

Parents'/carers/guardians guide to work experience for students

What is a Work Experience Placement?

This guide is intended to cover the main aspects relating to the work experience opportunity that your son/daughter will be undertaking. It provides information on the wider aspects of and benefits to students undertaking placements as well as a brief resume of the legal aspects in relation to working hours, health and safety and employer's insurance requirements. It is not designed to be a definitive guide. 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 Placement?

Following a period of Work Experience it is hoped that they 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.

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How are Work Experience Placements organised?

Students or their schools can contact employers to find a suitable placement. The employer 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 school.

It is a good idea for students to:

- Spend time preparing for the placement through discussion and research in class and in the 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. The County is now encouraging students and schools to participate in more bespoke placements in line with the wider Employer Engagement agenda.

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?

Young people in years 10 and 11 on work placements are regarded in health and safety law (**Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)** and **The Health & Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990** as employees and must be provided with the same health, safety and welfare protection given to other employees.

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 and 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. Information on this risk assessment and appropriate control measures will be made available to Parents/Carers prior to the commencement of the period of Work Experience.

Parents, carers and guardians are reminded that they should ensure there is a full disclosure of all existing medical conditions in the health declaration section of the student self-placement form. This may influence the type of placement that a student may choose. The information will also be passed to the employer so that they can take this into account when allocating tasks to the student. Failure to do so could contribute to the injury of a student or other party at the workplace. This practice further contributes to the safeguarding of students while 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. Guidance can be found on the HSE **www.hse.gov.uk**

Employers insurance requirements are checked as part of the work experience traded service provided by Norfolk County Council's Children's Services.

If insurance cannot be confirmed then the placement will not be authorised and will not be able to go ahead. The school/college will keep your son/daughter updated and will help support them to find an alternative placement if necessary.

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.

If for any reason your son/daughter is unable to continue with their placement then you should notify the school/college immediately.

Students use of social media while on placement

Parents/carers should remind students about the appropriate and proportionate use of social media from their personal accounts in relation to their placement, both while they are on placement and also once the placement has finished. Individual school's IT and social media policies cover student's use of equipment and various social media platforms. Students should ensure that they follow the guidelines set.

Safeguarding

Government statutory guidance on safeguarding in relation to work experience placements was introduced in April 2014 in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

Schools organising work experience placements are responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm. If parents/carers should have concerns or wish to raise a query they should do so with the named **Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school**.

Students will also be given clear advice and a point of contact in the school in case of any problems.

If there is a concern or an allegation made about a person who works with children and young people then Norfolk County Council's Children's Services LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) must be contacted **immediately** on 01603 223473.

Prevent is the Government's strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, in all its forms. Prevent works at the pre-criminal stage by using early intervention to encourage individuals and communities to challenge extremist and terrorist ideology and behaviour. Schools and colleges need to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). If you have any concerns about a young person please raise this immediately by contacting the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** for the school. If there are concerns or an allegation made about a person who works with children and young people then Norfolk County Council's Children's Services LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) must be contacted **immediately** on 01603 223473.

Finally ...

Schools must provide each student and the employer with emergency contact details for a member of school staff who can be contacted should an incident occur or if concerns arise. This includes early mornings, evenings and weekends, or if a pupil attends their placement at irregular hours. Emergency contact details must also be available and maintained in situations where a placement continues after the end of the school term into a holiday period.