



Parent Guide to Work Experience

Work experience for your child

A student or young person does work experience with an employer to learn about a job or an industry. It's a short-term placement in the workplace, usually 1 – 2 weeks during years 10 or 11 or during 6th form. To help your child get the most from their placement, talk to them about what jobs they are most interested in and the skills they already have. You can further support them with identifying a suitable work experience placement by doing the following:

- talk to them about subjects they like and dislike
- use the Careers Service webpage tools to generate job ideas
- encourage them to speak to their career adviser in school
- encourage them to start their search for a placement early
- rehearse telephone calls they may need to make to an employer
- proofread emails they send to employers
- think about the location of the placement and how they will get there

You may know of a family or friend who would like to offer your child a work experience placement, if this is the case please ensure you notify the school so as the employers details can be recorded onto the work experience database and all of the required checks are carried out prior to the placement commencing.

Benefits of work experience

Work experience is often the first contact your child will have with the world of work. It forms part of their careers education and allows them to observe and learn – not to do activities which require extensive training or experience.

Talking to your child about the benefits of work experience can help them to understand how useful it can be. Work experience:

- gives insight into the skills required for a particular job
- is an opportunity to test out a job to see if your child really likes it
- can broaden their knowledge of jobs they have never considered
- will increase their awareness of their own skills and strengths and build confidence
- helps them understand how the subjects they study in school link to certain jobs
- gives insight into what the world of work is really like and employers' expectations
- can increase their motivation to do well in school
- puts them in contact with potential employers
- can give them useful experience for their CV and provide referees
- helps them appreciate the skills needed to succeed in a job

Skills in demand

There are job opportunities across all occupational areas but there is higher demand for jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

If your child's strengths relate to STEM subjects, they may benefit from taking part in work experience linked to that area.

The role of the school

Schools should prepare the students beforehand in health and safety and work experience to ensure the student has a positive, valuable and safe experience.

Schools and/or students should identify a placement that is linked to their interests, skills and/or curriculum.

In some instances, employers will arrange interviews for students prior to agreeing a placement – this can assist students in experiencing a real-life interview, the type of questions asked and gives insight into what employers are looking for. When a placement has been confirmed between the employer and the school/student, clear objectives should be identified by the school and possibly with the employer. Objectives are important to ensure the student knows what to work towards in the workplace and to guarantee both the student and employer understand what is expected throughout the placement.

Schools have a mammoth task in helping the whole school year with identifying and confirming placements – realistically schools could be trying to confirm placements for 500+ students each year!!! That's a lot of employers to find. Worcestershire Education Business Partnership (WEBP) manage a database of available work experience placements across Worcestershire.

The placement name and dates will be matched and confirmed by the school and employer and recorded in the Worcestershire Education Business Partnership (WEBP) portal no later than 6 weeks before the work experience commences.

WEBP's role within work experience is to liaise with schools and employers and to arrange appointments to visit the employer premises to conduct a health and safety risk assessment check. Placements will be checked to ensure *Health and Safety policy & procedures and that Public & Employer Liability Insurances are in place.*

Placement details issued to WEBP after the 6-week deadline *could mean* that the student does not go on work experience at that placement.

When WEBP has conducted a visit and completed a Health and Safety check, the information will be updated on the work experience portal.

The role of the employer

By taking part in work experience, the employer will gain the opportunity to help shape their future workforce, promote their company and can allow employees to develop their own supervisory skills.

Employers should aim to:

- give your child an induction to help them understand the nature of the business
- explain what will be expected of them during their work placement
- explain health and safety requirements for the company
- identify a supervisor/trainer to oversee your child's work during the placement
- give feedback to the student at the end of the placement

Health and Safety

Only employers who can demonstrate that they manage Health and Safety effectively will be used for placements. This will have been checked and certified by a representative of the Worcestershire Education Business Partnership if the placement is registered on their work experience database.

Insurance

All employers who offer work experience are required to confirm that they are properly insured for accidents for which they can be held responsible. Public & Employer Liability Insurance Policy details and expiry dates will be recorded on the work experience database.

Prohibitions for children under the age of 16

There are certain activities, which a Work Experience student is prohibited from undertaking

Use of machinery or equipment which may be dangerous for new or young workers to operate, handling hazardous chemicals, firing equipment/arms, driving of any sort, riding in an open trailer or working above 2 metres in height. Students should only observe working practices from a safe distance where prohibited activities are within the placement location. WEBP also recommends that students should not work on unstable flooring/platforms and when being transported in a vehicle, whether with a group or lone driver, seatbelts should be worn by the student and employers should ensure the car is road worthy with valid vehicle documents and insurers are aware of students on work experience. In addition, any students working with animals should be supervised at all times and those students riding animals should be assessed by the provider for experience and competence prior to agreeing any such activity and any inexperienced student should not be allowed to participate

Parental Consent

You may be asked to fill in a parental consent form by your child's school.

If you (not the school) arrange your child's work experience placement, please ensure you notify the school with the employer details. If the employer is not listed on the Worcestershire Education Business partnership work experience database, it will not have had a Health & Safety Assessment completed so the school will need to enter it

Your child's school is responsible for overseeing the work experience placement. The school should make sure that all of the arrangements are in place before a pupil goes out on placement.

Making final preparations

Briefings are provided by the school and the employer but you can help by ensuring that you son or daughter knows:

- How to get there
- How long it takes to get there to ensure punctuality
- To whom they report
- The hours and meal arrangements
- The clothing requirements and dress code

You can also stress the importance of both Health and Safety in a work place and of mature conduct and behaviour during the placement

Useful Tips

As a parent or guardian, you will want to make sure that your son or daughter will get the most out of their work experience. The following tips will help you to support them:

- Ask your child how their placement is going, and encourage them to try harder with tasks they enjoy. Suggest that they make time to chat with people who are working in the type of job they've enjoyed shadowing
- make sure they arrive on time
- as work days are longer than school days, make sure they have a good night's sleep
- talk to them on a daily basis about their experiences
- remind them to record in their daily log book what they are doing on work experience
- remind them to note any computer packages they may use
- contact the school immediately if you feel your child is having problems during the work placement

If your child isn't enjoying their placement, help them to stay positive by focusing on the new skills they are developing. A placement can develop transferable employability skills and build contacts and references for future applications.

After the placement

Once the placement has finished, it's important for your child to think about what they have learned. You can:

- discuss what they learned from the experience
- Discuss whether it has changed their plans
- encourage them to write and thank the work experience provider
- ensure they get a reference from the employer if applicable

For further information

If you have any questions please contact your child's school in the first instance or Worcestershire EBP if you have a specific query about the employer placement