbidden.
- Learners should log out when finished using a computer.
- The computer rooms are to be kept tidy at all times.
- Food or drinks are not allowed in computer rooms.
- Wilful damage to facilities in the computer room will be treated as serious misconduct.

- Learners carrying out projects will have preferential access to computers.
- If a computer user encounters a problem with a password or computer, this should be reported to a member of staff.

Misuse of the Internet, mobile phones and e-mail

Accessing, downloading or sending indecent, obscene, pornographic, sexist, defamatory, racist or other inappropriate material and the circulation of these materials are a potential criminal offence, and will be reported to the appropriate authority.

Passing information through email and the internet greatly increases the risk of computer viruses, and users should be aware of this when they receive suspicious emails especially.

Internet use will be monitored on a regular basis by college staff. Learners who do not comply with the regulations will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Printing

Projects and assignments can be printed from the college computers. Please respect the service and aim to minimise waste by using the Print Preview function to ensure documents are laid out as intended. Print jobs are monitored, and CCTV is in use in all Computer Rooms. Students found abusing the facilities will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Any assistance with printing can be obtained by asking a tutor or the College Secretary.

7.0 Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are core activities of Teagasc Education. Teagasc is dedicated to providing the highest quality education and training that meets your needs as a learner. Teagasc is committed to providing you with a learner-centred environment and you will be supported by qualified and committed staff. Belief and confidence in your potential is central to Teagasc education philosophy. Teagasc will treat all learners with dignity and respect and respond to their needs and concerns.

7.1 Teaching Methodologies

Teagasc and Gurteen College use a range of delivery methodologies (depending on the subject matter) to reinforce and relate 'theory' with 'application'. Teaching methodologies may include:

- Classroom based instruction
- Practical skills demonstration
- Work practice training with a host or on a home enterprise
- Group discussion
- One to one instruction
- Self-directed learning
- Technology enhanced learning
- Conference calls

- Use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE)
- Project and assignment work
- Field trips and visits to research centres
- Guest lectures

7.2 Skills Training and Assessment

Practical skills demonstration and hands-on practice are an integral part of the Teagasc learning experience. Teagasc provides a learning environment and resources that supports your learning enabling you to achieve the key skills and competencies necessary for your award. Facilities and equipment include:

- Classrooms, workshops and computer rooms
- Access to farms, forests, horticultural and equine units.
- Skills demonstration facilities including livestock handling facilities and enterprise specific equipment including stables, glasshouses, gardens and farm buildings
- Horticultural and farm machinery/equipment
- Work practice arrangements

Please note that learners who have not attended certain practical skills training involving livestock/machinery/equipment may be prohibited from undertaking practical skills assessment for health and safety reasons.

7.3 Blended Learning

Teagasc training may involve a blended learning approach using a combination of traditional face to face teaching with the use of technologies. Teagasc employs Moodle as a learning platform. This allows tutors and learners to communicate electronically. Moodle provides electronic copies of workbooks and other learning support materials including PowerPoint presentations, video and quizzes. Supervised online assessments may also be conducted on Moodle. Teagasc may also use Zoom (or similar) for the provision of remote classes and lectures. To engage with the programme and to facilitate learning, you should have access to:

- The internet
- An active personal email account
- An effective desktop/laptop/notepad

Learner Guidelines for Online Behaviour or Netiquette are available in Appendix 2.

7.4 Recording of Learner Activities and Presentations for Course Delivery and Assessment

Teagasc use various means to deliver and assess course work including the use of video/voice recording.

Where it is necessary to use video/voice recordings for course delivery or assessment purposes; the learner's image and/or sound of the learner's voice will not be edited, copied, exhibited, published or distributed either within Teagasc or with an external third party except for course delivery and assessment purposes.

The learner completes a consent form as part of their online application process. Consent can be withdrawn by emailing the Data Protection Officer at dpo@teagasc.ie.

7.5 Practical Learning Period

Your programmes will include a Practical Learning Period (PLP). PLP may be undertaken with a registered host, on a Teagasc enterprise or on a home-based enterprise, depending on the programme you have enrolled in; some programmes also facilitate foreign work practice. PLP whether undertaken in Ireland or overseas will be supported by a Placement Officer or Education Officer.

Learners undertaking a Practical Learning Period (PLP) as part of a Teagasc programme are required to comply with procedures relating to:

- Health and Safety
- Animal Welfare and biosecurity
- Use of vehicles and equipment
- Use of Mobile Phones
- Reporting of incidents and accidents
- Attendance, punctuality and reliability
- Communication with peers and hosts

7.6 Field Trips

Your training will be supported by visits to benchmark units including high performing growers and breeders. You will also visit food processor, veterinary labs, government department and other service providers to your industry.

Your programme will be supported by the Teagasc advisory service and may involve attendance at conferences, open days and visits to Teagasc research farms and research centres.

7.7 Learner Responsibilities

While Teagasc is committed to supporting you, the successful completion of your programme also requires you to commit to your course and take responsibility for your own learning. To this end Teagasc expects you to:

- Attend punctually and participate actively in all learning situations
- Comply and submit all assessments and project work
- Engage with online training on Moodle or other learning platforms
- Comply with assessment regulations
- Complete PLP as scheduled
- Act on constructive feedback

- Support and respect the rights of fellow learners and staff
- Abide by all rules, regulations and Teagasc policies

Attendance is monitored during training sessions throughout your programme. Poor attenders will be contacted and advised about the possible consequence of poor engagement.

Exam and assessment results are posted to Quercus (learner management system). Quercus will inform you of your results and it allows tutors to monitor your performance. Teaching staff will provide feedback to you on exam/assessments. Concerns will be raised directly with you by your tutor and may be followed up by your course co-ordinator, Access officer, assigned mentor or by management if required.

Please note that all assessment results are provisional and are subject to change as part of internal verification and external authentication processes.

8.0 Teagasc Student Maintenance Grant Scheme

The Teagasc Student Maintenance Grant Scheme is a means tested maintenance grant for students attending full time Level 5 and Level 6 courses at Teagasc and Private Agricultural Colleges. Teagasc maintenance grants are paid through Teagasc, and the grant scheme is managed by Teagasc. The scheme is implemented along the lines of the national Student Grant Scheme but varies in respect of items added back to determine overall reckonable income.

The Student Maintenance Grant is a contribution towards the living costs of students. Students will not be paid for non-attendance unless specifically allowed. See section 3.3 on time and attendance.

All scheme information including application form and guidance notes are available [here](#).

9.0 Teagasc Education and Training Promotion

Teagasc use various means to promote education and training. The list below, not exhaustive, includes:

- Educational videos
- Event promotional material
- Conference presentation
- Testimonial videos
- Teagasc Course Prospectus

Learners are asked to complete a consent form as part of the online application process. This consent permits learners to participate in such promotional materials and allows for the use of the learner's image, and sound of the learners' voice as recorded on audio or video devices, without payment or any other consideration, for Teagasc educational, training or promotional purposes. The image and/or voice recording may be edited, copied, exhibited, published or distributed and this personal data may be used in diverse educational/promotional settings and mediums within an unrestricted geographic area.

Teagasc will also ask your permission to be contacted regarding feedback, comments and graduate surveys following the completion of your course.

The learner has the right to opt out of participation in these events.

10.0 Data Protection Statement

Gurteen College and Teagasc will comply with all its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Teagasc and Gurteen College are the data controllers in relation to any personal data which you provide to us.

Teagasc and Gurteen College will process your personal data for purposes which are necessary to comply with the Learner Handbook. We may, on occasion, share your personal data with third parties such as hosts involved in practical learning period training, education contractors employed by Teagasc, Central Statistics Office, QQI and college service providers (e.g. catering companies, security companies).

Teagasc applies different retention periods for different categories of your personal data. The personal data supplied by you will be retained according to Teagasc Data Retention policies. Your personal data will only be processed for purposes other than compliance with the Learner Handbook where such processing is necessary for lawful reasons under data protection legislation or in circumstances where Teagasc is compelled to do so by law. Teagasc and Gurteen College may share personal data requested by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). Under regulations which were introduced in 1991, third level institutions are obliged to supply the Department with details of students registered for full-time daytime education.

Teagasc and Gurteen College have taken the appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect your personal data from loss, abuse and unauthorised access. For more information on how Teagasc may process your personal data, please contact the Teagasc Data Protection Officer at: dpo@teagasc.ie

11.0 Assessment Regulations for Teagasc - Programmes Leading to QQI Awards

It is your duty to familiarise yourself with the regulations relating to written examinations, assignments and practical assessments and the consequence of infringing these regulations.

11.1 Assessment and Practice

Teagasc and Gurteen College adhere to QQI guidelines in regard to fairness and consistent assessment practice. Assessment Policy and Practice within Teagasc Courses was developed with reference to international theory and best practice. Please note learners are required to bring evidence of identity with them to produce on request if required by assessment supervisors.

11.2 Written Examinations

- You must sit at your assigned desk during all written examinations unless otherwise directed. An attendance record will be taken according to the seating plan, therefore if you are not sitting at your assigned desk there is a risk that you may be marked absent, and your paper may be at risk

of not being accepted. You must remain in your assigned desk while completing the examination.

- Any writing on your assigned desk must be brought to the attention of the superintendent before the exam commences otherwise you may be held accountable and disciplined accordingly.
- You must carefully note the date, time and location for all written examinations.
- You are required to be in attendance at the examination room/hall or computer room prior to the commencement of the examination. If you are late, you may not be admitted into the examination room/hall.
- You will not be admitted into the examination room/hall once a learner has surrendered their examination script and left the examination room/hall.
- You will not be allowed to leave the examination room/hall and re-enter it during the time of the examination.
- If you leave the examination centre before the end of the examination you must surrender to the superintendent the examination papers, answer books and all other stationery supplied for the assessment.
- It is the learner's responsibility to ensure their name has been entered onto the examination script, answer book and any additional stationery used during the examination.
- You must not bring any books, paper or notes into the examination room/hall or have any of these within reach, under your control or in your possession.
- You must not, use or attempt to use a mobile phone, while in the examination room/hall.
- You must not while in the examination room/hall, aid or attempt to obtain aid from another learner.
- You must not, while in the examination room/hall, communicate with or attempt to communicate with another learner.
- You must not write in the answer book anything that is not directly connected with the subject matter of the questions to be answered.
- At the conclusion of the examination, you should immediately stop writing and remain in your seat until the superintendent has collected the scripts
- At the end of the examination, you should hand all stationery including examination papers and answer books to the superintendent.
- You must obey the directions of the superintendent in all matters relating to the examination.
- You may be expelled from the examination room/hall if your behaviour, in the opinion of the superintendent, is such as to jeopardise the successful conduct of the examination.
- Expulsion from the examination room/hall may result in more serious disciplinary action.
- Each learner will be asked to sign that they have read and understand the Teagasc Assessment Policy and Practice before undertaking written examinations.

11.3 Online Assessments

- You must carefully note the date, time and location for all online examinations.
- You must use your designated login and password to logon for examinations.
- You must not share your password with others.
- You should be logged in and ready to commence the exam ahead of the scheduled start time.
- If you are late, you may not be admitted into the examination.
- The exam will not be available until the designated start time.
- You must not be in possession of any materials, equipment, notes or books during an examination other than those specified in advance by the tutor/ invigilator.
- You must not contact, communicate, talk to, or copy from any other learner/source during the examination or allow your work to be copied.
- You must not help or receive help from another learner/source either online or in person
- You must not submit an assessment/exam on behalf of another learner.
- You can submit your exam at any point by clicking “Submit”. You cannot review your answers once your exam has been submitted
- You should aim to complete your exam before the finish time—any open exam will be automatically submitted at the finish time.

11.4 Practical Examinations

The regulations applying to the written examination will be adopted as appropriate for the conduct of practical assessments. Where learners have not attended instruction in practical skills, the college reserve the right not to allow the learner to attempt the practical examination due to health and safety considerations; in addition, you must:

- Wear personal protective equipment appropriate for the practical examinations in question.
- Use safe procedures and practices at all times.
- Ensure that you do not compromise your safety, the safety of other learners, the assessor, the public, the environment and/or the safety/welfare of the animal (if applicable).
- Inform the assessor of any factors which may influence the learners’ ability to sit a practical assessment.

11.5 Written Coursework (Assignments/Projects)

You must observe deadlines for submission of written coursework for assessment. If the assignment is submitted late, it will be treated as a repeat assessment thereby capping the associated module grade at a pass.

- When submitting coursework, you must sign a declaration that all coursework (assignments, projects, records, collection of work, portfolios etc.) submitted for assessment is your own original work.

- Downloading and submitting material directly from the internet or copying the work of other learners will be regarded as plagiarism.
- Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist you in assessment or project work where you are not permitted to, is a breach of Teagasc plagiarism rules and assessment policies. AI can only be used when a tutor has expressly stated that it can be used. Where a tutor allows the use of AI in an assessment, they will provide you with guidance on how you should use and any contribution of AI must be fully acknowledged. Learners who breach this rule may be sanctioned under Teagasc assessment guidelines.
- Making your course work (projects, assignments, records, collection of work, portfolios etc.) available to other learners is a breach of Assessment Regulations.
- Where group projects/assignments are used, all learners must indicate which part of the work is their own and submit supporting evidence of each individual's contribution to the group projects/assignment

A learner can request an extension to the submission date for assignment or projects where genuine difficulties arise in meeting a scheduled submission deadline. An application can be made by contacting either the course co-ordinator or the relevant tutor/assessor. You must provide verifiable evidence for consideration. Examples include:

- An accident, illness or a physical injury
- An emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- A recent bereavement of a family member or friend
- Domestic emergency
- Other extenuating circumstances.

11.6 Repeats Assessments

Learners will have 2 assessment attempts (an initial assessment and a repeat assessment) during the duration of a Level 5 or Level 6 programme.

- Where a learner has passed a module, they are not required to repeat any assessments.
- Where a learner has failed a module and there are a number of assessment types associated within a module, a learner is not required to repeat elements of a module which they have passed. Only failed assessment types need be repeated.
- Learners can only repeat assessments/ examinations/assignments that they have failed. They cannot repeat assessments they have already passed to achieve a higher grade.
- The highest mark achieved at the initial assessment or a repeat assessment will always stand. This mark will be the record on your Record of Education on Quercus.
- Where any assessment (written exam, skills assessment, assignment or project) is repeated, the module grade will be capped at a "Pass". Capping a module or a number of modules at a pass grade may have implications for the overall award result.

- Assignments, projects, diaries or other work which is presented for correction after the submission deadline will be treated as a repeat attempt and late submission of work will result in the module being capped at a “Pass” grade.

Repeating Modules in a Subsequent programme

- Learners who do not pass all modules associated with their programme cannot be put forward for a major award with QQI.
- The results for all modules which have been successfully passed will be exported to QQI and the learner will receive component awards for these modules.
- A learner can re-register, pay repeat fees and repeat additional modules on a subsequent programme at the discretion of the College. Your college will inform you of the repeat fee per module.
- Learners who repeat coursework and successfully complete the modules required for a major award will be put forward for a major award with QQI.

12.0 Penalties for Breaches of Assessment Regulations

It is an offence, under the Assessment Regulations for Teagasc, to procure, or to attempt to procure a breach of the regulations, whether on your own behalf or on behalf of any other person.

A **breach of assessment regulations** shall be deemed to have occurred when there has been an actual or attempted form of:

- Cheating
- Copying
- Aiding another learner during a written or practical examination
- Plagiarism
- Failure to acknowledge the contribution of AI
- Sharing assignments or project work with other learners
- Falsely claiming to have carried out assignments, work-based learning, projects etc.
- Misrepresentation
- Bribery
- Falsification
- Personating or other such form of deception. Personation will be treated as serious misconduct.
- Breaching the security and integrity of any assessment in any way or by any means.
- Any other behaviour, deception, or false claim, that manipulates or breaches assessment practice

The **penalties which can be imposed for breach of assessment regulations** may constitute any or all of the following:

- No credit in the assessment or part of the assessment.
- No credit for a module.
- No credit for all of the modules associated with a particular programme.
- Ineligibility for an award.
- Suspension from all course activities, for a fixed period of time.
- A recommendation to the head of college for the formal expulsion from a college.

You will be notified in writing if a suspected breach of assessment regulations is being investigated.

Breaches of Assessment Regulations is regarded as serious misconduct and will be investigated and managed under the Formal Disciplinary Procedure.

12.1 Compensation policy

Teagasc operates a compensation policy which can allow learners who fail to attain the required pass standard in some modules to achieve the overall award within the limits set out in the Compensation Policy document. Details of this policy will be made available to you during the programme.

12.2 Assessment Appeals

There is a system of academic appeal for learners unhappy with their assessment results. All written assessment scripts, assignments, projects and skills assessment record sheets are retained by your tutors for external authentication.

If you are unhappy about an assessment result you should:

- I. Firstly, contact your tutor for results feedback. The tutor will recheck the assessment and explain to you how the assessment was marked. If an error is detected, the result of the assessment will be corrected.
- II. If you are still unhappy about the result you can seek an Assessment Review with the Course Coordinator. The Course Coordinator will arrange a further recheck of the assessment. If an error is detected, the result of the assessment will be corrected
- III. If the issue remains unresolved following the assessment review, a learner can request an appeal by the External Authenticator.

A fee of €50 is charged for an Appeal. This fee is refundable if the appeal is upheld. Appeals can only be considered where a valid reason is given. Valid reasons include:

- Perceived inequity in the marking of scripts or practical assessments
- Perceived errors in the Record of Education and Training

The External Authenticator will arrange an Appeal Board. The Appeal Review Board will not include any person that has had any previous involvement in the decision under consideration. If an error is detected, the result of the assessment will be corrected.

The determination of the External Authenticator is final, and no further appeal can be taken by a learner.

12.3 Results

Results of assessments will be available to view on Quercus using your username and password.

However, it is important to note that all results are provisional until verified by an appointed External Authenticator.

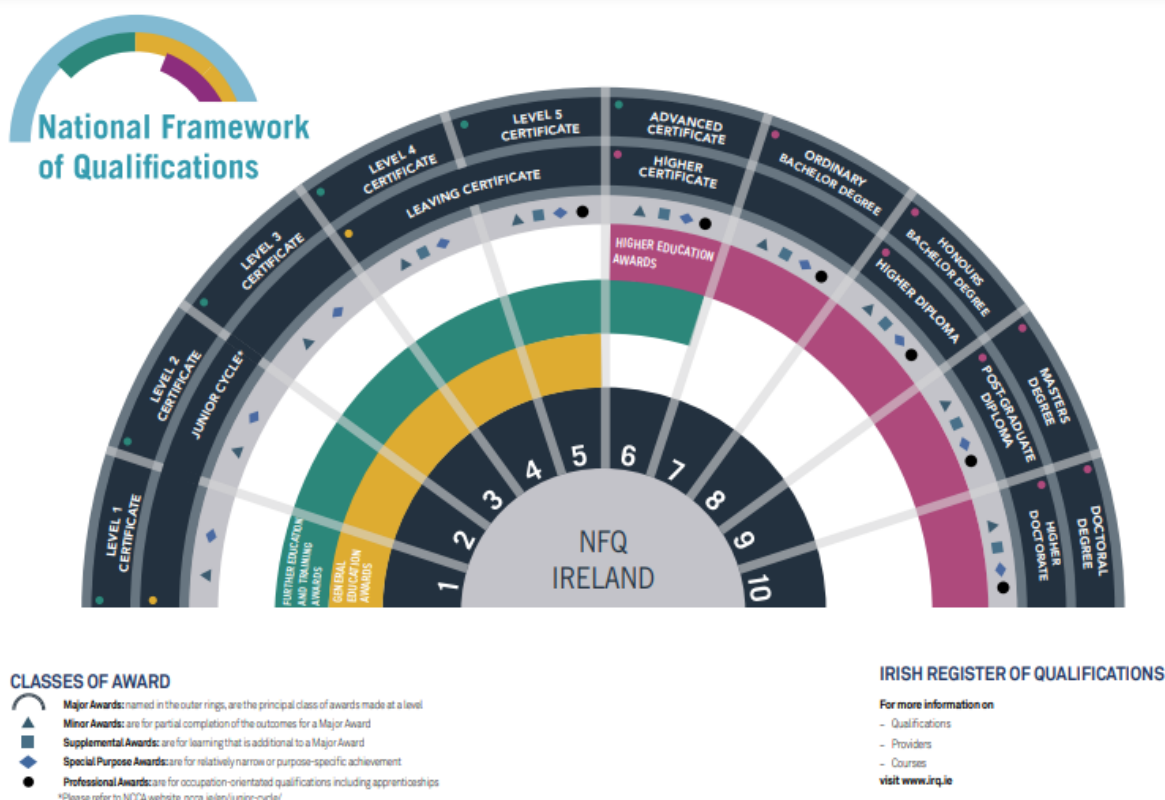
Exam scripts and other course work submitted by learners will be held by colleges and regional centres until the appeals period following external authentication has expired.

13.0 QQI Certification

Teagasc is not an awarding body, your award will be issued by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Learners who successfully complete training programmes with Teagasc will receive QQI awards placed at Level 5 or Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The NFQ facilitates progression through the education system as below.

National Framework of Qualifications



The QQI Learner Charter can be read and downloaded from the QQI website at www.qqi.ie.

13.1 Access, Transfer, Progression and Higher Education Link Scheme

Teagasc is committed to the promotion of access, transfer and progression to facilitate opportunities for learners to gain access or progress to education programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications. Normal progression is from one level to the next on the National Framework of Qualifications. The Teagasc Access, Transfer and Progression Policy is available [here](#).

Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS)

Learners can use results from Level 5 Certificate or Level 6 Advanced Certificate to apply for CAO courses using the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS).

Progression via HELS requires a Level 5 or Level 6 major award, with at least 120 credits. Access to some higher-level courses may require applicants to have achieved specific awards/module. Applicants are advised to check individual course entry requirements with the institution to which they are applying.

Prior to submitting a HELS application to the CAO, you must:

- Inform your college that you are applying to the CAO and that you intend to use the HELS.
- Confirm with your college that your results will be finalised to meet CAO deadlines.

HELS applicants must check both the individual Higher Education institution and the CAO websites to ensure they meet any special or essential requirements specified such as:

- A specific major award.
- A specific grade in specific components.
- Additional award requirements such as English or mathematics.
- That all credits used for scoring purposes are achieved in one 'single sitting'.

Further information on the Higher Education Links Scheme is available from the QQI website www.qqi.ie

Other Progression Links

For information on progression and links to other courses and institutions, contact your Course Co-ordinator and check with the relevant institution itself.

14.0 Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Teagasc is a process by which prior learning is formally identified, assessed and acknowledged.

14.1 The Purpose of RPL

RPL in Teagasc programmes is used for the following purposes:

- To enable applicants to gain entry to Teagasc programmes.
- To enable applicants to gain exemption from components (modules) of a Teagasc programme (exemption will not be granted for parts of a component).

Learners seeking exemptions for components by RPL should contact their course coordinator at the start of their training programme for information on making an application for RPL. Further information on RPL can be viewed [here](#).

15.0 Services for Learners

15.1 College Facilities / Residential Accommodation

Student sports and recreational facilities are open upon request; the student lounges are open all day and are closed each night. Facilities at Gurteen College include:

- Floodlit sports field for hurling, football, rugby and soccer
- Heated outdoor swimming pool (May-October)
- Floodlit all weather basketball and tennis courts
- Indoor soccer / badminton / volleyball court (runners required)
- Table tennis tables
- Student lounges with TVs, DVD players and student kitchens
- Two student computer rooms
- Wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi)
- Vending machines (drinks, snacks)
- Pool tables
- Snooker table

Sports Clubs

Gurteen College GAA Club (Hurling and Football)

Participation in the Inter-Agricultural College competitions

Other Competitions

Inter-Agricultural Colleges Macra Day

Friendly Rugby and Soccer matches

Outings / Activities

Students may organise trips to the cinema in Tullamore or Nenagh; swimming in Birr, Roscrea or Nenagh; karting in Tynagh; Bowling in Tullamore or Athlone; or night clubs in Tullamore, Athlone, Limerick and Galway.

15.2 Lockers

Learners on full time courses will be provided with a locker for their farm work clothes (boots, coats, high vis etc). Learners are to provide their own padlock for the locker. Work boots, wellingtons, dirty footwear, coats and overalls are not allowed to be worn in the main College Building.

15.3 Lost and Found

During the daytime any items found will be handed in to the Secretary's Office. During nighttime any items found can be handed in to the Night Supervisors office. If a learner has lost some of their property they should check with the College Secretary, Night Supervisor, or Hospitality Co-ordinator.

15.4 Notice Boards

There is a Notice Board at the start of the main corridor for general information relevant to all students. There are two other Notice Boards beside the Secretary's Office: one for Level 5 and one for the Level 6 course information. Learners should check these boards on a daily basis for updates.

15.5 Parking

Vehicles must be parked in the designated car parks only. Cars parked elsewhere may be clamped or barred from campus. Parking regulations apply at all times.

Staff and their visitors:

Front and back of main building (learners are not allowed to park in these areas)

Learners and their visitors:

Car park (the college side of the archway)

Front of Sports Hall

Un-surfaced area behind dining room (beside rooms 1-11)

Arrangements for visitors' cars can be made with Hugh O'Brien before 5.00pm. All visitors' cars must leave the campus by 11.00pm. Residents and visitors should note that the security gate closes at midnight. The college accepts no responsibility for the safety of learner / visitor vehicles or any damage resulting from their use.

15.6 Post

Post sent to the college for learners can be collected from the Secretary's Office. When post is delivered for a learner, a Post Notice is put on the appropriate course Notice Board. If a learner wishes to send post, they can drop it into the Secretary's Office and the postman will collect it either that day (if it's in time) or the following morning. Students may purchase occasional stamps at cost price from the Secretary's Office if they cannot obtain stamps easily themselves.

15.7 Reception / Secretary's Office

The Secretary's Office / Main Reception is open every weekday with the exception of Bank Holidays and Public Holidays, as follows:

Monday – Thursday: 09:00 – 17:15

Fridays: 09:00 – 16:00

Tutors and the college principal are generally available at the same times as above, unless in meetings, timetabled for teaching, working from home or working on a Part Time basis.

15.8 Chaplain

Rev. Steven Foster Ph: 087 163 1208 is available at any time to provide support or assistance in the event of a sudden illness, family matter or any personal problem that you may prefer to discuss with someone outside the college.

15.9 Night Supervisors

Gurteen College has two Night Supervisors in a job-share arrangement: Brendan Molloy and Noreen Conroy – they are resident in the main accommodation block from teatime until breakfast of the next morning; they are on duty all evening and on call to deal with emergencies overnight from Sunday evening to Friday morning each week.

Students can talk to Brendan in confidence about anything that is causing concern, in or out of college: see above under Counselling. It is a learner's duty to contact a Night Supervisor in the event of an urgent problem or an emergency, whatever the time - do not assume they already know.

Note especially that Gurteen House fire alarms do not sound in the main building, so if the fire alarm in Gurteen House sounds at night-time (anytime from teatime through until breakfast time), please ensure the Night Supervisor has been notified.

15.10 Welfare Team

The welfare team consists of: Hugh O'Brien, Maura Campbell, Anna Camon, Stephanie Scully and Brendan Molloy (nights). You can approach any member of the Welfare team, or your Student Mentor, for assistance with daily / routine issues or any personal / confidential issues.

15.11 Catering

Full time Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture students, and full time Level 6 Advanced Students, are catered for when classes are Timetabled, which at the moment is as follows:

- Residential: breakfast, lunch, and tea Monday – Thursday
- Non-residential: lunch Monday - Thursday

Students on the Part Time and Distance Learning (adult education) courses currently have no meals or refreshments included in their fees; typically, applicants on these courses will be offered lunch for a fixed daily rate on a pay-as-you-go basis.

There are student tea/coffee facilities in the students common room including microwave, fridge and toaster, with tea / coffee / bread and milk provided. All learners may use these facilities.

Students may enter the dining room when they are suitably dressed and with clean hands – if footwear, clothing and hands are not suitably hygienic then students should not be offended if they are asked to go and wash hands / change.

Special diets

Learners will be asked about any special dietary requirements as part of the application / enrolment process. Our college canteen caters for all dietary requirements. Queries regarding college food should be directed to the Hospitality Coordinator: Maura Campbell.

15.12 Laundry facilities

Full time residential learners may avail of laundry facilities provided at the college (washing machines and indoor and outdoor drying areas). Learners provide their own washing powder / fabric conditioner.

15.13 Security / CCTV

Teagasc operates Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) on Gurteen College property. Learners may be recorded on CCTV in accordance with the Teagasc CCTV policy. For more detail on the Teagasc CCTV policy please refer to www.teagasc.ie.

Location	Purpose
College access and entrance points	College security & biosecurity
College farmyard	Health and safety College security & biosecurity
Education facilities	College security Health and safety Facility management
Residential accommodation access / corridors	College security Learner safety and security

For further information relating to Teagasc's CCTV recording activities contact the Teagasc Data Protection Officer at: Data Protection Officer, Teagasc, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co Tipperary, E41 AK4, or by email to dpo@teagasc.ie

15.14 Site layout and maps



16.0 Student Fees Policy and Refunds

16.1 Fee Payment Information

Amounts payable, and dates by which instalments are due, are made available to students when offers are made. The college can be contacted anytime where a learner / parent / guardian would like to find out about fees.

Payment methods in order of preference:

- By card, either over the phone or in person (Tel 067 21282)
- By Bank Transfer (request bank details by email to info@gurteencollege.ie)
- Bank Draft, Postal Order, or Cheque - by post or in person
- Cash – in person only, to the college secretary.

16.2 *Withdrawing from Course*

- If a learner withdraws from a course before 1st October of the academic year a full refund will be issued with only an administration fee retained. Where applicable, workbooks issued, or the cost of workbooks issued, may be recouped.
- If a learner withdraws from a course between 1st October and before 1st December of the academic year a proportionate refund will be issued, with an administration fee retained, based on the number of weeks attended versus not attended. Where applicable, workbooks issued, or the cost of workbooks issued, may be recouped.
- If a learner withdraws from a course on/after 1st December of the academic year no refund will be issued.

16.3 *Converting from a Residential to a Non-residential Student*

If a learner changes from Residential to Non-Residential before 1st October of the academic year a partial refund will be issued so that they pay the residential rate only for the weeks they were residential, and the non-residential rate will be charged for the remainder of the course.

If a learner changes from Residential to Non-Residential between 1st October and 1st December, there is no refund payable on the first instalment paid. The learner will become a day student from the date the second instalment is due (early December), and the second instalment will be charged at the Non-Residential Rate.

Refunds are not possible when a learner changes from Residential to Non-Residential after 1st December because at this point resources have been committed; after this point, the college will only consider a refund because of "special circumstances".

Special circumstances include those circumstances that are beyond the person's control; that do not make their full impact on the person until on or after 1st December for the course of study for the academic year; and which make it impracticable for the person to complete the course.

Some examples of "special circumstances" include:

- Medical reasons where a learner's medical condition has changed to such an extent that they are unable to continue studies
- Family/personal reasons such as death or severe medical problems within a family, or unforeseen family financial difficulties, so that it is unreasonable to expect a learner to continue their studies
- Employment-related reasons where a person's employment status or employment arrangements has changed so that the learner is unable to continue their studies, and this change is beyond their control.

Special circumstances do not include a lack of knowledge or understanding of the course content or requirements, or a person's capacity to pay, or in the event that a learner has been removed from residence or a course due to a disciplinary ruling.

16.4 The process of refunding fees

Refunds will ideally be made by card, but they can only be made by card if we previously took a payment from that same card (to the same or a greater amount). Alternatively, they will be made by Bank Transfer during the next payment run after the date of the refund being authorised (payment runs are made once per month).

16.5 Complaints and appeals concerning refund application

The college principal reserves the right to make the final decision in the rejection of a request for a refund or an appeal for a refund on behalf of the college Board of Governors.

17.0 Accommodation and Conditions of Residence

The college wishes to develop a vibrant community that supports the social and academic aspects of college life. Residents must respect the rights of all staff and students, so that living on campus is a rewarding experience for everyone.

17.1 Legal status

Students are accommodated on a 'licence to occupy' basis, as at all colleges. Such a licence (i.e. permission) can be withdrawn at any time without notice. No college would do this without good reason, but students must understand that tenancy rights do not apply to college rooms. Accommodation is therefore conditional on acceptable behaviour and residents must permit entry to duly authorised members of staff. Residents are in effect on probation.

17.2 Conditions of Residence

- A standard fee is charged for all rooms, except where a reduction applies in cases of approved double occupancy. Fees will not be varied to take account of differences between rooms.
- Students are offered accommodation on a term-time basis. Rooms must be vacated, and personal property removed during vacation and placement periods and keys returned to the Bursar. The college from time to time may allocate a different room, if deemed reasonably necessary.
- Accommodation Fees are based on a 4-day week (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday nights). Thursdays, Fridays, weekends and work placement periods are not included; accommodation has to be vacated at these times and over holiday periods unless by prior agreement with the Hospitality Co-ordinator.
- On occasion, you may be required to stay overnight i.e. when on Farm Duty. Where an overseas learner is in residence or a learner that is from a long journey away (3+ hours) permission may be granted for weekend residence, at a rate of €40 per weekend.

- Accommodation is offered on a fully catered basis only, inclusive of all meals (except at weekends if weekend permission is sought and granted). The college does not provide self-catering facilities.
- Accommodation may be withdrawn without notice in the event of misconduct or late payment of fees.
- The college reserves the right to access all allocated accommodation without prior notice.

17.3 Accounts

Continued accommodation at the college depends on fees being paid up to date. Where a learner is resident at the college, if their account is in arrears at the end of January, they will be asked to find alternative accommodation. It is college policy that accounts which remain in arrears will be handed over to our legal representatives for pursuance of payment. The college reserves the right to withhold results from the Verification process where fees are owed on learners' accounts (meaning Certificates won't be issued and progression to a higher level - at any college – will not be possible).

17.4 Allocation of rooms

The Hospitality Coordinator, acting on behalf of the principal, allocates rooms at the college. Learners are not allowed to move to another room without permission from the Hospitality Coordinator. Rooms are to be occupied only by the learner(s) to which they have been allocated; no other person is allowed to reside therein, even on a temporary basis.

17.5 Responsibility

From the moment a learner receives their key until they surrender it, they are responsible for the condition of the room and any activities undertaken in the room, including noise levels. It is essential that learners keep their rooms clean and tidy and the fixtures and fittings in good condition.

Key(s) may be left at the Bursar's Office where a learner is going to be absent from the room for a week or more. In the case of loss or theft, new keys, for which learners will be charged €50.00, are available from the Bursar. Learners are not permitted to give their keys to others or to have copies made. In certain areas of college electronic/magnetic locks are in place - in such cases, the responsibility is the same as with keys. Replacement key fobs for electronic locks are available from the Bursar at a cost of €50.00.

17.6 Room Inspection

At the end of a learners' period of residence in college, the Hospitality Coordinator or a nominated representative will inspect the room - these parties are the sole authority in the matter and the cost of any missing items or of any damage not due to fair 'wear and tear' will be charged directly.

17.7 Security

College Insurance does not cover any personal belongings on the campus. Learners are strongly advised to exercise due care and consideration with their valuables and take out personal insurance cover. Learners should be aware that a CCTV system is in operation at all times.

Learners should make sure they lock their rooms whenever they leave and also close any ground-floor windows. Note that cleaners and other staff are under instruction to lock all rooms after cleaning.

17.8 Visitors

Learners are permitted to have visitors on campus only on weekdays, but they must remain in the downstairs recreational areas and must leave the campus by 11.00 pm. Residential sleeping areas are strictly out of bounds to visitors at all times. Learners are responsible for the conduct of their visitors and should accompany their visitors at all times. Evening visitors must be introduced to the Student Supervisor at the earliest opportunity, to distinguish them from uninvited persons. The college reserves the right to refuse admission or to ask a visitor to leave college property at any time.

17.9 Overnight Guests

Due to recent changes in Health and Safety legislation, we are not in a position to allow non-residential students or visitors to stay overnight in an occupied student bedroom.

17.10 Parties and Gatherings

If numerous learners congregate in one room it is invariably noisy and can cause a nuisance, inconvenience or annoyance to residents occupying adjoining rooms, especially late at night. Please respect your neighbours.

17.11 Damage

Students will be charged for Gurteen College having to make-good any damage done. Damage done in a learners' own room is the responsibility of that learner (as the key holder) unless someone else accepts responsibility.

Damage includes:

- (a) Removal of bedding, soft furnishings, or furniture from any room
- (b) Use of nails, drawing pins, 'Blu-tac', sticky tape etc on the walls or woodwork
- (c) Putting up pictures, posters, bunting, flags etc.

17.12 Defects / Repairs

When taking up occupancy learners should, for their own protection, check rooms are in good order and that keys are correct. All defects (stains and/or burns on carpet; damaged paintwork or furniture; evidence of damp; broken fire surrounds; broken or cracked windowpanes, etc.) should be reported immediately to the Bursar or Hospitality Coordinator - failure to do this may result in learners being charged for these defects on vacating the room.

17.13 Pets

Pets are not allowed on Campus, anywhere.

17.14 Fire Prevention

All learners must acquaint themselves with fire safety procedures:

- (i) The alternative fire escape routes from your room
- (ii) Action in the event of fire (Section 5.4)
- (iii) Fire prevention check list for students
- (iv) The compulsory fire safety lecture

Fire Wardens will inspect equipment and rooms and will conduct fire drills. Learners must not under any circumstances use candles, incense burners, oil lamps or any device which emits a naked flame.

SMOKING is NOT allowed in the College building; it is only allowed outside in the smoking shelter (not outside the front or rear entrances to the college building).

17.15 Fire Safety Equipment

All residences in college are equipped with fire safety systems including detection, alarms and emergency lighting, and first aid firefighting equipment. All students are required to take every reasonable precaution to ensure that fire alarm systems are not accidentally activated. In particular, learners are required to ensure that cooking fumes are contained within kitchens and do not reach adjacent detectors.

Tampering with or misusing fire equipment or means of escape is a major offence - this includes activating a fire alarm or discharging an extinguisher without good reason. It is a criminal offence to activate a fire alarm without good reason. Learners are referred to the Fire Services Act 1981 - the penalties therein include both a substantial fine and a six-month jail sentence at the discretion of the court.

17.16 Electrical Appliances, heaters, etc.

Learners may **not** introduce any additional portable electrical, gas or paraffin heaters into their rooms or use any electrical apparatus consuming more than 500 watts (fuses and circuit breakers will trip out). Fridges and cooking equipment are expressly prohibited.

Residents must realise that bedrooms are not designed for cooking. Student kitchens are equipped with a fridge, microwave, toaster, kettle, wash up sink etc.

17.17 Television and Radio

Learners may use a small TV, radio, CD-player etc. in their bedrooms provided that the noise from these devices cannot be heard outside the room.

Note that the law requires that learners must buy a TV licence for their room if they will be using such devices - neither a parents' licence nor the college licence can cover a learners' room.

17.18 Room Cleaning

Learners are responsible for keeping their rooms tidy so that the college housekeeping staff can clean their room weekly. Vacuums and cleaning materials are available upon request. In order to maintain the condition of rooms the staff of Housekeeping Services will make periodic inspections. If rooms are found to be in an unsatisfactory condition by the Hospitality Coordinator, students will be asked to clean them up to an acceptable standard or they will be fined.

17.19 Inventory

The following are provided by the college in each room:

- Bed and mattress
- Desk chair
- Desk (or worktop style desk)
- Curtains
- Waste bin

Double rooms have two of each.

Learners, when they first inspect their room, must report to the Hospitality Co-ordinator if any of the above-listed items are missing from their room.

18.0 Students Under 18 Years of Age (Parent / Guardian should also read)

As a result of changes in responsibility governing how colleges deal with residential learners who are under eighteen years of age, Gurteen College and all of the colleges in our educational sector have modified the rules of residence and our Child Protection policy to come in line with the new position.

What has changed:

- Learners under 18 years of age, until further notice, will not be allowed to be resident in college at weekends.
- Learners must participate in a "sign out" and "sign in" system when leaving the campus in the evenings. Students must also return to campus by 00:30am (with a 15minute grace period)
- The college is required to verify that learners are attending class. As a result, if a learner has not clocked in / signed our attendance registers the learners' room will be checked. If the learner is not in the bedroom, then parents / guardians must be contacted to try to establish the learners whereabouts and safety.
- If for any reason a residential learner under 18 years of age is absent due to illness or for any other legitimate reason, please inform the college as soon as possible. This will prevent unaccounted-for absence and eliminate unnecessary phone calls to parents / guardians.

Once a residential student turns eighteen years of age these additional rules, above and beyond the normal rules contained in this learner handbook, will no longer apply. A copy of our child protection policy is available from the Hospitality Co-ordinator or on the Student Access area of the server.

19.0 Information for Parents / Guardians

Parents and guardians of learners who are dependent, financially or otherwise, might find the following information useful – learners should give this section of the Handbook to their parents / guardians to read:

Study Time

Learners will not pass this course if they miss a lot of classes or fall behind and fail to submit coursework on time and to an adequate standard. We appreciate that there are occasional emergencies which results in a learner being unable to attend for class – in such cases, the learner (or parent or guardian) should notify the college.

Staff should also be informed immediately if a long-term problem arises at home, such as the serious illness of a family member, which could result in a learner missing a lot of class time - please alert us so that we may establish what support can be offered before the learner falls behind on college work (it may be possible to find an alternative path for completing the course).

Transport

Many students find it easy to manage without a car (depending on where home is). A parent or guardian who can give lifts to and from a suitable bus stop near home may be able to save a learner the cost of running a car that would only be really needed to get to college and back at weekends. There is no bus service direct to the College, but a Taxi from Birr is one option, or car-pooling with other students / parents or students. A car has few legitimate uses mid-week (the local pub usually provides free transport every evening for those who want it, which is a much safer option).

College Fees

Learners may be suspended from the course and/or required to find accommodation off campus if fees fall into arrears without consent. In the event of financial difficulties contact the college at an early stage rather than allowing arrears to mount up. A higher priority should be placed on payment of fees over learners' other financial demands (such as pocket money or money to help cover the costs of a car).

Medical & Personal Problems

Students are encouraged to disclose any areas of concern when they register, however it can be hard to go into enough detail on a form. Parents worried that a long-standing problem might not be fully understood by staff are welcome to call the Hospitality Coordinator (Maura Campbell) during office hours or the Student Supervisor (Brendan Molloy) any weekday evening to brief them in confidence. The college has access to all relevant sources of professional help.

Teagasc Student Maintenance Grant Scheme

Teagasc grants are paid only for days attended by learners. Learners record their attendance daily on the SEATs System and need to log two valid clockings (as directed) to be considered in attendance for grant purposes. Records of attendance are used for calculating attendance. Grants payments are only paid for days where the required clockings were recorded.

Information about the grant can be found by doing an Internet Search for “Teagasc Student Maintenance Grant”, and looking at that information, then checking the tab which says “1st Time applicants” – there are some tables on that page which can be used for determining the amount an applicant is likely to be awarded. There is also a Tab called “Application Process” and that is where you will find the application form.

PLEASE NOTE: if, for example, a student is awarded a “100% Grant” this only means they were awarded 100% of the maximum grant available – it has absolutely no bearing on the costs of the course, so a 100% grant does not mean 100% of course costs will be covered (and this is a common misconception).

20.0 Directions & Maps

Gurteen College is located in North Tipperary on the Nenagh Road (N52) between Birr (Co. Offaly) and Borrisokane (Co. Tipperary). Find us by using our Eircode: **E53 TP93** or GPS co-ordinates N53.0468°, W008.01150°. Warning: there are many other Gurteen’s in Ireland, so if you search by place name make sure you search for Gurteen College (not just Gurteen).

Full Address: Gurteen College
 Ballingarry
 Roscrea
 Co. Tipperary
 E53 TP93

Don’t be misled by the inclusion of Roscrea in our postal address – we are about 27km from the town (by main road).

21.0 Important Contacts

Emergency Services: Garda / Fire / Ambulance 112 / 999 Gurteen College Eircode E53 TP93
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Access Officer:	Rachel Dolan via 067 21282
Accident / Near Miss Reporting:	Maura Campbell or Ken Flynn
Accommodation:	Maura Campbell, via 067 21282
Bursar:	Hugh O'Brien, via 067 21282
Catering:	Maura Campbell, via 067 21282
Chaplain:	Rev. Steven Foster 087 163 1208
Farm Manager:	Ken Flynn, via 067 21282
First Aiders:	Maura Campbell, via 067 21282 Brendan Molloy, 067 21282 Rita Gorman (Kitchen, via 067 21282) Ken Flynn (Farm, via 067 21282)
Garda Stations:	Borrisokane: 067 27101 Nenagh (District HQ): 067 50457
GP Out of Hours:	Shannon Doc, 1850 212 999, website: www.shannondoc.ie
Housekeeping:	Maura Campbell, via 067 21282
Night Supervisor:	Brendan Molloy / Noreen Conroy, via 067 21282
Placement Officer:	Anne Marie Doheny, via 067 21282
Principal:	Jon Parry, via 067 21282
Secretary:	Amy Jackson & Lorraine Shaw, 067 21282
Tutors / Mentors:	via 067 21282
Welfare Officers:	via 067 21 282

22.0 Other Relevant Policies

The Learner Handbook does not exhaustively detail all Teagasc policies of potential relevance to learners. Other policies may be accessed through the Teagasc website.

23.0 Learner Handbook 2025-26: Agreement

This section to be completed by the Learner (if requested to do so by the college)

.....

Name of Course _____

Student Declaration:

I have received the Learner Handbook.

I have read and understood the Learner Handbook and accept Teagasc and Gurteen College rules and regulations relating to my period of study at Gurteen College.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Learner Incident Report Form

Date of incident:

Day of Week:

Time:

1. Member of staff reporting the incident

Name:

Position:

2. Personal details of learner involved in the incident

Name:

Address:

Course:

3. Details of incident

a) Type of incident:

b) Location:

c) Other details:

4. Possible contributory factors and any other relevant information

.....

Signed: Date:

5. Outcome/Action taken

.....

Signed: Date:
College Principal/Regional Manager

Appendix 2

Learner Guidelines for Online Behaviour or Netiquette (extract from DKIT Guidelines)

This guide aims to clarify expectations and promote courteous and professional behaviour and communication online.

Guide to Online Etiquette

With attending classes online, we have constructed a guide to help you get the most out of your online learning. Here are a few simple guidelines you can follow to ensure your online classes will go as smoothly as possible:

1. **Mute your microphone:** (Unless you are told otherwise) This avoids any unnecessary background noise or interference and ensures everyone is able to hear the person speaking.
2. **Raise your hand:** If you want to talk or ask for help and the lecturer is already talking make sure to use the 'raise your hand' feature or indicate in the chat, do not interrupt them. When finished, don't forget to lower your hand.
3. **Take notes:** Even if the lecture is recorded it is always good practice to take notes and write things in your own words to make it more memorable and understandable when you review it come exam time. (You could further consolidate your learning by speaking it out loud or explaining it to someone else in your class).
4. **Use the video option when possible:** This shows the lecturer you are attending and paying attention. Where this is not possible, it is useful to have a photo uploaded to your profile.
5. **Position your camera properly, dress accordingly and be aware of your surroundings and what others can see in the background:** college at home can be more difficult if you are in a busy household, but ensure you are positioned in the best possible way to attend your lectures by finding a quiet, private place in your house and ensure you are dressed appropriately.
6. **Stay focused:** Don't multi-task or do things you wouldn't do in a physical lecture. This ensures you or other attendees will not be distracted during class time. Attend the class as though you are in a physical lecture, this means do not eat and do not do things that should be done in private such as checking emails or texts or bathroom breaks (it is likely for longer lectures your lecturer will schedule in a break).
7. **Be prepared:** Before attending the lecture ensure you have your copy and pen ready to take notes, but also have a think about any extra materials you may need for the class such as calculators, drawing materials, sketchbooks etc.
8. **Be on time:** Arrive promptly so the lecture can begin on time, and you don't get stuck in the waiting room (if there is one).
9. **Be considerate to your lecturer:** If you can't attend a class, a quick email to your lecturer will be much appreciated. Some lecturers may be waiting for the call to reach a certain number of people for the lecture to go ahead, so letting them know if you aren't attending will ensure the class goes ahead on time. Remember, this is a new experience for your lecturers too, we are all going through similar struggles. Talk to your lecturer if something is bothering you, they are there to help.
10. **Use a headset if possible:** You might want to invest in a good headset with an external mic. This will block out background noise around you but also let others hear you more clearly.
11. **Close applications not in use:** Try to only have the applications you are using for your lecture open and close the others. This hopefully allows for a stronger connection and a better video.
12. **Leave meeting:** When your lecture is over, remember to leave the meeting, hang up or sign out.
13. **Groups:** When working in groups be courteous and considerate of others.