

# Work Experience Placements

## How to Guidance



### What is the Legislation?

In compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act etc.1974 WCC must ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that their employees including students on work experience are not exposed to risks to their health & safety. Under Health & Safety legislation all students on work experience must be provided with the same health, safety and welfare protection given to other employees with additional requirements that must be met for young persons. Legislation that specifically applies to work experience is as follows:

- Health & Safety at Work etc. Act
- The Management of Health and Safety Regulations
- The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
- Health And Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations
- The Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance Act
- Working Time Regulations
- Education (Work Experience) Act

### INTRODUCTION

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) welcomes requests for work experience placements and will endeavour to make placements as informative and interesting as possible, always within a safe working and learning environment.

To request a placement, often it is the young person's responsibility to identify their own work placement and schools actively encourage young people to contact prospective employers, so most will write in or telephone directly. However, parents/carers may also contact WCC, and some requests may come via WCC staff seeking placements for their children.

Any request for work experience with WCC must initially be sent to the WCC Work Experience Team, who will then make arrangements wherever possible with teams within the organisation that align with the type of work experience sought by the young person. WCC Work Experience Team needs to be notified about every placement

([wccworkexperience@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:wccworkexperience@warwickshire.gov.uk))

Work experience offers students the opportunity to prepare for the challenges of working in the adult world. However, if the working environment is not carefully controlled, students may become involved in activities where there is potential for injury.

Through offering work experience, we have an opportunity to instill within students an understanding and importance of health and safety which will help them not only throughout their working life, but in their everyday life as well. Sensible health and safety at work is about managing risks rather than expecting them all to be eliminated.

Periods of work experience will probably be the first time that young people experience the work environment. Good preparation and organisation of placements is essential if these opportunities are to be rewarding and a safe introduction to the world of work. Students will face unfamiliar risks, and this will mean that there is a heightened risk to them because of their possible lack of awareness of existing or potential risks, and their lack of maturity, experience and training. They are also likely to lack confidence and be eager to impress or please others.

This guidance identifies the controls WCC will undertake to ensure the health safety and welfare of work experience placements.

### **What about Insurance?**

Work experience placements undertaking normal work placements are classed as employees for the purposes of the Council's employers' and public liability insurance and full cover will automatically apply. If you have any questions please contact the Insurance Team, Resources Directorate, telephone 01926 412351.

## What are the Manager/Supervisor, Parent, Work Experience Student, School Responsibilities?



As an employer WCC has a statutory obligation to assess the significant health and safety risks to all employees and this requirement extends to work experience students for the duration of the placement.

Parents must provide their consent to the work experience placement, normally by signing a form which includes the company details, duties to be undertaken, and the risk assessment and control measures. This process will be arranged by the Work Experience Co-ordinator within the relevant school. Placement hosts within WCC will issue an Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form which needs to be returned to the Work Experience Team on the first day of the placement.

Parents must provide WCC, generally via the school, with relevant information about their child's/own medical or behavioural conditions, which may make the placement unsuitable for them. This information will be supplied to the placement provider, either by the school Work Experience Co-ordinator or directly by the student, so it can be taken into account in the risk assessment.

Parents must inform the school or WCC of any actual or potential health and safety problems during the placement which the work experience student may tell them about whilst on placement.

### **What about Risk Assessment?**

The effectiveness of WCC's risk management arrangements is what matters. Managers should already be managing the risks in their workplaces, and they are best placed to assess whether or not they need to do anything additional for a new young person joining them. Schools and colleges, or those organising placements, should simply ask sensible questions, in proportion to the level of risk, to satisfy themselves that those arrangements are in place.

You should simply use your existing arrangements for risk assessments and management of risks for young people. A separate risk assessment is not required specifically for work experience students, if your existing assessment already considers the specific factors for young people. Furthermore, there is no requirement

to re-assess the risks each time an employer takes on a new work experience student, provided the new student has no particular needs.

- Avoid repeating your assessment of the risks if a new student is of a broadly similar level of maturity and understanding, and has no particular or additional needs (the organiser or parent should tell you if they have)
- If you do not currently employ a young person, have not done so in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, or one with particular needs, review your risk assessment before they start.
- Discuss the placement in advance with organisers and take account of what they and the parents or carers tell you of the student's physical and psychological capacity and of any particular needs, for example due to any health conditions or learning difficulties.
- Keep any additional work in proportion to the environment
- For placements in **low-risk environments**, such as offices or shops, with **everyday risks** that will mostly be familiar to the student, your existing arrangements for other employees should suffice.
- For **environments with risks less familiar** to the student (e.g. print unit), you will need to make arrangements to manage the risks. This will need to include induction, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment needed.
- For a placement in a **higher-risk environment** such as waste sites/vehicle workshops you will need to:
  - consider what work the student will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed; and
  - satisfy yourself that the instruction, training, and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and that they work in practice.
- You may, in particular for higher-risk environments, need to consider specific factors that must be managed for young people, including exposure to radiation, noise and vibration, toxic substances, or extreme temperatures. Where these specific factors exist in your workplace, you should already have control measures in place. This will also apply to legally required age limits on the use of some equipment and machinery (e.g. Forklift trucks and some woodworking machinery). Consider whether you need to do anything further to control the risks to young people.
- Explain to parents/carers of children what the significant risks are and what has been done to control them. This can be done in whatever way is simplest and

suitable, including verbally, and is very often done via the school or college before the student starts the work placement.

Please note that for environments with less familiar risks to young people and/or those in a higher risk category the school may wish to carry out a physical check prior to the placement beginning. Separate guidance for schools is also available [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SchoolHSDocs](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SchoolHSDocs).

For further information on Risk Assessment, refer to the WCC Risk Assessment Standard and Guidance.

### What about Safeguarding?



Employers should take the following steps for Safeguarding matters:

- A placement supervisor is appointed.

Employers who offer work experience placements on a regular basis should ensure

safeguarding responsibilities are explicitly stated in the job descriptions of all placement supervisors.

- Placement providers have appropriate child protection policies and procedures in place or endorse and agree to work in accordance with the school/college's child protection and associated policies, to protect children from harm. Employers must disseminate policies and procedures to all relevant staff.

- The placement supervisor receives some basic safeguarding training. As a minimum, that training must include the following elements consistent with the training provided for all school and college-based staff:

- (i) Recognition, recording and reporting signs of abuse and neglect.
- (ii) Responding appropriately to disclosures of abuse or neglect by students.
- (iii) Safe working practice for adults who work with children and young people (N.B. the school/college should have a code of conduct in place for all school staff. This should be shared with the placement supervisor and all staff who will work with the student required to read and sign to confirm they have read, understood and agree to abide by it)

- Liaise with the school/college to agree a programme for the student and monitoring arrangements.

- Consider the suitability of staff members to support students on placement.

Employers providing work-related learning should do all they reasonably can to avoid putting young people into a vulnerable position. They should ensure their employees' relationships with young people on work experience are appropriate to their age and

gender, and do not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitude, behaviour and language all require care and thought.

Employers should consider the following guidance when providing a work experience placement:

- **Dress and Appearance:** Adults should wear clothing which is appropriate to their role. It should be culturally sensitive and absent of political slogans and anything else that might be considered contentious or discriminatory.
- **Contact, environment and DBS checks:** As a work experience host you and/or colleagues must never be alone or in an isolated or closed environment with a young person unless the placement agreement specifies that arrangement. This includes being in transit with a young person if making site/client visits.

If the young person will be working 1:1 with colleagues then it is the responsibility of the employer to seek DBS checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service. You will need to register with an Umbrella Body who is a Registered Body that provides access to the Disclosure and Barring Service. You can find a suitable Umbrella Body by searching their Umbrella body database accessed from the DBS website, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>. Umbrella Bodies are entitled to charge an administration fee for the service they provide; these charges are published on the Umbrella Body database.

Occasions should NOT arise when you need to touch a young person. Handshakes are acceptable, particularly when introducing the young person to colleagues.

- **Behaviour:** Whilst it is important to reassure a young person who may be nervous working in an unfamiliar setting, they are reliant on your guidance. However, you should avoid being over familiar. Never permit 'horseplay' which may cause embarrassment, fear or give rise to misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Should student behaviour give cause for concern, you should speak directly to the named work experience organiser/coordinator at the school where the student is based.
- **Personal Information:** Adults should be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations. This means adults should not give their personal contact details to children or young people, including their mobile telephone number or email address. Similarly, adults should not communicate with students via social networking.
- **Mentor:** Those placed immediately in charge of young people should be competent in their work role, mature in their attitudes, and yet, at the same time, be at ease with young people.
- **Disclosure:** Occasionally young people may disclose confidential information to work colleagues that gives rise to concern for their physical or emotional safety. In such circumstances you should speak directly to the named work experience organiser/co-ordinator who will share your concern with an appropriate member of the pastoral team within the school where the student is based.

- **Data Protection:** Schools need to share relevant information about students with colleges, employers and training providers to help them to make decisions about appropriate forms of work-related learning activity and aspects such as health and safety. Information about students might also be collected through employer assessment and student evaluation forms and on visits made to students who are in placements. The disclosure of personal information collected before, during and after work related learning is covered by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). This regulates how personal information is used – it provides a common-sense set of rules which prohibit the misuse of personal information without stopping it being used for legitimate or beneficial purposes. Under health and safety legislation (HSW Act 1974) matters potentially affecting the safety and health of employees in a workplace must be revealed to an employer before a placement begins. Therefore, while it is important that data protection rules are always followed, no placement can be approved if lack of permission means that relevant health and safety information cannot be made available in confidence to the employer.
- **Disqualification:** You are reminded that you are required by law to protect children from harm and that any employees are required, under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, to declare that they are disqualified from working with children.



There are other agents, processes and work that should be considered when employing a young person. The following list doesn't cover all of those, but if any of the issues are relevant to your workplace you can find more information on the Health and Safety Executive Website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk):

- biological agents
- working with chemicals
- working with lead and lead processes
- asbestos
- working with explosives, including fireworks
- working with compressed air
- construction, including demolition
- electrical safety
- agriculture
- manufacturing

Work Experience begins in school year 10/11, however, for advice and guidance on young people in employment (including volunteer work) please contact the Child Employment and Children in Entertainment Officer within Children & Young People Directorate, telephone 01926 742522.

## What about Working Hours?

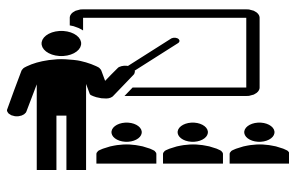


Working hours are not governed by health and safety law. Young people and children have different employment rights from adult workers and are subject to protections in relation to the hours they can work.

A young worker cannot usually be made to work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week. These hours cannot be averaged over a longer period, and you're not allowed to ignore these restrictions.

In addition, an employer must ensure that no young person works during the “restricted period”. The restricted period is the period between 10.00pm and 6.00am or, in a case where the worker is contracted to work after 10.00pm, the period between 11.00pm and 7.00am. The working time and night working restrictions are subject to various exemptions relating to particular occupations and particular circumstances.





### **What about Induction/Training/Supervision?**

Managers/supervisors must ensure a formal induction to the workplace is conducted on arrival. In the induction process, the student should be given a basic introduction to health and safety i.e. first aid and fire evacuation procedures and specific risk assessments should be explained and checked that they understood, where relevant. Students must know how to raise health and safety concerns.

A checklist is provided for your use in the Corporate and School Intranet sections (links in contact information below). A copy of this checklist is to be kept by the manager for the duration of the placement and a copy given to the student. On the first day of the placement, please return all documents issued by the Work Experience Team [wccworkexperience@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:wccworkexperience@warwickshire.gov.uk).

Managers/supervisors must provide information, instruction, training and supervision. This is particularly important for work experience students.

A work experience student must be closely supervised during their placement and should receive appropriate training and information when they begin work experience - they need it to increase their capabilities and competencies to a level where they can do the work without putting themselves and others at risk. Information must include, as a minimum:

- an explanation of the work activities and any associated significant risks and control measures in place
- the names of nominated supervisor(s) and one person with overall responsibility for health & safety during the placement
- instruction on any equipment they will be using
- awareness of any equipment they must not use or only use with supervision
- specific procedures relevant to their work activities

## Contact Information

All health and safety information is available on the intranet. Go to:  
[Intranet > HR > Health & Safety](#)

For Schools, refer to the health and safety document library on  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SchoolHSdocs](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SchoolHSdocs)

Alternatively you can contact the Health & Safety Service on [Hornbill/HR Service Desk/H&S](#) or telephone 01926 476803