



## South Somerset 14-19 Partnership Work Experience

### Employers Handbook

#### Introduction:

**Thank you for considering taking a learner on a Work Experience Placement.**

The contribution of employers to the school curriculum is immense and the following guidance will assist you in undertaking work experience safely and with maximum benefit to your business and the young learner.

Work experience is the most important factor in shaping young people's perceptions of the world of work. It helps them to learn about a particular occupation, gain valuable personal skills such as independence and team work and to understand the expectations of employers.

As an employer you have the opportunity to help shape the future workforce and give your employees the chance to develop their supervisory skills. Getting involved in work experience shows your company is committed to helping the community.

The following handbook has been devised to help answer any queries or concerns you may have about taking a young person on a Work Placement and to help ensure that you, your organisation and staff also benefit from the experience.

#### What is Work Experience?

The Education Act (1966) defines work experience as ***'A placement on an employer's premises in which a learner carries out a particular task or duty, or range of tasks or duties, more or less as would an employee, but with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience'***.

The placement must be part of a properly approved programme i.e. for school-age pupils it must be arranged or approved by either the local authority or by their school. Work Experience may be

completed as a block placement i.e. on consecutive days or on designated days across a term or longer period, this is called an extended placement.

Young people may complete work experience placements in any employment sector, including “industrial undertakings” such as construction, manufacturing etc. from which they would normally be excluded because of their age. However, they cannot carry out tasks subject to a statutory age limit e.g. operate certain items of equipment such as lift trucks etc.

Students on work experience are classed as employees for health and safety purposes.

## **Insurance**

Pupils may only attend placements where the business holds both Employers Liability and Public Liability insurances.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI), the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association and Lloyd's of London have agreed that, as a matter of convention, students on work experience placements should be treated as employees for the purposes of insurance against personal injury (that is, they will be covered by the Employers' Liability policy). However, it is advisable to notify insurers that a young person will be on the premises and the dates of the placement.

Annex A is a guidance document prepared by the Association of British Insurers (ABI) covering Insurance and Work Experience

## **Health & Safety:**

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees '***so far as is reasonably practicable***'. Risk assessments are key tools to achieving this.

Annex B is based on the Health and Safety Executive publication IND(G) 163L “5 Steps to Risk Assessment” and gives guidance to employers on meeting their duty of care.

Before employing a young person (anyone under 18) or offering a work experience placement, employers should complete a risk assessment that takes into account their psychological or physical immaturity, inexperience, and lack of awareness of existing or potential risks. The risk assessment should be shared with the young person and in the case of work experience students, with their parents. (The South Somerset WEX Partnership will facilitate the sharing of risk assessments on employers' behalf).

## **Working Hours and Conditions:**

Work placements to support pre-16 learning must be compliant with the EU Working Time Directive. The number of hours and the pattern of work on any placement are normally a matter of agreement between you, the school, parents/carers and learners. Start / Finish times need not be restricted to school hours and we encourage students to complete your usual working day. However, all hours must be agreed beforehand by all parties.

Normally placements should be between 07.00 and 19.00. However, evening working e.g. "split shifts" in the catering industry is permitted under certain circumstances. A maximum working time of 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week applies. In addition a minimum half hour break should be allowed after a 4.5 hour period of working.

## **Payment:**

Learners are not entitled to receive payment whilst on a work placement as it is part of their continuing education programme. However, should you wish to contribute to certain expenses such as travelling, meals or by extending the benefits of any employee welfare scheme to learners engaged on Work Experience, this is quite acceptable.

## **Child Protection**

Child protection is a term used to describe the steps taken to guard children and young people from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Employers should adopt a common sense approach when considering child protection issues, the following minimum precautions are reasonable:

- Employees are required by law to declare if they are disqualified from working with children if placed in any role where this will be required.
- It is not advisable to structure a placement where one learner is working with one adult where this is not part of their normal duties.
- In cases of unavoidable one to one working e.g. sole traders, schools have the responsibility to consider whether or not it is appropriate to ask for a CRB check to be carried out.
- The location(s) for all aspects of the programme should be agreed well in advance. Never change the location or job role at short notice and without consent.
- Parents/carers should be aware of travel arrangements and journey times.
- Learners should not be left alone to work unsupervised.

- Companies should be aware of and forbid any type of initiation ceremony or horseplay with young learners.
- Jobs requiring unavoidable unsocial hours must be agreed with parents before the placement and included in written consent.
- There should be no sudden changes to working hours between the interview and placement stages.
- Learners should not be placed unsupervised in environments where there is inappropriate or confidential material.
- Placements should not include any area of work where direct physical contact is an element of the job.
- Learners should not have unsupervised access to the Internet.
- Young learners may in extreme circumstances disclose personal information to a workplace supervisor or mentor and an agreed protocol should be agreed for handling this. Schools can give further guidance.
- Avoid being in an enclosed room with a young learner, always conduct interviews or meetings in public spaces where possible.
- Travel between venues with one adult is accepted on work experience if necessary to the job, journeys should be notified to central staff and be direct from start to finish point.

Employers should note that schools may not place students in any work placement which due to their profile or history includes significant “at risk” elements including medical, emotional, behavioural issues or involvement with the criminal justice system.

### **Preparing to take a student:**

You have the primary duty of care for young learners whilst they are on your premises, however the placement should be managed by a clear agreement between you, the central organiser (South Somerset WEX Partnership), school and parents, covering all circumstances and ensuring that sufficient information has been communicated to allow for safe management.

In your planning you may want to include:

- Giving information about the company and its activities to schools and parents
- Being aware of the objectives of the learner including projects or assignments
- Ensuring that other employees are informed about the placement
- Complying with legal requirements such as Health & Safety, Equality and Child Protection regulations

- Clear Induction on Day 1
- Providing a planned programme of work
- Best means of support
- Ensuring adequate supervision and monitoring throughout the placement
- Reviewing how things went after the placement.

### **The Role of the School:**

The school is responsible for organising the placement with you, providing you with any relevant information about the learner, support to prepare for the placement, monitoring visits and / or calls during the placement and will liaise between you, the student and the parents regarding placement arrangements. The school sends details of the placement to the South Somerset WEX Partnership who will then organise a visit to meet you, if required, prior to the placement taking place.

### **South Somerset WEX Partnership Visit:**

The Partnership will contact you to arrange a visit to meet you and review arrangements prior to the placement taking place. These visits will happen every 1 – 4 years, depending on the Risk Level of the activities and associated premises. The visits will give you the opportunity to discuss arrangements for the placement and answer any queries you may have. Visits usually last about 30 minutes and we would be grateful if a photocopy of your Employers and Public Liability Insurance Certificate can be given to the visitor, for our records.

### **Induction:**

A comprehensive induction should be given to learners on Day 1 and should include:

- Emergency arrangements (fire, accident and first aid)
- Any significant risks which may affect them e.g. machinery, equipment, manual handling, hazardous substances, slips/trips, dealing with the public, etc.
- Control measures e.g. safe systems of work, supervision, use of PPE, signs and notices, etc.
- Supervision and key contacts in the organisation
- Restrictions and prohibitions in the work place
- Reporting accidents and 'near misses'
- Welfare arrangements such as breaks, toilets, eating/drinking arrangements
- Any other 'do's' or don'ts'.

## **Learner Checklist:**

The following ideas may be of use whilst planning for the placement:

- Explain to your staff why your company is taking part in Work Experience and how they can contribute
- Identify who is going to manage the learner – the level of supervision should reflect the learner's immaturity
- Consider the tasks that the learner will be able to manage
- Draw up a Job Description suitable for the learner – this could include hours, breaks, dress code and code of conduct, PPE requirements
- Ensure that Work Experience is inclusive – can the company support learners with disabilities or learning needs?
- Carrying out of Risk Assessments for all activities and work areas, with a young learner in mind. A Risk Assessment should bear in mind a young person's lack of experience and training, physical and psychological capacity, awareness and level of maturity. The assessment should also outline adequate and competent supervision for the learner.
- Has the learner been given an interview – these are not compulsory but gives the learner the chance to explain why they want to work with you
- Do you have enough information about the learner – the school will let you know if the student has any special requirements, health issues, etc.
- Is there a plan of action if the placement doesn't work out – the School is the first point of contact if any problems or issues arise.



## **Ten Top Tips to make Work Experience a Success:**

- 1. Meet the young person before the work placement starts**
- 2. Discuss objectives and expectations**
- 3. Agree suitable work tasks to give an understanding of your organisation**
- 4. Prepare a Risk Assessment appropriate to age and work to be done**
- 5. Ensure significant risks are communicated to parents if the young person is of school age**
- 6. Check with your insurers that they agree to the Work Placement**
- 7. Plan an induction programme that includes Health, Safety and conditions of work**
- 8. Identify a supervisor and mentor**
- 9. Review progress during the Work Placement**
- 10. Provide feedback to the school and expect some in return.**

## Annex A

### **Insurance - Guidance document prepared by the Association of British Insurers (ABI) covering Insurance and Work Experience:**

The principal risks which may arise as a result of Work Experience and other visits are:

- a. Injury to the students themselves
- b. Injury to others on the premises (employees, visitors, customers, etc.)
- c. Injury to others who are not on the premises (including customers and members of the general public)
- d. Damage to, or loss of, employers' property; and:
- e. Damage to, or loss of, other property (e.g. the student's or a customer's property).

Employers Liability Insurance covers the employer's liability in respect of work-related injuries to employees, which includes workplace students. This insurance is compulsory by law. Further information can be found at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) Any injuries caused to employees by students on Work Experience will normally be covered by the Employers Liability Policy.

Public Liability Insurance provides cover for injuries to the public or damage to, or loss of, their property. The term 'public' includes students on Work Experience.

In summary, any injuries caused to employees or students, provided they arise out of activities undertaken in the employer's name, should normally be covered by your Public Liability or Employer's Liability policy. Damage to your property may be covered by your material damage policy. Damage to anyone else's property on the premises should normally be covered by your Public Liability policy. You should notify your insurer if the sorts of activities to be undertaken are onerous or different from your normal business activities. In these circumstances you should make sure that you obtain written confirmation that the risk has been accepted.

Insurance covers learners on both a short term (up to two weeks placement) and longer extended work placements.

## **Annex B:**

### **Extract from The HSE publication IND(G) 163L “5 Steps to Risk Assessment”**

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees *‘so far as is reasonably practicable’*.

**By law Work Experience students are regarded the same as employees.**

**The HSE publication IND(G) 163L “5 Steps to Risk Assessment” gives the following guidance to employers on meeting their duty of care:**

1. Look for and identify the hazards (i.e. physical; chemical, biological; ergonomic; psychological).
2. Decide who might be harmed and in what circumstances.
3. Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.
4. Record the significant findings.
5. Review the assessment if there is a significant change or evidence that the original assessment was inadequate.

***Staff carrying out the assessment must have sufficient knowledge and experience to do so competently.***