

Parents'/Carers' Guide to Work Experience Placements for Students

What is a Work Experience Placement?

A Work Experience Placement is primarily an educational activity which gives students an insight into the world of work from Year 10 onwards.

How do students benefit from a Work Experience Placements?

Following a period of Work Experience it is hoped that students may have developed:

- More confidence
- Improved self esteem
- Ability to communicate with adults
- Improved timekeeping
- Additional practical work skills
- Team working
- Problem solving skills

What type of work can students do?

There are a wide variety of placements available and there are very few occupational placements that are prohibited to a student. In some cases, legislation imposes restrictions on the type of activities which students can do on Work Experience. These restrictions are designed to protect students from work unsuitable for them. Due to a student's inexperience and age some tasks may only be completed under strict supervision or may, in exceptional circumstances, be observation only. The emphasis, however, is always on trying to provide an interesting and well-balanced placement.

How are Work Experience Placements Organised?

Students or the academy can contact employers to find a suitable placement. The employers will be asked to complete a Work Experience Self-Generated form with a description of duties, times and days of working, which the student will be undertaking. Once this has been agreed, the school will request the health and safety check on that employer to ensure they meet the standards specified by government. These details will then be available to the student's academy.

It is a good idea for students to:

- Spend time preparing for the placement through discussion and research in class and at home
- Record their learning during their placement in a diary or journal
- Share their knowledge and experience with fellow students on returning to school.
- Ask for a reference from the Employer at the end of their placement.

When can students participate in a Work Experience Placement:

The planning and organisation of Work Experience programmes is strictly determined by the Education (Work Experience) Act 1973/1996 Education Act, amended by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In effect, students may take part in Work Placements from the first day of the autumn term in Year 10.

Are students paid whilst on Work Experience Placements?

Students must not be paid whilst on Work Experience Placements as it is part of their education curriculum and payment may invalidate insurance arrangements.

What hours can a student work whilst on a Work Experience Placement?

It is recommended that students should not work for more than 5 days in any consecutive seven day period. The number of hours worked together with the pattern of work is normally a matter of agreement by the placement provider, school and students. They should not work excessively long hours or unnecessarily unsocial hours and should not work more than 40 hours per week. For guidance on the Working Time Directive please look at the www.direct.gov.uk website.

Are there particular Health & Safety considerations?

In the workplace the primary duties relating to the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) rest with the employer. The Health & Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990 extended the meaning of the term 'employee' to include students on Work Experience Placements.

Students are required to comply with the safety regulations of the organisation where they are working. It is their duty to take reasonable care for the Health & Safety of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or omissions. In addition, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, require the employer to undertake an assessment of the risks to students before they start the placement.

Parents and Carers are reminded of the necessity to notify the employer and school of any medical condition that might influence the type of placement that a student may choose. Failure to do so could contribute to injury of a student or other party at the workplace. Information should be provided on the Yellow "Work Experience Parental Consent Form" (available from the school). This practice further contributes to the safeguarding of students whilst they are on placement.

What Insurance cover is required?

It is a requirement that all employers hold a current Employer Liability Insurance and that this insurance covers a student whilst on placement. It is also recommended that valid Public Liability Insurance is held by the employer.

What support does the Academy provide during the placement?

During the placement the Academy will be liaising with employers on students' attendance at the placement and the careers lead will visit to talk to both the employer and the student to see how the placement is progressing. The teacher will complete a record of how the placement is going and will talk to the person supervising the student. A copy of this record will be given to your child and it can be used as a reference when completing college or sixth form applications. It is therefore important that a good impression is created. The visit will also allow the student an opportunity to discuss any problems they might be experiencing.

Students will be given a Work Experience Diary for them to complete throughout the week which gives them all the information they need about what to expect, what is expected of them and who to contact if they have any questions or concerns during their placement.

How can Parents/Carers help?

Young people need to be motivated and determined if they are to benefit from the opportunities that a Work Experience Placement presents. Parents/Carers should encourage their son/daughter to think of the type of placement that they believe they would like to have. For example, they might picture themselves in different industries such as catering, engineering, agriculture/horticulture, community care, clerical administration or hairdressing.

Personal preferences might also be considered such as working for large or small companies, working indoors or outdoors, dealing with members of the public or being part of an office team, using equipment like computers, fax machines, photocopying machines or manufacturing equipment.

Parents/Carers can help during the placement with encouragement and support, particularly with punctuality and reporting absences to the employer and the Academy.

Finally, if you have any queries, please contact: Mrs Fosker, Careers Lead & Work Experience Coordinator, 01473 464545 or v.fosker@oeacademy.co.uk