

Emergency Procedures

Serious Illness or Injury

Immediately call 911. If you notice any jewelry with medical information, bring it to the 911 dispatcher’s attention. Do not move the victim.

Fire

Call 911 and report the location of the fire. Alert others; leave the building.

Violence

If you are witness to or are part of violent acts or behavior, immediately move away from the incident, then dial 911.

No person shall, on the basis of race, creed, sex, religion, national origin, or handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program, activity or employment by the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks, Inc.



2026-2027
Student Handbook



LITERACY
COUNCIL
OF READING-BERKS

Classes are generously sponsored by:



Pennsylvania
Department of Education



UNITED WAY
Berks County

450 South 6th St. Reading, PA 19602 | 610.670.9960 | www.lcrb.org

Welcome to the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks!



You have joined other determined adults to continue your education and achieve your goals. Our staff members are committed to helping you reach your goals and move on to further education, training or employment. Our programs focus on four positive outcomes, read and write proficiently, become a productive citizen, prepare for work, and achieve success on the job.

This handbook will answer many of the questions commonly asked by our students and guide you through the policies unique to our program. I wish you well on your journey and look forward to celebrating your successes with you!

Sincerely,
Ryan A. Breisch
Executive Director

Administrative Staff

Ryan A. Breisch, Executive Director
Beverly Hirneisen, Training & Development Support Specialist
Taylor Mahoney, Volunteer Coordinator
Lily Ponce, Executive Assistant

Instructional Staff

Michael Diebert
Annie DelCollo
Katie Evans
Grace Farnelli
Gary Fox
Valeri Harteg
Lupe Kasper
Taylor Mahoney
Abigail Martin
Pamela Sonon
Ramona Turpin



Hours:

Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Email: info@lcrb.org

Website: www.lcrb.org



We reserve the right to change policies and procedures.
You will be notified of any changes.

Conditions and Terms of Use

Because the internet allows access to ideas, information and commentary from sources around the world, the Council cannot control its content. The internet is an unregulated medium. It also provides access to information that is inaccurate, illegal or that some may find offensive or disturbing. Therefore, individual users must accept responsibility for determining the validity and accuracy of information located on the internet. The Literacy Council is not responsible for any use made of information obtained from internet resources.

Viewing of certain materials may be considered improper in time, place or manner. The Literacy Council reserves the right to terminate an internet session that disrupts Council services or involves user behavior that violates Council policy.

The Literacy Council is not responsible for damage to user’s disks or computers or for any loss of data, damage or liability that may occur from the use of the Literacy Council’s computers.

A cost recovery fee for printouts is charged. Black and white printouts cost \$0.15 per page and color printouts cost \$1.00 per page.

Unacceptable Uses of Computers

- ⇒ Commercial or for-profit uses;
- ⇒ Uses that violate the law or encourage others to violate the law;
- ⇒ Uses that cause harm to others or damage to their property;
- ⇒ Uses that jeopardize the security of access of the computer network or other networks on the internet;
- ⇒ Uses that compromise the safety and security of minors when using email, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications.

User Responsibilities

Users have 60-minute access to internet terminals; however, this period may be extended up to 60 more minutes if no other users are waiting for a terminal. No user can have computer access for more than a total of 2 hours a day. Users are responsible for damage to equipment beyond what occurs with normal usage. Hardware and software may not be abused, modified or destroyed.

Staff Assistance

The staff of the Literacy Council is willing to assist with internet searches. However, due to limited staffing and time constraints, users are encouraged to take the initiative and explore on their own.

Response to Violations

The user’s access to the Literacy Council’s computer network and internet is a privilege, not a right. Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures will result in the forfeiture of the user’s right to use these computers.

2026- 2027 Master Calendar

August 31	Fall Term Begins	January 18	CLOSED– MLK Day
September 7	CLOSED– Labor Day	January 20	GED Info Session
September 24	Citizenship Registration	February 15	CLOSED- President’s Day
October 21	GED Information Session	February 24	GED Info Session
November 11	GED Information Session	February 25	Winter Term Ends
November 19	Fall Term Ends	March 2	Spring ESL Registration
November 24	Winter ESL Registration	March 8	Spring Term Begins
November 26 & 27	CLOSED- Thanksgiving	March 11	Citizenship Registration
December 1	Winter Term Begins	March 26	CLOSED- Good Friday
December 24-31	CLOSED– Christmas	May 27	Spring Term Ends
January 1	CLOSED– New Year	May 31	CLOSED- Memorial Day

Parking
You will be given an information sheet at registration.

Severe Weather Procedure
In the event of severe weather, the Executive Director will notify you via Google Classroom (your teacher will provide the instructions on the first day of class).

Tobacco
Smoking is permitted outside of the Literacy Council building at designated areas. Satellite locations must follow their building’s policies.

Weapons
The Literacy Council will not tolerate the possession, use, presence, or sale of weapons in any of its classes or facilities. If conditions warrant, the Executive Director will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Computer Policy, Abbreviated
Please Note: *A copy of the complete “Computer Policy” is available at the front desk of the main office in West Lawn.*

The Internet
The Literacy Council has installed a filtering mechanism on all computers to prevent individuals from accessing visual depictions that are (1) obscene, (2) pornographic, or (3) harmful to minors.

The Literacy Council, having installed and enforced the operation of filtering software, will have no liability for damages related to the operation of, or failure of, the filtering software, or for its circumvention by users.

Right to Privacy
All users have the right to expect that their information-seeking activities in the Council are private and confidential. No records of internet use are retained.

From Article II, Section D and Article XIII of the Literacy Council’s Bylaws:

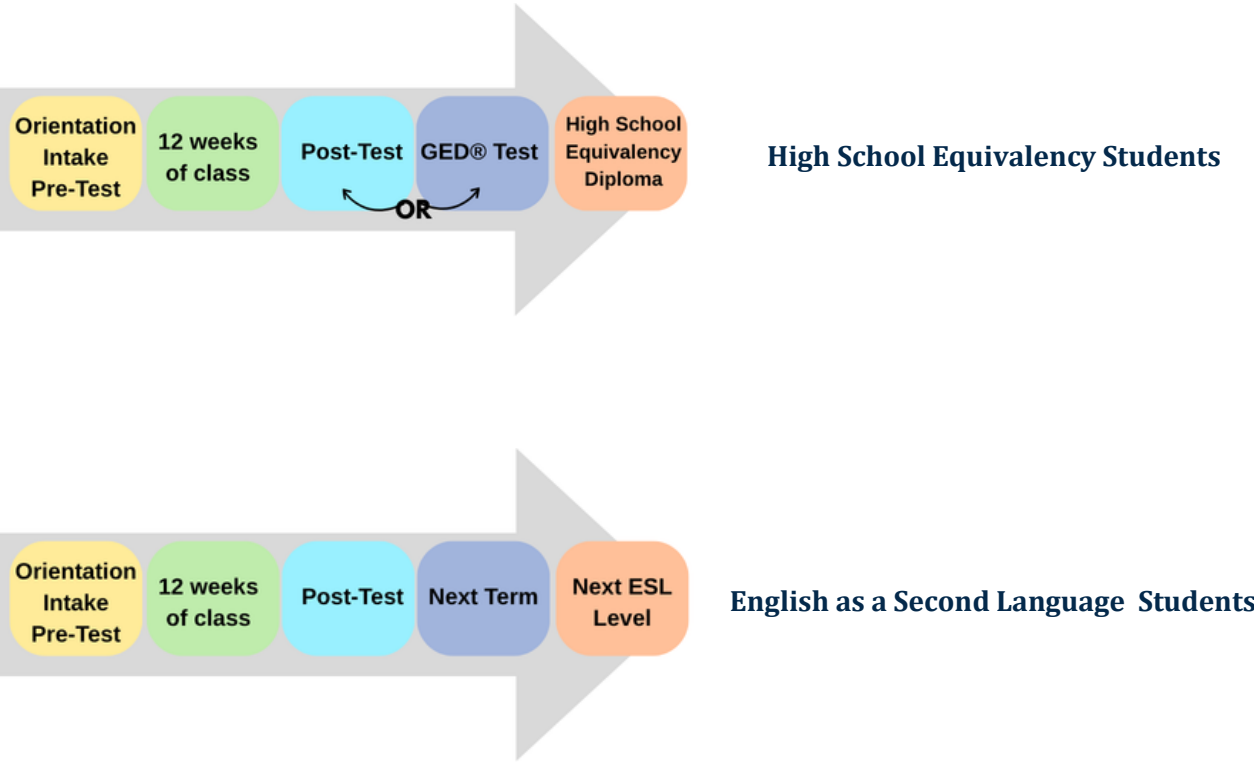
II. D. No Discrimination. The Council shall provide services to students, choose volunteers, and provide employment without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, income, marital status, political affiliation, religious affiliation, or any characteristic prohibited by law from being considered.

XIII. WHISTLEBLOWER RETALIATION PROHIBITION - The Literacy Council prohibits retaliation against any board member, officer, employee, or volunteer who in good faith reports a possible deviation from law, regulation, or policy applicable to the Council, or for cooperating in an investigation into any potential violation. Any employee, officer, or board member who retaliates against another such individual for reporting in good faith a possible deviation from policy, law, or regulation, or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment, or removal from the Board, as applicable. In the case of an allegation of retaliation by a member of the Board of Directors, such allegation shall be referred to the Executive Committee for investigation. The Executive Committee shall make a recommendation regarding potential removal of the Board Member to the full Board of Directors for vote in accordance with the Council’s bylaws.

Complaints alleging noncompliance with the non-discrimination policy should be directed to the Executive Director, Ryan Breisch, ryan@lcrb.org or 610.670.9960 x105, 450 South 6th Street, Reading, PA 19602.

To file a complaint please contact the Executive Director. He will assist in the filing of a formal complaint.

- Attendance Policy**
- Students must attend all class sessions with teachers and tutors and are required to be on time. If you cannot make it to class or tutoring session, you must call the office or your tutor ***at least one hour*** before your scheduled session. Students must give a reason for each missed class and tutoring session when calling. Students in Literacy Council classes may also use email for communicating absences with teachers.
 - Going to an appointment during class hours is the same as missing a class.
 - If absences become excessive, the Executive Director has the authority to remove a student from the program.
 - There are many students waiting to be in classes or have a tutor. If you do not attend or are not on time, you will be dismissed from the program and we will give your seat to a student who is committed to coming to class.



****Remaining for an additional 12-week term is possible.**

Student Support Services

Training & Development Support Specialist

 Bev Hirneisen, offers career counseling and personalized advisement to provide assistance for students struggling with anxiety, stress, poor study skills, difficulty managing time or any other area that interferes with maintaining success. Bev can also offer assistance and referral for students with substance abuse problems.

Supplemental Learning

 The Literacy Council provides its students with supplemental computer-based learning opportunities to provide students with a greater intensity of instruction focused on his/her specific needs and interests to help achieve outcomes quickly. The activities are aligned with classroom instruction and can be used when classes need to be cancelled due to weather or health emergencies. Taylor Mahoney, coordinates activities with each instructor and monitors student participation. **Students must participate a minimum of 30 minutes per week to be eligible for this free service.** The activities help students in obtaining digital literacy skills necessary for future educational and career opportunities.

Child Care

Do not bring your children to class or tutoring sessions for any reason. If your child is sick or has a day off school, please find a babysitter to watch your child. For help with childcare needs, please contact the following program: CCIS (Child Care Information Services of Berks County) 610.987.2247 or 800.257.3038

Transportation

You must provide your own transportation to and from your classes or tutoring sessions. Please do not ask your tutor or teacher to provide this service to you. For help with transportation needs, please contact the following services:

BARTA (bus)	610.921.2361
Berks Taxi	610.373.7777
Grab-A-Cab	610.478.1111
Reading Metro Taxi	610.374.5111

Other Services

The Literacy Council has access to contact information for many community services. Please see Bev Hirneisen, for this information. Here is a partial list of other services for which we provide information: Clothing Banks, Food Banks, Dental Services, Financial Assistance, Disability Services, Housing Services, Mental Health/ Developmental Disabilities, Refugee/Immigration Services.



Policies

Behavior/Conduct

The Literacy Council will not tolerate any form of physical or non-physical violence including, but not limited to intimidation, cruelty, harassment, mistreatment, physical harm, profanity, abusive or offensive language. Any student who exhibits these behaviors in or outside any Literacy Council class or facility will be immediately dismissed from the program.

Cell Phones

All cell phones must be turned OFF during class, unless a teacher requests its use.

Change of Status

Report any change of name, address, telephone number, or email address to your teacher immediately.

Class Materials

Students must bring a pen or pencil and notebook to each class and/or tutoring session. These materials will not be provided. Laptops and tablets are also encouraged.

Complaints or Concerns

If you have a concern or complaint, ask to meet with the Executive Director.

Dress Code

A student whose dress or appearance interferes with or disrupts the education process within classrooms, the Literacy Council building, on the Council’s premises, or at remote teaching sites will not be allowed in the building. The following clothing is not allowed:

- ⇒ Pajama tops and/or bottoms, slippers
- ⇒ Suggestive or vulgar clothing
- ⇒ Clothing with offensive pictures or slogans
- ⇒ Apparel with slogans or pictures that have a negative or offensive social double meaning
- ⇒ Examples are phrases referring to alcohol, tobacco, sexually vulgar or obscene behavior or controlled substances (drugs)
- ⇒ Short shorts, cutoffs, beachwear, short clothing, and yoga tights, Halter-tops, tube tops, bare midriff tops, spaghetti straps, unless appropriate outer garments covering the top are worn
- ⇒ Clothing which advertises alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products
- ⇒ Spikes, chains, or any objects that could harm students and staff
- ⇒ No hoodies (hoods are not to be worn on the head during class)
- ⇒ Sunglasses are not to be worn in the building.

If a student violates the dress code, the student will be given the opportunity to correct the attire that violates the dress code. A student who continues to violate the dress code will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures, including suspension from classes.

Drugs and Alcohol

The Literacy Council will not tolerate the possession, use, presence, or sale of alcohol or illegal drugs in or outside any of its classes or facilities. Any student who is found to be in violation of this provision will be immediately dismissed from the program. If conditions warrant, the Executive Director will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency. Any student who is believed to be intoxicated will be asked to leave the class or facility.

