



Vocational Training and Empowerment Center

Student Handbook

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Dear Student,

Opportunity Enterprises welcomes you to VTEC, the Vocational Training and Empowerment Center. We are excited that you have accepted this opportunity to learn, grow, and enhance your skill sets. We look forward to helping you reach your goals.

The VTEC program is designed to fit your unique needs as you grow your skillset for employment. The program includes a variety of activities and skills labs that allow you to enhance your skill set.

This student handbook will help you gain a clear understanding of the policies we have within VTEC. Please take the time to review this handbook before starting your selected program.

We are excited to have you join VTEC. We can't wait to see you grow, learn from your teammates, and successfully complete the training.

Most sincerely,

Sarah Rotas
Vocational Education Director
Opportunity Enterprises, Inc.
2801 Evans Avenue, Valparaiso, IN 46368
(219) 464-9621 ext. 293

General Admission Criteria

To ensure that each participant is set up for success, individuals interested in enrolling in the program must meet the following general admission criteria:

1. Age Requirement

- Must be 18 years of age or older.

2. Diagnosis of Disability

- Must have a documented intellectual, developmental, or other qualifying disability.

3. Interest in Program Goals

- Must demonstrate a genuine interest in gaining employment within the chosen discipline.

4. Participation Readiness

- Must be able to engage in group activities and classroom settings with minimal behavioral concerns, with or without support.

5. Communication Skills

- Must be able to communicate basic needs either independently or through supported communication methods.

6. Mobility and Self-Care

- Must be able to navigate the environment safely and independently, with or without assistive devices.

7. Independent Living Skills

- Must be able to independently manage personal care needs during program hours, including eating lunch without direct assistance.

8. Attendance Commitment

- Must be able and willing to attend and participate regularly throughout the course.

9. Funding or Payment

- Must have appropriate funding or payment arrangements in place prior to enrollment.

Training

Class Schedules

Classes may vary depending on the location and discipline you are enrolled in. They could follow one of the schedules below:

- **Tues/Thurs**
 - **Duration:** 6 hours
 - **Time:** 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM
 - **Breaks:** Frequent breaks throughout, with a lunch period provided.
- **Mon/Wed/Fri**
 - **Duration:** 4 hours
 - **Time:** 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM
 - **Breaks:** Frequent breaks during class.

Class Structure

The class will begin with a focus on soft skills, including—but not limited to—social and interpersonal skills, independent living skills, personal safety, and the use of public transportation. Once students demonstrate an understanding of these foundational concepts, the class will transition to essential workplace skills applicable to any job, such as workplace safety, customer service, and teamwork. In week six, the curriculum will shift to program-specific content. During the final two weeks, students will explore job search strategies and interviewing techniques, concluding the course with a comprehensive review of all material covered.

Instruction throughout the class can be in the classroom, in a training lab, or through field experience.

Materials Needed:

- Notebook
- Pen or pencil

POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance is required and will be tracked. If participants know that they are going to miss class, it is expected that they will call the instructor at least 2 hours in advance. Do not ask someone else to relay the message. Absences of 12 hours (3 days) will result in discharge from the program.

Participants are expected to be on time for class. Anyone who is not at his or her assigned workstation and ready to learn at the beginning of the training time will be considered tardy. If participants know they are going to be late to class, they must notify the Vocational Training Instructor 1 hour prior to the start of class. Opportunity Enterprises attendance policy will be reviewed on the first day.

Participation

It is expected that students will participate in all classroom activities and discussions. The activities help to determine if the student will pass the competencies to complete the class. Participating shows that they understand the information and are able to use it in the future

Technology

Chromebooks will be used for class activities as assigned by the instructor. Participants will need to use a pen and paper to take notes. Misuse of Chromebooks will not be tolerated. Chromebooks will be assigned by OE.

Cell Phones

Cell phones should be turned off and put away during class time. There may be times when students are allowed to use their phones for class purposes. Participants are allowed to use phones during breaks, but they should not be out during class.

Dress Code

Participants are expected to dress appropriately for class. Participants are expected to wear long pants (jeans or khakis), non-slip shoes and/or steel toe/composite toe shoes – depending on discipline, and a shirt that does not have anything offensive on it. If you are not dressed appropriately, it may result in you being unable to participate for the day.

Professionalism

Participants are expected to act in a professional manner. This program is to prepare you for a career in the community. Professionalism includes treating others with respect, appropriate conversations and a desire to learn.

Focus/Attention

Participants should be prepared to give their full attention to lessons and discussions. We want to ensure that each student is given time to ask questions and participate in discussions.

Disciplinary Policy

The VTEC Program is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants. Our goal is to support personal and professional growth through positive reinforcement, clear expectations, and respectful communication.

Participant Expectations

All participants are expected to:

- Treat staff, peers, and themselves with respect
- Follow classroom and program rules

- Maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom, community, and on work sites
- Use appropriate language and maintain a calm demeanor
- Participate to the best of their ability

Behavior That May Result in Disciplinary Action

The following behaviors may result in disciplinary action:

- Aggressive or threatening behavior (verbal or physical)
- Repeated disruption of class or program activities
- Inappropriate language or conduct
- Refusal to follow staff directions
- Destruction of property
- Theft
- Bullying or harassment
- Any behavior that poses a risk to the safety or wellbeing of self or others

Disciplinary Process

We follow a progressive approach to discipline, taking into account individual support needs and accommodations:

1. Verbal Reminder

Staff will address the behavior with the participant privately and provide a clear explanation of the issue.

2. Written Warning / Behavior Plan

If the behavior continues, a written warning may be issued. A behavior support plan may be developed in collaboration with the participant and, if appropriate, caregivers or support professionals.

3. Temporary Suspension

Continued or serious misconduct may result in a temporary suspension from the program.

4. Dismissal from Program

In cases of repeated or severe misconduct, or if safety is compromised, the participant may be dismissed from the program. This step will only be taken after all appropriate interventions have been attempted.

Appeals Process

Participants (or guardians, if applicable) may request a review of any disciplinary action by submitting a written appeal to the Vocational Education Director within 5 business days.

Supportive Measures

We recognize that participants may demonstrate behaviors related to their disability. Our team will always consider individual needs and work collaboratively with support teams to implement accommodations and strategies before disciplinary action is taken.

Emergency Closures

The safety of our students and staff is our top priority. In the event of severe weather, power outages, building issues, or other emergencies, the course may be canceled or delayed.

Notification Procedures

- Students, guardians, and caregivers will be notified as soon as possible via:
 - Phone call and/or text message
 - Email

Transportation

If transportation is provided through the program, closures or delays will apply to transportation as well. Please ensure emergency contact information is up to date in case transportation must be canceled mid-day due to worsening conditions. It is the responsibility of the student to contact transportation and notify them of any closures or delays.

Make-Up Days

Efforts will be made to reschedule missed days or adjust the curriculum if multiple closures occur.

VTEC Program Service Disclaimer

The Vocational Training and Empowerment Center (VTEC) provides vocational education, training, and support services to adult individuals with disabilities in preparation for community-based employment and increased independence. Participation in the VTEC program does not guarantee employment or long-term job placement. Outcomes may vary based on individual abilities, readiness, and available community resources.

Handbook Acknowledgment

I have read and agree to abide by this Handbook.

Student Printed Name

Date

Student Signature

Date

Witness Printed Name

Date

Witness Signature

Date



Vocational Training and
Empowerment Center
