

**A GUIDE TO
WORK
EXPERIENCE
FOR
PARENTS/
CARERS**

This information is intended to answer the questions parents/carers may have regarding Work Experience as well providing suggestions about how to help your son/daughter make the most of this opportunity.

NB - IT IS THE STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND A PLACEMENT

Payment and Expenses: Students do not receive any form of payment whilst participating in the Work Experience Programme. Travel expenses are not reimbursed.

Hours and Conditions of Work: The details of each programme will vary, but generally the students will experience similar hours and working conditions as a young employee of the firm/organisation concerned.

What about Health and Safety? Each employer accepting a student must have appropriate Employer Liability Insurance and be designated a safe place of work by Connect South West staff. In the past, we have had students who have been unable to attend placements they have arranged due to insufficient or non-existent employer insurance. Suitable health and safety clothing may be supplied by the employer, however you will be informed if you need to supply anything for your child (e. g. safety boots). Each student should receive an induction as a new employee and be informed about health and safety issues. Students are required to comply with the safety regulations of the firm/organisation that they are working in and to wear clothing and footwear that is considered to be appropriate for the placement.

For this reason, it is important that any medical conditions/special education needs are notified to the employer via the Health Declaration Form.

What is Work Experience? Work Experience is an unpaid placement lasting one week, at a place of work. Your child will carry out a range of tasks similar to those of an employee but with a focus on the learning aspect of the experience. Despite a difficult economic climate, employers understand the value of work experience and still want to give opportunities to young people. There are many benefits to employers, including of course, the chance to work with the workforce of tomorrow.

Who can I contact for advice? Your first point of contact should be the WEX Coordinator, Mrs Duncan. You can also contact the Careers & Employability Lead, Mr Porter.

- What do I need to do as a parent? Read the enclosed information.
- Talk to your child about the type of experience they want. What skills, interests or hobbies does your child have that might influence their choice of a work experience?
- What family/local contacts do you have who might provide a suitable placement? (Remember that it is not always a good idea to have your own child with you on work placement.) What ideas does your child have that might lead to a good placement?

How Can Students Find Their Own Experience of Work Placement? We strongly encourage students to find a placement as, in our experience, students who find placements for themselves find the placement more interesting, rewarding and successful and employers respond favourably to young people demonstrating their initiative and willingness

to work. You can help your child by encouraging them to think about what they would like to do during Experience of Work fortnight and discussing it with them. It does not have to be about chosen careers, it is simply to give young people a flavour of a work-place environment and the demands of it. Having decided what sort of company they are looking for, students can find contact details in a number of places. 1. Using the CSW Database (students will be shown how to access this information). 2. Use a search engine like Google to search the Internet using phrases that include the location or postcode, e.g. Florists, Enfield, or computer shops, EN1. 3. Have a look at a business directory website such as Thompson's (www.thomweb.co.uk) or Yell.com (www.yell.com). 4. Look at local papers and magazines and see what companies are advertising and what may be of interest to your child. 5. Think about organisations or employers that you know and look them up in the phone book or on the Internet or visit them in person. 6. Ask family and friends; many students find a placement through a personal connection.

What type of placements are suitable? All employers who offer placements will be required to meet specific requirements. These exist to make sure your child gets the best possible opportunity to learn in a safe environment. All employers must:

- Have up to date Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance cover up to £5 million.
- Provide an opportunity for students to undertake relevant and realistic tasks that develop skills and confidence.
- Provide adequate supervision and support.
- Have assessed the likely risks for the student and have appropriate safety systems in place. If you are not sure if the placement you have found is suitable we will be happy to advise you, particularly, if the placement is in a private residence, on a construction site or in a high risk sector. Placements with mobile workers are not usually suitable.

What you can do now to help your child:

- Discuss with your child what sort of company or organisation they would like to spend their Work Experience week. Do they have a chosen career in mind or would you just like them to gain an insight into a working environment? What are their strengths? Are they good at writing, drawing, practical skills, I.C.T.? Are they a good organiser? What are their interests? Health & Beauty? Cars? Art? Computers? Sport? Music? T
- Try and help them find contact details on relevant companies e.g. search on the Internet, look in a business directory like Thompson's, or a local paper, look at retailers in local shopping areas.
- Help them to contact prospective employers either in person, by phone, email, or letter.
- It is best to contact several companies to widen their options.
- Once they have successfully secured a placement ensure that the WEX Placement and Health Declaration forms are completed in full and returned to their form tutor as soon as possible.

What else can I do to help? There are a number of things that you can do to support your child to help them get the best out of their Work Experience.

Here are a few ideas:-

Before the placement:

- Talk to them about their choices, go on the on-line system and see what's available & encourage them to look at opportunities in different sectors.
- Help with finding or suggesting ways to find a private placement.
- Get them to look at placements in the area where you work. Placements can be taken across the whole county so don't limit choices to just the immediate vicinity of the school. Travelling to new places is an important part of the experience and can be fun.
- All placements provide a job description so you can talk to them about what they will be doing on their placement.
- Encourage them to go for a pre-placement interview, or at least call to confirm all the details such as, where to go? At what time? What to wear? Who to ask for?
- Complete the WEX forms on time, this helps keep things on schedule.
- Reassure them that everyone gets nervous about doing something new, talk to them about what your first day at work was like or get them to chat with siblings who might have done Work Experience.

During the placement:

- Ensure the school has a contact number for you or someone else in the event of an emergency.
- Encourage your child to be responsible and turn up, on time, everyday and call if they can't attend. Employers offer placements on a goodwill basis, they plan activities for the Young People so not turning up is both inconvenient, rude and it may put them off offering placements for others.
- Talk to your child about what they have been doing and encourage them to keep a record in the Work Experience diary, this will help when they go for job interviews in the future.

After The Placement:

- Chat with your child about what they have learnt and how this can be used for the future, how it impacts on their career and further study choices.
- Congratulate & praise them on completing their placement successfully, put your comments in their diary.

Placements Outside of Bristol: Placements do not have to be within the Bristol area. If you are happy for your child to commute you will find they have more options open to them.

Placements can take place within the UK but cannot take place abroad.

Downloadable Information: All information regarding WEX can be found on the School website. The Work Experience Placement Form and Health Declaration Form is included on the website in downloadable formats.

PLEASE ENSURE YOUR CHILD DOES NOT LEAVE IT TOO LATE TO ORGANISE A PLACEMENT, IT IS TO THEIR ADVANTAGE TO ORGANISE ONE AS SOON POSSIBLE. THEY MUST SECURE A PLACEMENT AND HAND IN COMPLETED PAPERWORK BY:

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