



Work Experience Additional Information Pack
For Students & Supporting Parents/Carers

What is a work experience placement?

You go out to work for an employer, observing and carrying out tasks in much the same way as any employee, with the emphasis on learning from experience. Work experience provides opportunities for learning about the skills, behaviours, careers, roles and structures that exist within a workplace. It is an exciting opportunity for students to spend valuable time with an employer, allowing them to experience the hours, working conditions and regulations they may encounter in the world of work.

Work experience also bridges the gap between education and the world of work. Work experience can open young people's eyes to jobs they may never have thought of and help inform careers decisions, offer a chance to prove themselves to an employer and help instil the attitudes and behaviours expected at work. It shows students that school and work environments differ quite dramatically, which increases their maturity and confidence and develops invaluable skills that will help them in work after education.

Why do we do work experience?

Our careers programme of careers information, education and guidance ensures that students are exposed to the Gatsby Benchmarks (details of which can be found [here](#)), which have been designed to give students the skills needed:

- To manage their careers and to be able to investigate learning and career opportunities
- To make informed judgements about learning and careers options
- To understand how these choices will help them achieve their aspirations
- To enable them to successfully manage the transition to Post 16 further education and, if applicable, into higher education.

Gatsby Benchmark 6 focuses on 'Experience of the workplace' and states the following:

Every pupil should have first-hand experience of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of careers opportunities. By the age of 16, every student should have had at least one experience of the workplace, in addition of any part-time jobs they may have.

How will I benefit from a work experience placement?

Work experience helps you to make career decisions, supporting successful transition into college, university, apprenticeships, and the workplace. Some of the benefits are:

- It gives an insight into the skills required for a particular job.
- It is an opportunity to test out a job to see if a student likes it.
- It broadens the knowledge of available jobs.



- It increases awareness of skills and strengths.
- It helps students understand how the subjects they study at school link to certain jobs.
- It gives insight into what the world of work is really like, and employer expectations.
- It can increase students' confidence and motivation to do well at school.
- It puts students in contact with potential future employers.
- It gives students useful experience for their CV, and a good placement can provide referees for future jobs.
- It helps students appreciate the skills needed to succeed in a job.
- It can enhance employability skills, such as
 - Confidence
 - Self esteem
 - Communication
 - Time management and organisation
 - Team building
 - Problem solving
 - Initiative
 - Responsibility
 - Readiness
 - Respectfulness
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Finally, it offers valuable experience for those who want to go on to vocational courses or take up apprenticeships after Year 11 such as healthcare, childcare, mechanics and hairdressing as it shows that you have spent time in those environments and understand what they are about.

What is the process for Work Experience?

1. Read the work experience packs (parents, carers and students)
2. Spend time thinking about what sort of job you may like to consider, and what sort of environment you would like to work in, i.e. outside, retail, office etc.
3. Research availability in the local area (or further afield if you can travel).
4. Contact employers, either in person, by email or a phone call.
5. Be proactive and contact employers as soon as possible. Remember that we have a large year 10 student population also looking for places, as well as several other local schools also undertaking work experience in the same week so you will have competition!
6. Once a placement has been sourced, ask the employer to complete their section of the form.
7. Parents or carers, and the student, needs to then complete the back of the form, and return to Mrs Richings at the academy.
8. Remember you need to meet the deadline for placements, of 29th February 2024. But remember not to wait until last minute to find your placement or you may not get the placement you would like.
9. The form will then be processed, health and safety checks carried out, and confirmation sent to the employer.
10. You will need to re-contact the employer closer to work experience, to ensure that you are fully prepared for your placement. Some placements will require students to wear certain uniform or personal protective equipment, and students will be responsible for obtaining these (if an employer does not provide it).
11. A few weeks before students go on placement, they will have further information provided in PSHE lessons, such as health and safety, behaviour and conduct, safeguarding and expectations
12. Students will also receive a work experience logbook that they will begin to complete before work experience and keep with them for completion whilst on the placement.
13. Students go on placement, completing their logbook during the week. This is an important part of the process as it allows students to reflect on their experience and the role they have taken on.
14. Students to ask employers to complete the reference pages of their logbooks before the final leave the placement. This will also ask the employer to comment on attendance and punctuality, key skills and how the student has presented themselves.

15. School staff will contact placements during the work experience week to ensure students have settled in well, are meeting expectations and to inform the employer about the work experience booklet that students should complete.
16. Students return to school after placement and will discuss their work experience booklet, complete an evaluation, as well as having the opportunity to write a thank you letter to the employer.

Parental Support for Work Experience.

Parents play an important part in Work Experience. The areas you may be able to help in are:

- Read all the documentation that has been sent home with students.
- Talk to your child about subjects they like and dislike and why they prefer certain subjects over others.
- Talk about the skills they are good at and skills they would like to improve – how can these skills be used in the workplace?
- Talk to them about the benefits of work experience and the opportunities it could lead to.
- Encourage students to speak to their form tutor, year team or careers team (Mrs Richings, Mr Cooper and Mrs Gibbons) regarding work experience.
- Pass on any contacts you feel may help your child.
- Encourage them to start their research early to consider where they may go, supporting them as needed. Get them to compile a list of possibilities.
- Support them in preparing a letter, email or what they might need to say in a phone call (they would also have had help in school for this).
- Remind them to set deadlines, the earlier they can get a placement the better it will be for them. If they leave things until last minute, other students may have already secured the placements they want.
- Support them to arrange their own work experience (instead of parents and carers making the contacts to employers) as this will help develop independence.
- Rehearse any phone calls they might like to make (see hints and tip sheet)
- If they choose to contact by letter or email, proofread them before sending out (see hint and tips sheet).
- Before the placement starts make sure that they:
 - Know how they are going to get there.
 - Know how long it will take to get there.
 - Have contacted the employer for the final details.
 - Make sure they have any required clothing, uniform or personal protective equipment.

As a parent or carer, you will want to make sure that your son or daughter gets the most out of their work experience placement. The following tips will help you support them;

- Make sure they are up and left home to arrive at placement on time.
- Workdays are often longer and harder than school days, recommend a good night's sleep.
- Talk daily about their experiences, and how they are doing. Reassure as needed.
- Remind them to complete their logbook daily.
- Contact the school immediately if your child is having any problems during the placement.
- Contact the school and the employer immediately if your child is unwell and unable to attend the placement.

- Although the majority of placements are successful, if your child isn't enjoying their placement, help them to stay positive by focussing on the new skills they are developing, the reference they will get from the end of it, and of course a reminder that most people don't enjoy their work 100% of the time.
- After the placement discuss what they have learned from the experience.
- Discuss if the choice of career chosen from work experience has had an impact on career aspirations – is it something they would still like to do or have they changed their mind?
- Discuss what skills they used in the workplace.

How do I find a work experience placement?

So you can get the most from your experience we want you to find your placement. This will usually be with help and support from your family and friends. See the 'student' guide to get started. The assembly and workshops will have also given guidance.

What will happen if I don't find a placement?

We want to encourage all of you to be out in the community taking part. If you are not at an approved placement during that week, you will be expected to come to school where you will follow a bespoke timetable of lessons and work related activities.

What should I do when an employer has agreed to offer me a place?

1. The employer will need to complete the front of the Self Placement Form in full
2. Parents complete the reverse of the Self Placement Form.
3. The fully completed Self Placement Form should be returned to school before 28th February 2025.
4. Checks on the placement will take place and you will be informed if there are any problems

What should I do before my work placement?

It is recommended that you arrange a pre-placement meeting before the placement starts. This will allow you to have a 'practice run' for the travel element, to see the business premises and meet with your contact so it is not so daunting on the first day. You can telephone the company before the placement, but failure to call or visit may lead to the placement not going ahead. It will also provide a valuable opportunity to ask questions such as;

- What time should I arrive and what time will I finish?
- Where to report to on the first day and to whom?
- What are break/lunch arrangements – is there somewhere to buy lunch or should I bring a packed lunch?
- What is the dress code, and do I need to provide any PPE (Personal protective equipment e.g. protective footwear)?
- Do I need to bring anything with me?
- It is a good idea to keep your log book of your experiences while on placement and any feedback from your employer as you may be able to use this at college or job interviews. The employer may also be willing to provide you with a reference when you are applying for jobs, so make sure you give a good impression! You will be given your log book prior to the placement starting.

What about travel?

It is your responsibility to get to and from the placement. You should;

- Be aware of how you are getting to your placement
- Ensure you know and understand any timetables for public transport and the costs
- Consider any potential problems with travel i.e. roadworks, public transport strikes
- Have a back-up plan to your method of travel in case of an unexpected scenario i.e. bicycle has a flat tyre

What about Health and Safety?

In order to ensure students are safe on placement, we work alongside an external provider who carry out any necessary Health and Safety check prior to placements being approved and confirmed.

However students also need to take responsibility for their own Health and Safety and those around them. At the start of the work experience placement, they should receive an induction which as a minimum should include:

- Tour of the working area/premises
- Fire procedures
- First aid arrangements
- Overview of expected tasks during the week
- Prohibited tasks and/or areas
- Requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Introduction to colleagues
- Confirmation of working hours and breaks
- Shown welfare facilities

What will my employer expect of me?

Prior to the placement, it is a good idea for you to research your employer to gain a basic knowledge of the company to understand the possible expectations that the employer will have. Employer expectations will also be discussed at the pre-placement meeting. However, you should be aware of the expectations that all employers will have, including;

- Have a positive attitude
- Show interest in the work
- Be polite and friendly
- Listen well and follow instructions
- Be hard working
- Be punctual and reliable
- Have good appearance and hygiene – Be appropriately dressed

What should I expect?

You may have a different expectation of what a placement will be like compared to reality. Therefore, you should have realistic expectations. Be aware that...

- Age, lack of experience, lack of training, knowledge, skills and safety restrictions may limit some tasks that you can do.
- Time may be spent observing others especially in environments that are high risk, such as building/construction, garages, and engineering. This is not a waste of time. Every observation is useful.
- You may need to carry out routine tasks such as cleaning, tidying, filing, making drinks etc
- A full working day will be undertaken in most placements and not 'school hours'

How can I make the most of my experience?

You may find that once your placement gets underway that it was not what you expected it to be. Or maybe you are on a placement which was not your first choice. There are 2 ways to deal with this.

The wrong way - You can lose interest and give the impression that you don't want to be there. This will mean that both you and your employer have negative outcomes from the experience.

The right way - You can lean into the work and prove to them, and to you, that you are able to adapt and learn from any situation. Think about...

- Asking questions & showing interest

- Volunteering to carry out tasks
- Showing enthusiasm & commitment

This strategy will ensure that the time is beneficial. You will find that you learn stuff that you had not even intended to.

How can I present myself well?

You should ask questions to show interest and be aware of negative and positive body language. Examples of positive body language are:

- Making eye contact
- Sitting up straight
- Paying attention
- Relaxed posture
- Keeping hands out of pockets

Examples of negative body language are:

- Staring
- Slouching
- Yawning
- Crossed arms and legs
- Looking at your watch

What about my smartphone?

Use of mobile phones will not be allowed during the placement 'working hours. You may be asked to place phones in bags or lockers or as a minimum, phones should be turned off or placed on 'silent'. Mobile phones are not permitted in childcare/school placements due to safeguarding procedures. Inappropriate content and use of social media whilst on placements may result in placements being terminated.

Will I get paid?

You will not be paid whilst on work experience, as it is a learning experience not employment.

What will my working hours be?

This will vary and will be agreed before your placement starts. You should not work for more than 5 days in any consecutive seven-day period, and it is a requirement that students should not work more than a standard eight-hour day or forty hours in a week. You will get appropriate breaks. You will be informed of the exact times of the placement by your employer.

What do I do if I can't go in?

If you are going to be late for your placement, then you should:

- Contact the employer
- Apologise to say that you will be late and explain the reason
- Provide an expected arrival time

If you are unable to attend the placement

- Contact the employer
- Explain the reason for absence
- Provide an expected return date
- You should also contact the academy attendance department to let them know

How can I reflect on my placement afterwards?

Work experience should be treated as a 'learning experience' and not just a week out of school. Therefore, you need to reflect upon your placement to consolidate what you learnt and apply it to your future career planning and goal setting. You should ask yourself;

- Did you enjoy the placement and was it beneficial?
- What new skills did you learn and develop? What did you learn about how a workplace operates?
- Do you now have an idea of what employers require from their employees and how staff interact?
- Has it given you a better idea of what career path you want to take?

If you didn't enjoy the experience this is also a positive thing! Now you can investigate other career paths which may be of interest. We will help with this process during careers-related activities and meetings in school.

Above all, use the experience to learn about yourself and help you make informed choices about your future.

If you have any other questions, please email Mrs Richings on jrichings@ormistonden.es.co.uk or by telephoning 01502 574474.