

Work Experience Policy

Meopham School



Document Management

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1. Introduction

Work experience is an integral part of our students' entitlement to CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) and this clearly supports Gatsby Benchmark 6 "Experiences of Workplaces" which states:

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.

<https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/the-benchmarks>

Work experience gives young people vital insights into the world of work, encourages them to aspire to great things, and helps them to prepare for their future. It bridges the gap between school, college and work and helps young people make decisions about their future and develop new and existing skills.

The opportunity to participate in work experience is provided to all students by the end of their compulsory years. Students are encouraged to find placements linked to career paths that suit their interests, skills and strengths with the absence of stereotypes, which are actively challenged.

Students with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), or any other additional needs, will be supported appropriately through liaison with parents and relevant staff i.e. the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and the placement provider.

2. Our aims

Work experience should:

- Enhance students' knowledge of the world of work
- Develop students' employability skills
- Provide an insight into the skills, qualities and attitudes required by particular sectors and employers

- Provide opportunities for personal and social development – including self-confidence, time management, personal organisation and resilience

- Help prepare students for the world of work
- Enable students to make cross-curricular links
- Support the School's CEIAG provision
- Provide students with an opportunity for self-evaluation

3. Provision

The opportunity for a three day work placement is offered to all Year 10 and 12 students. However, some KS5 students might access additional work experience placements during Year 12 and/or 13 through their subject courses.

4. Management and coordination

Approval of work placements is the responsibility of the School and the School manages all documentation for placements. They can be sourced through a number of different methods including personal contacts, school contacts or external provider contacts, e.g. The Education People or Careers Enterprise Company.

National legislation from the HSE and the DfE will be followed to ensure the health, safety and safeguarding of students whilst on work experience. The School only authorises placements which have met all of our safeguarding requirements (see below).

5. Safety considerations

The HSE guidance for work experience and placements is invaluable and should be shared with staff and placement providers. It can be found at

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/index.htm>

6. Considerations for School

"[For] those organising placements, [they] should simply ask sensible questions, in proportion to the level of risk, to satisfy themselves that those arrangements are in place. They should not be second-guessing employers' risk assessments or requiring additional paperwork. This means that schools do not need to complete extensive health and safety checks or risk assessments of their own, nor do they need to hire third parties to do so." HSE Guidance on Work Experience.

7. Considerations for the placement provider

Under HSE guidance (the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990), students on work experience are treated as employees for health and safety purposes. The placement provider has the same duty of care to the students as it does to its own employees. The provider must ensure that any young person on placement is protected from any risks which are a consequence of their lack of

experience or an absence of awareness of existing or potential risks or the fact that a young person has not fully matured.

Employers' existing workplace risk assessments may already cover the risks that work experience students may be exposed to. Their existing Employer's Liability Insurance will cover such placements.

8. Assessing the risk

Employers are required to have risk assessments for their employees, although small employers (with fewer than five employees) do not have to have them written down. We will ask placement providers to carry out an appropriate workplace induction, which may include undertaking the risk assessments with students, in accordance with the HSE guidance:

- For placements in low-risk environments, such as offices or shops, with everyday risks that will mostly be familiar to the student, we consider that existing arrangements for other employees should suffice.
- For environments with risks less familiar to the student (e.g. in light assembly or packing facilities), we will ask the placement provider to make arrangements to manage the risks. We consider this should include induction, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment needed.
- For a placement in a higher-risk environment such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing we will ask the provider to consider what work the student will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed and to satisfy themselves that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and that they work in practice.
- In addition to this, we will ask that the risk assessments take into account the student's potential inexperience, lack of awareness of risks and their stage of development. Where it is appropriate to do so, relevant information (such as a care plan) may be sent to the employer to allow them to consider how best to provide safe methods of working. The advice of the SENCO, Head of Year, Medical Welfare Officer and other relevant staff shall be sought in such cases before information is sent from the school.

Briefing our students in school:

- The school will deliver an assembly, prior to the students going out on placement, which reiterates the importance of work experience and its benefits. This assembly will also be used to explain about health and safety in the workplace and confirms the procedure for raising any health and safety, as well as safeguarding, concerns.
- The school will reinforce these messages in the final few days before the students go out on placement, through the pastoral system (tutor time).
- We request that the placement provider brief students on their first day of induction on health and safety; how to identify hazards and control measures that can be put in place to reduce risk of injury or accident.

9. Safeguarding our students

9.1 Guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Department for Education in the document "Keeping Children Safe in Education" indicates:

- Pupils below the age of 16 cannot have a DBS check undertaken.
- It may be appropriate for barred list checks to take place on individuals who supervise such a placement. Consideration should be given to whether the person providing the supervision will be unsupervised and how frequently they are providing the supervision. If it is more than 3 days in a 30-day period then it is likely to require a check. This check can be in the form of a barred list check.
- For students aged 16 or over, where the placement is in a "specified place" (such as a school, children's home, childcare premises), the placement provider "should consider whether a DBS enhanced check should be requested."
- Separate government guidance suggests that students aged 16 and over, who will be undertaking a placement in Health Care or the Early Years sector should have an enhanced DBS check. Time should be allowed for this to be undertaken in advance of the placement commencing. (This refers to "Post-16 work experience as a part of 16 to 19 study programmes and traineeships" published by the DfE in March 2015). It is recognised that the issue of safeguarding refers both to the pupils undertaking the placement as well as service users who attend such specified places. Whichever way it is viewed, the advice of maintaining "reasonable supervision" should be considered central to protecting both parties.

All placement providers will be given guidance prior to the commencement of the placement (see appendix 1) which highlights good practice for safeguarding staff and how to report a safeguarding concern.

9.2 The Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy applies in *all* work experience arrangements which take place during term-time only in line with the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, paragraphs 311-314, September 2021.

Young people must know they will be listened to and believed if they report any concerns. They must know that when on work experience they can report to a DSL in their school or any member of staff by phone, email, text or in person, at any time. The member of staff arranging the work experience must ensure this is understood by the student beforehand. (Pupils will attend a preparation session with the careers advisor)

9.3 Schools must ask employers/providers to provide signed agreement to the following:

If, whilst on work experience, a student discloses anything that gives you reason to suspect that they may be at risk of harm, you should:

- Listen carefully and take what is being said seriously;
- Tell the student you have a duty to report concerns;
- Tell the student you cannot promise confidentiality;

- Write down what the student says in their own words and record the date of the conversation;
- Contact the student's school or college as soon as possible;
- The school will ask you to follow this up with a written report with details of the time, date and what happened.

A template for a signed agreement from employers is available in Appendix 2.

9.4 Online work experience

Most online work experience involves multiple participants organised by companies/organisations such as the NHS, national banks, British Gas, tech companies, the armed services. These provide valuable insights and opportunities for young people to find out more about the workplace and future careers. Risks to personal safety are considered to be low.

On some occasions, a young person may be invited to a 1:1 online meeting with a provider. If this happens within school hours, the school must take all reasonable steps to ensure that, if such a meeting is organised:

1. the school is aware when the meeting is taking place and the length of the meeting;
2. parental consent has been given; if consent is verbal this must be logged so that there is a record;
3. the young person knows who to report to if they have any concerns;
4. the option of having a member of staff present has been discussed.

The school is not responsible for online meetings arranged independently by a young person or their parents/carers without consulting the school, and for those which take place in the evenings, at weekends or in school holidays. Young people must however be reassured that they can report any concern to a member of staff regardless of when it took place, in line with the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

All students who access the work experience programme will be asked to evaluate and reflect on their experiences immediately after they return from their placements. This will take place through, but will not necessarily be limited to, a formal evaluation and other reflective work through the pastoral system.

In addition, the work experience programme is reviewed by the Head of Sixth Form (Careers Lead) and the school Careers Adviser responsible for work experience. This review is based on evidence from students and placement providers and will be presented to the SLT and the Governors as part of the CEIAG reporting procedures.

The review will:

- Consider the extent to which the programme meets the stated aims
- Consider any health and safety issues that have arisen, including from the induction provided
- Calculate the percentage of students arranging their own placement
- Calculate the percentage of students completing a placement
- Consider reasons for failure to complete a placement
- Identify areas for improvement, which will be incorporated into the CEIAG development plan.

Other policies and documents which are relevant to this policy:

1. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
2. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2021-22

Appendix 1

Employer Guidance:

Positive role models: During the work experience, the employer acts in a mentor capacity and therefore needs to act as an appropriate role model with due regard for appropriate conduct with learners. It is therefore important to:

- Act as an appropriate role model
- Value a learner's contributions and opinions
- Encourage them to reach their desired goal and
- Listen to the learner and discuss relevant topics
- Ensure the learner feels supported and safe in the working environment

It is also important that work experience supervisors are not put in a vulnerable position, so it is suggested that where possible liaison with learners should:

- Take place in an open space with other people present where possible
- Be within appropriate working hours
- Consider if questions asked about personal or family life are of an appropriate nature.

Disclosure from a learner:

If you have concerns about the protection of a young person you are working with (for example something the learner has said) then immediately contact the school and speak to either the senior member of staff responsible for child protection or the Head of Sixth Form or the careers adviser responsible for arranging work experience. Further details are provided in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2

Dear *(name of contact at work experience placement)*,

In order to ensure the safeguarding of our students we require written confirmation that you:

- i) have policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm;

ii) understand that it is your duty to respond if one of our students discloses something to you which is a safeguarding concern.

We ask that you:

- Listen carefully and take what is being said seriously;
- Tell the student you have a duty to report concerns;
- Tell the student you cannot promise confidentiality;
- Write down what the student says in their own words and record the date of the conversation;
- Contact the student's school as soon as possible;

The school will ask you to follow this up with a written report with details of the time, date and what happened.

This is in the best interests of both yourself and our students, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021; KCC safeguarding policies; and good safeguarding practice.

Please sign and return this letter to confirm that you agree to this guidance.

Print name of employer: _____

Signed by employer: _____

Date: _____

Print name of designated safeguarding lead (DSL): _____

Signed by DSL: _____

Date: _____