

# Work experience guidance for schools

**For headteachers, senior leadership teams  
and work experience coordinators organising  
student placements**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of guiding principles that Warwickshire Local Authority (LA) maintained secondary schools should follow to ensure that young people for whom they are responsible benefit from suitable and safe work experience placements.

Any placement undertaken should be in a safe environment with an employer who can demonstrate that they hold suitable insurances. This guidance is designed to set out the LA's minimum requirements and arrangements that schools should have in place.

The role of overseeing the Duty of Care for students whilst on work experience no longer rests with the Secondary Phase Team within Learning and Achievement. Annual "School Work Experience Accreditation" visits will not be undertaken by the LA after July 2013.

The Duty of Care for students rests with:

- The school
- The parent/carer
- The employer
- The Local Authority

This guidance will take effect from October 2013 and will be reviewed every three years.

This document replaces the 'Warwickshire County Council Work Experience Toolkit' (2011) and the 'Warwickshire County Council Health and Safety Standards for Young Person Work Placements' (2011).

## **2. DEFINITION**

Work experience is defined as a "placement with an employer in which a young person carries out a range of tasks in much the same way as an employee with the emphasis on learning from the experience".

## **3. GENERAL**

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is committed to improving outcomes for our young people by championing their education and training needs.

We are working with partners to deliver against the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) strategies, working to reduce the NEET's (not in education, employment or training) figures and monitoring the performance of secondary schools focusing on the performance of vulnerable learners. We are also targeting employer needs in order to stimulate economic growth via the "Going for Growth" strategy.

We believe that work experience is one of the most valuable ways in which young people develop their life skills, personal qualities and attitudes to work. It is an integral part of the

new Study Programmes and fits in with Government thinking around the need to prepare our young people much more effectively for the world of work.

Schools should consider the following guidance when planning and delivering their work experience programmes:

#### 4. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty on employers, including learning providers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. Young people on work placement are regarded in health and safety law as employees.

Under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations, employers have a responsibility to ensure that young people employed by them are not exposed to risk due to lack of experience, being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or lack of maturity, physical capability etc.

WCC follows the current guidance by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at [www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/)

Key points:

- The placement provider (employer) has primary responsibility for health and safety of the student and should be managing any significant risks. The employer can include specific factors for young people into their existing risk assessment.
- Schools organising work experience programmes should take reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that placement providers are doing this. Schools should discuss with the employer what the student will be doing during the placement, noting any relevant precautions.
- Employers must inform parents/carers of any significant workplace risks to their child on work experience and how they are being controlled. This can be done directly or via the school. **Appendix 1 – Statement of significant risks and control measures form** can be used to record and agree this information.
- Schools can use past experience, or other pooled experience when organising and checking the suitability of placements. It is not necessary to repeat the same process again for a new student where an employer is known to the school and has a good track record, and the student's needs are no different to those on past placements.
- Schools should work with parents/carers to ensure employers know in advance about students who might be at greater risk, for example due to health conditions or learning difficulties, so this can be taken into account when planning the placement. This should include details of any medical or behavioural conditions as well. This information can be incorporated into a simple questionnaire.

- Checks of the placement should be kept in proportion to the environment. In **lower risk environments**, such as offices or shops that have everyday low risks that will most likely be familiar to the student, speaking with the employer to confirm their arrangements may be sufficient enough.
- For environments with **less familiar risks**, e.g. light assembly or packing facilities, discussion with the employer should take place to confirm the arrangements they have for managing risks. This will need to include induction, training, supervision, site familiarisation and any protective equipment that might be needed etc.
- In **higher risk environments**, such as construction, agriculture, manufacturing or motor vehicle repairs, as well as workshop / machinery environments etc; the checks will need to be more robust. Schools should satisfy themselves that adequate health and safety arrangements are in place and the work the student will be doing is being effectively managed to ensure their health and safety. In addition, students should know how to raise any health and safety concerns.
- Schools should also check that employers understand and are aware of the specific factors relevant to employing young people. For further information including details on industry specific prohibitions and limitations for young people at work go to [www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/index.htm)
- It is the responsibility of schools to decide the extent of checks that are carried out for work experience placements, based on the types of environment and potential risks involved.
- For environments with **less familiar risks** or for those in **higher risk categories**, WCC recommend a physical check of the workplace is carried out by a competent person. A competent person is somebody who has suitable and appropriate training and experience. The attainment of a formal health and safety qualification may also be appropriate.
- Physical checks should look at the general suitability of workplace conditions which should include housekeeping, toilets and washing facilities, fire precautions, guarding of machines, provision of any necessary protective equipment etc. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other important aspects to consider. This will be dependent upon the type of environment and risks involved.
- Schools may also wish to arrange a physical check for placements involving students who might be at greater risk, for example due to health conditions, learning disabilities or other complex needs.
- Schools may wish to prepare a pre-induction form for students to complete prior to the placement for them to obtain relevant information from the employer. This could include details such as hours of work, break times, welfare facilities, who to report to, general health and safety arrangements on-site etc.
- There should also be agreement on key points of contact between the employer and school during the placement to discuss any issues or concerns. This includes the reporting of any serious accidents or incidents to the school who should follow current WCC accident reporting procedures.

## 5. SAFEGUARDING

Schools and FE colleges organising work experience placements should ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm (Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE draft guidance, 2013).

It is important that all adults working with young people under eighteen years of age are aware of issues relating to the safeguarding of children and young people.

Both schools/FE colleges and placement providers should have policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. However, responsibility for the student's welfare always remains with the school or college.

The following simple steps will assist in keeping children safe while on work experience placements:

- Schools and colleges should appoint a work experience co-ordinator (WEC), who will be responsible for organising and supervising placements.
- The WEC should have attended training and be experienced in dealing with child protection and safeguarding issues. Ideally, they will be a designated member of staff for child protection or should at least have attended designated person training.
- The WEC should be responsible for assessing and ensuring the:
  - suitability of a work experience placement for an individual student
  - suitability of an individual student for a particular placement.
- The WEC should ensure there are systems in place for students and employers to report any concerns. Schools and colleges should prepare students for work experience placements with a briefing on safeguarding, expectations of safe behaviour and what to do if they are worried they have been abused in the placement.
- Students who are identified as vulnerable in any way or whose past difficulties or behaviour indicate that an employer might be vulnerable if working alone with that student should not be placed alone or in situations where they will be working on a one to one basis with an employer.
- Placements which require extended one-to-one contact of individual students with individual employees should be approached with extreme caution.
- Schools/colleges should be particularly careful with regard to distant placements, checking the health and safety and child protection issues of workplaces and accommodation.

- The WEC must actively monitor the student's welfare during the work experience placement. For both short and long term placements there should be school/college procedures for regularly checking the welfare and safety of students, e.g. visits which allow individual discussion with students, a telephone helpline etc.
- The school/college should provide clear advice to employers about who to contact in relation to any child protection issues that arise during a work experience placement. This should be the school's designated child protection member of staff but the WEC should also be informed.

The WEC on behalf of the school/college should ensure that the employer takes the following steps:

- 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, in order 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.

Where there are any doubts or concerns about the vulnerability of students or work experience providers, arrangements to place two or more students together and to avoid one to one work between students and providers should be considered.

Monitoring arrangements for vulnerable students must include seeing the student face to face in the placement and speaking to the student on their own. Students should also have a mechanism for contacting the WEC directly at all times during the placement.

Where work experience placements include the student travelling in vehicles owned by the provider, the WEC should consider the need to see the vehicle to check its suitability for

transporting passengers safely and checking that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place.

Where Disclosure Barring and Service checks are undertaken in respect of work experience placement providers, any offences should be considered as they would when recruiting staff to work in the school or college in accordance with safer recruitment principles, i.e. are convictions relevant to a role working with young people, do they indicate that a student might be at any degree of risk while working with the work experience provider, might the conviction and use of the placement potentially bring the school or college into disrepute?

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 Data Protection Act 1998. This Act 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.

## 6. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING (PREVIOUSLY CRB CHECKS)

### 6.1 General

DBS is a formal check on an individual's criminal record, performed in conjunction with the Disclosure and Barring Service. The check discloses all convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings that are held on the Police National Computer (PNC). The check raises any relevant issues that are then considered by the employer / potential employer, where they exist on that individual's criminal record. This can include any on-going investigations. In addition to the main DBS check, two additional checks can also be performed; barred



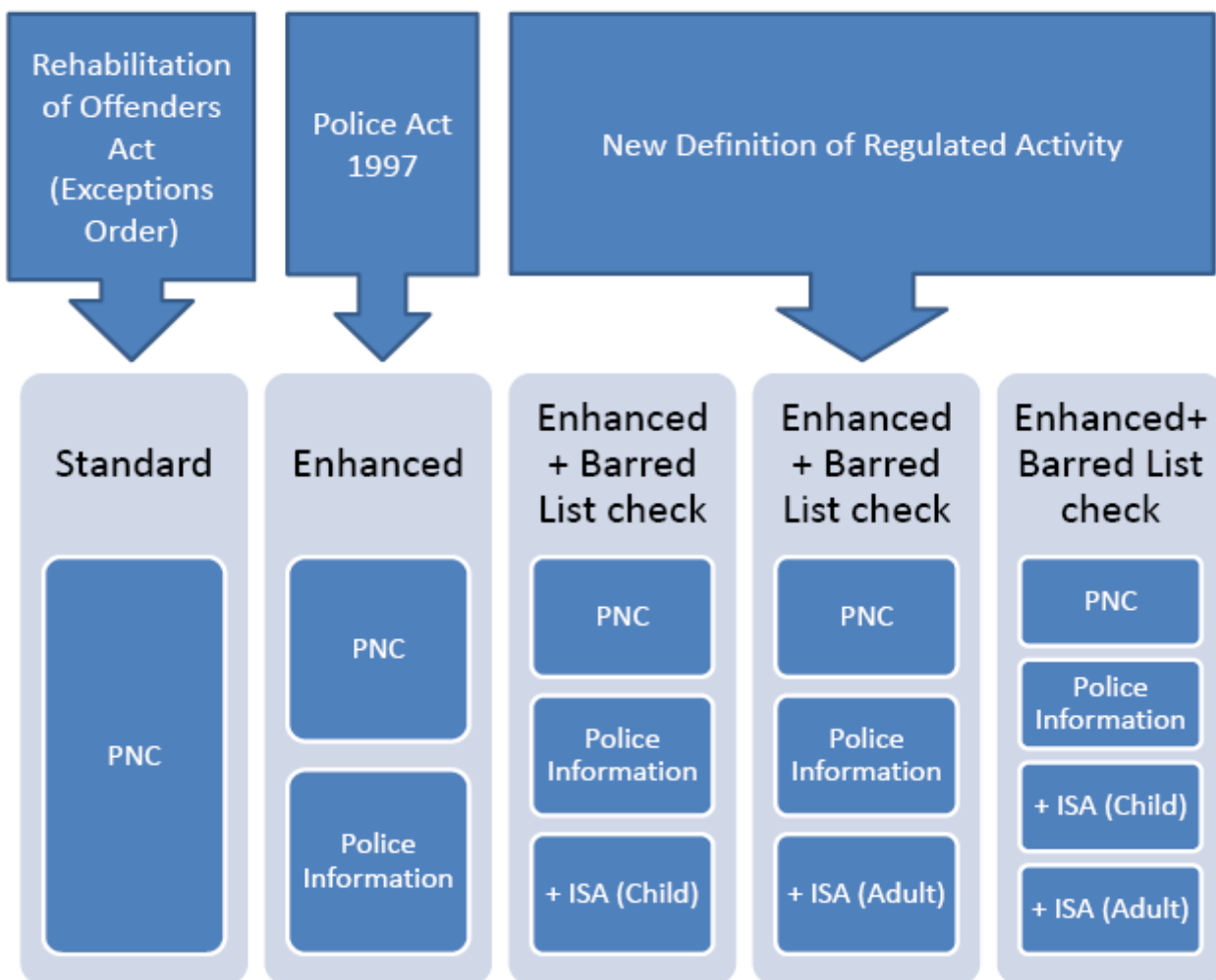
Adult's and Children's List checks, whereby an individual's name(s) are checked against a list of those barred from working in relevant areas e.g. with children or vulnerable adults. The check is designed to allow a judgement to be made on the appropriateness for individuals to work in defined areas where they are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974

Warwickshire County Councils Vetting Services Team is responsible for the processing of DBS checks for internal teams, schools and private organisation.

## **6.2 Eligibility**

The Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 lists the types of work, employment or professions on which you can legally obtain a DBS check. However, there are other pieces of legislation that set out additional requirements. For local authorities, it is essentially the case that a DBS check is required for those in regulated activity where the individual is working 'frequently, intensively and/or overnight' with children or vulnerable adults or those who are regularly caring for, training, supervising or in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults. Warwickshire County Council's Vetting Services will assist managers in determining who should have a DBS check and at what level.

The diagram below shows the various types of DBS Disclosures along with the relevant legislation.



All positions in schools will require a DBS check as they are governed by legislation and will work frequently and/or intensively with children.

Some positions that do not need a DBS include; financial and ICT staff (even where they visit schools infrequently), administrators in social work offices, libraries and museums staff (unless they lead children’s groups or school visits), and call centre staff. The general rule is that if the role works intensively or frequently with children or vulnerable adults then a DBS will be required.

### 6.3 Regulated Activity Definition

The following information outlines the meaning of regulated activity relating to children.

- Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice/guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children;
- Work for a limited range of establishments (‘specified places’), with opportunity for contact: for example, schools, children’s homes, childcare premises. Not work by

supervised volunteers; Work under (i) or (ii) is regulated activity only if done regularly.

- Relevant personal care, for example washing or dressing, eating, drinking toileting or teaching someone to do one of these tasks; or health care by or supervised by a professional;
- Registered child-minding; and foster-carers.
- Day to day management of a person providing a regulated activity

The definition of regularly is -

- Once a week or more
- 4 days in one month or more
- Overnight between 2am-6am

#### **6.4 Supervision must be:**

- Reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of protecting the children concerned
- Carried out by someone who is engaging in regulated activity relating to children

Further guidance in relation to supervision can be found on the [Department for Education website](#).

#### **6.5 Umbrella Body Service**

We are proud to provide DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) checks, to help organisations undertake security checks of those working for them, ensuring that their customers are protected from harm.

As an umbrella body, we can perform checks for all organisations, large or small, and across all sectors, private, public and third sector alike. We have fully trained staff providing support and guidance at every stage to ensure that you receive the best customer service along with the fastest possible turn-round of your DBS application.

With a modern DBS database, we record every application at every step, and retain a history of transactions. We also retain customer information that ensures we know who to contact and when, as well as maintaining a record of our interactions with them.

Our service is good value for money, and simple to use.

For further information, frequently asked questions or to find out how to register with us, please visit [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/dbs), email [dbs@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:dbs@warwickshire.gov.uk) or Telephone **01926 418 264**.

## **7. INSURANCE**

### **7.1 General**

The blanket liability insurance covers arranged by Warwickshire County Council will indemnify the Council and any school subscribing to the scheme in respect of their legal liability arising from work experience placements.

The Council's insurance arrangements do not provide an indemnity for the employers with whom the students are placed.

The following information outlines the insurance responsibilities of both the school and the employer. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Insurance Team as follows:

Roger Linney, email [rogerlinney@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:rogerlinney@warwickshire.gov.uk), telephone 01926 418160.

### **7.2 School's responsibilities**

Public liability insurance to indemnify the school in respect of any legal liability for injury to the student or a third party and loss of or damage to the student's or a third party's (including the employer's) property.

Provided the school subscribes to the Schools Insurance Service – School Combined Insurance, these requirements are automatically covered to a limit of indemnity of £50,000,000.

### **7.3 Employer's responsibilities**

Employers' liability insurance to at least the minimum levels required by legislation, currently £5,000,000 in respect of any one occurrence, and public liability insurance to a level commensurate with the employer's business activities. This should be at least £2,000,000 in respect of any one occurrence and £5,000,000 would normally be considered desirable.

In both cases, the employer's insurance should extend to include work experience placements and afford them the same cover as other employees. This must include an indemnity to the student if a claim is made against him or her as an individual for acts committed in connection with the student's work for the employer.

### **7.4 Exempt businesses**

Some employers are exempt from the legal requirement to have employers' liability insurance. Being exempt does not remove or limit an employer's liability to pay compensation, nor will it necessarily be the case that the employer does not have insurance in place.

Placements with exempt employers are generally acceptable (but please see below regarding family run businesses). Please do not, however, sign any agreement holding the employer harmless from any liability or transferring any liability to the school or the Council, as this will not be covered under our insurance arrangements.

## 7.5 Family run business

One of the classes of employer exempt from compulsory insurance is family businesses where all the employees are closely related to the employer, unless it is incorporated as a limited company, in which case the exemption does not apply.

For the purposes of any work placement, even if it is a family run business and usually exempt, WCC standard is that they **must** have employers' liability insurance if the student is **not** related to the family of that business. If the student is related, the parents/carers must make a choice whether they approve the work experience placement and must provide written confirmation to the school.

## 8. QUALITY POLICIES AND PROCESSES

In order for the school to ensure that the work experience on offer is of the highest standard and provides a valuable learning experience we would suggest that the school consider including the following good practice in the planning process:

- **Work experience coordinator:** Schools that provide work experience opportunities for their students should appoint a work experience coordinator. This should be a competent member of staff who is provided with sufficient time and resource to carry out the role effectively.
- **Policies and processes:** There should be a work experience policy in place which details for example; aims and objectives, roles and responsibilities, contingency plans and monitoring and evaluation. The school should have systems in place which enable tracking and monitoring of information and which store evidence of checks and assessments made. It is also recommended that schools have clear expectations of students on work experience placements, e.g. standards of behaviour etc.
- **Out of county placements:** The LA supports work experience opportunities taking place in Warwickshire and where appropriate opportunities with employers who are based out of the county. Where the school authorises a placement out of the county which requires the student to stay away from home over night the school must ensure that robust processes are in place which will provide evidence that risk assessments and health and safety checks have been undertaken, that adequate supervision is in place, and that the accommodation and travel arrangements are agreed and accepted by the parent/carer. It is advised that parents/carers are provided with this information and that their consent is sought prior to the work experience taking place.

*The LA does not support out of country work experience.*

- **Employer briefing:** Employers should be well briefed prior to taking a student in order that they fully understand their responsibilities and the level of commitment involved. There should also be agreement on key points of contact between the employer and school to discuss or raise any concerns or issues during the placement.
- **Student visits:** Students should be visited by a member of school staff during their placement. The staff member can check that the placement is running smoothly, answer any questions from the student or employer and check that the environment is suitable. If a personal visit is not possible (for example where the student's placement is out of the county) then a phone call should be made by the school to the employer and student.

## 9. FURTHER INFORMATION / CONTACTS

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|---|---|
| Health and Safety   | WCC Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service<br>Tel 01926 476803 email <a href="mailto:healthandsafety@warwickshire.gov.uk">healthandsafety@warwickshire.gov.uk</a> |
| Safeguarding  | Adrian Over, Education Safeguarding Manager<br>Tel 07771 552315 email <a href="mailto:adrianover@warwickshire.gov.uk">adrianover@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>                |
| Disclosure and Barring Service checks (previously CRB checks) | HR and Payroll Services<br>01926 738 444<br><a href="mailto:hrandpayroll@warwickshire.gov.uk">hrandpayroll@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>                                      |
| Insurance   | Roger Linney, Corporate Insurance Manager<br>Tel 01926 418160 email <a href="mailto:rogerlinney@warwickshire.gov.uk">rogerlinney@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>                |

APPENDIX 1

**This form must be signed by the employer, student and parent/carer**

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT RISKS & CONTROL MEASURES FORM  
(To be completed by employer)**

Name of Student:  Tutor Group:

Name of Company:

Contact Person:

Dates of work experience: From  to

Type of work undertaken by student:

Significant risks:

Measures taken to minimise these risks:

Employer ..... Date .....

Student ..... Date .....

Parent ..... Date .....