

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.



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 can not 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.

Virtual Work Experience

Due to COVID 19 restrictions and anticipated school/college curriculum pressures, it is possible that many KS4 and post 16 young people will not be able to carry out traditional face to face work experience placements in 2021, and potentially beyond.

Some employers are responding to the request to continue to support young people to gain valuable insights into the world of work by developing online opportunities and programmes offering a range of structured experiences.

Virtual Work Experience (VWEX) is also known as online, remote or digital; it provides young people with the opportunity to gain invaluable workplace skills, boost employability and explore new industries and roles.



VWEX opportunities can differ. Programmes can vary in length and can take place either in a block or over an extended period of time, some also have age restrictions in place.

Students undertaking VWEX programmes will either be based at school and/or based at home and could be working with other students as part of the programme, for some or all of the time.

VWEX is an additional work-related learning resource not a replacement for more traditional work experience. It remains critically important that, wherever possible, students can experience the face to face contact of a real environment, where they can put into practice the transferrable skills they have learnt in the virtual world.

The benefits

Many employers currently offering VWEX programmes are not based in or do not have premises in Norfolk. Accessing traditional opportunities with these employers would usually be out of reach for most students; so, an online option/version reduces geographical barriers meaning that location is no longer a limiting factor, making the experience more accessible.

Some careers/professions are more suited to VWEX than others. Students may well benefit from accessing a VWEX experience before moving onto a real-life experience, providing a great insight into challenging professional environments.

Although VWEX has some great benefits for students over traditional WEX opportunities, such as no travel, greater accessibility for students who may have missed out previously, students with limited familial networks; it can also be a barrier for those who are digitally disadvantaged.

VWEX can be an effective and worthwhile method for students who may suffer from nervousness, stress and social anxiety, providing a good balance of the security of a familiar setting with the challenges of meeting new people and undertaking new tasks.

How do we find a virtual opportunity?

Your son/daughters' school will be able to provide support and guidance to help them understand the range of opportunities available and will also be able to advise on potentially the most suitable opportunities. Educators have been advised to support students to check ICT accessibility and compatibility before registering/enrolling students.

What ICT and other facilities will my son/daughter need?

By virtue of the model a VWEX programme can be undertaken anywhere, with the right equipment and access. Access to appropriate ICT is crucial; school have been asked to give extra consideration to students who would like to undertake/benefit from a VWEX experience but are digitally disadvantaged. Schools have also been asked to consider whether students complete the programme at home or in school, or if they support students to do a mixed model, with time in both locations.



Where students might not have access to the equipment or a suitable space at home to undertake the programme and school is a viable option, schools have been asked to consider allocating a quiet space to help students' concentration and to minimise possible disruption to other students.



- A laptop/desktop/tablet would be the preferred device to access a VWEX programme, access via mobile phone is possible but is likely to be more challenging. Microsoft Office will need to be installed, or a compatible suite available on the device the student will be using. Reliable internet access will also be a standard requirement.
- A quiet space where they can work, uninterrupted if possible. This will mean your son/daughter can effectively contribute to online meetings and other participants can hear them without the noise from background distractions. Headphones might help/be useful.
- A suitable chair and table/desk to work from. If members of the student's household have been working from home then students may well be familiar with a working from home environment and the challenges it may pose for them.



What else do we need to consider?

Most VWEX experiences are free to join but it's advisable to check if there's a cost before your son/daughter agrees to take part.

Employers will set their own application criteria but often programmes are open all year round. Students may need to complete an online application to a determined closing date and/or attend an online interview as part of the initial process. It may be a competitive process to get a place on the programme. Any support you can offer with this activity will be really helpful. Students will need to provide an email address and as work experience is a curriculum activity, schools may decide that this should be their school email address. If they are using a personal address they will need to make sure this is suitably named.

Schools should also ask for parental consent to take part in the VWEX programme, where the student is under 16.

Safeguarding

Schools retain the responsibility for safeguarding students on a VWEX programme the same as if they were on a placement in an employer's premises. Schools will provide students with the named contact details of the safeguarding lead at their school, if they have any queries/concerns in respect of their placement.

Employers providing VWEX programmes are likely to have signed a code of conduct document for the programme/platform host which outlines how they will interact with students and data requirements. For example, stating their policy on recording video meetings.

Your son/daughter will also be asked to sign a code of conduct; outlining behaviour expectations and what to do if they feel unsafe/see something unexpected. They should note that they may be on a programme with students from other schools, not just their own, and that they may be from different year groups.

Your son/daughter should not be asked to participate in a one to one call with the employer. They should only be invited to group meetings where there will be at least three people always present. Employers should have an online meeting etiquette in place which students will be asked to adhere to. If this is not in place you might like to advise students that they initially mute their microphone when joining a meeting and blur their background when they have their camera on.



Your son/daughter will be reminded by school that they should not share any personal information, details with other students or employees while on the programme or once the programme has finished. This includes contact via social media channels. It would be helpful if you could reinforce this message. Participants on a VWEX programme may come into contact with company confidential or commercially sensitive information - this should not be shared with anyone outside of their placement or school, unless they have obtained prior permission from the employer.



Data Protection

The platform host/employer will be responsible for complying with the requirements of GDPR. Your son/daughter's schools will need to assure themselves that all necessary steps have been taken to maintain student privacy and that no personal data is shared without the permission of those involved.

The platform host will have full access to all activities so that they can monitor compliance and participation by students and employer/s and will moderate and intervene where required.

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.

Your emergency contact is:

Name: School:
Telephone number:



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