

Getting ready for work experience

A guide for parents/carers

Helping your son or daughter prepare for work experience should be an exciting activity. It doesn't need to be hard work but it is worth spending time preparing together so the experience is easy and valuable for everyone. All the information for work experience can be found at:

<http://www.backwellschool.net/Year-10-Work-Experience>

Work experience works

Your son/daughter will have learnt many valuable skills at school, helping them understand and enjoy life. However, the world of work is starting to get closer and initially whilst this may be a paper-round or a weekend job we need to ensure that they are equipped with the skills required for today's workplace. Work experience will provide an opportunity for them to spend time with an employer where they will carry out a range of tasks in the same way as an employee with the emphasis on learning. Work experience will help them put classroom skills into practice so they can develop the 'Employability Skills' that employers look for. This is a big step towards a successful career that can be rewarding and fulfilling.

What are 'Employability Skills'?

These are the skills that employers seek in any member of staff whether they are new to the working environment or have years of experience and include skills such as being polite; helpful; customer focussed; responsible; good communication and team working skills etc.

Students have been told through assemblies, the Y10 breakout days and other activities that there are 3 key areas where they can show they are strong candidates within the world of work:

- they need to demonstrate key employability **skills**
- good **knowledge**, i.e. their qualifications such as GCSEs, A levels, vocational courses or apprenticeships help to demonstrate this
- that they have tried to get as much **experience** as possible, i.e. through work experience; trips; visits; voluntary work or through meeting with employers

Other reasons for doing work experience

Backwell School believes very strongly in the benefits of work experience and besides developing valuable employability skills other reasons for getting fully involved in work experience include:

- It helps with the inevitable job hunt. Well over half of the recruitment agencies that took part in a recent research study said that, "applicants who have had no previous work experience at all are less likely to be successful during the selection process"
- If young people haven't got an idea what career they want to do, work experience is a perfect way to sample a career option. They might find something they are passionate about or identify something they really don't like.
- Work experience shows the employer that young people are motivated to get into a chosen career
- It will help young people identify their own skills and perhaps even highlight the areas that they might want to work on, giving them a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses
- Young people might impress employers so much that they'll manage to get an offer of part time work or even an apprenticeship
- It can help young people build up vital contacts and will look good on their CV

How do we choose what to do?

For many, choosing what to do on work experience is the hardest part. Remember, work experience is not always about choosing a career for the rest of your life, it is about gaining experience in the world of work.

The decision of where to apply should be led by your son/daughter not you. Your role is to encourage, support and also to help when they get rejections from applications. Like any job application, rejection is not personal; the employer may just not be in a position to help at that time. The school has access to a database of employers who have previously taken work experience students. These are not guaranteed placements but it is worth contacting them for a potential placement in your area. Encourage/help your son or daughter log on to the database to search for placements (please see the green sheet for instructions on how to do this).

The placement does not have to be local (Bristol, BANES, Gloucester, Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon), you may go further afield but you must check the 'out of area' deadlines to ensure we have enough time to carry out the Duty of Care check. There is a charge for Out of Area placements of £40. Please note that International placements cannot be approved.

All placements have to have Public Liability Insurance (PLI) and Employer Liability Insurance (ELI). This will be checked by the school but it is worth noting that some small employers may not have ELI so will be unable to take students. If you can, please make sure that the placement has **both** PLI and ELI before proceeding.

Work Experience Preparation Tips

- Does your son/daughter already have a plan? Listen to their ideas. Remember, this is their work experience. Help them, but don't be tempted to complete the tasks for them
- Encourage them to consider their interests, favourite subjects in school and after-school clubs. Is there a local employer you know linked to these interests that could be approached?
- Think about accessibility of the placement. How are they going to get there and what is the cost?
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- Help them prepare a letter/email to send to employers to request a placement
- Practice a phone call with them so they are comfortable and confident when they call an employer
- Some employers may require a pre-placement meeting. It would be useful to practice interview skills to help with their confidence
- Encourage them to complete all paperwork required by the school promptly
- Inform the employer of any medical/health conditions that they should be aware of prior to the placement

They've secured a placement, now what?

Once they have secured a placement, they must get the yellow Work Experience Agreement form completed and returned to the student services office. This is THE essential form. It lets the school know where they are intending to go in order that they can carry out the necessary 'Duty of Care' checks. It represents your permission for them to be out of school for the week just as you would give permission for a school trip. It is confirmation that the employer has agreed to take them for work experience.

Vital check list before they start

Now that your son/daughter has secured a placement it is essential that some preparation is done prior to the start of the placement - if you think about these key things before the day, first day worries can be minimised. Observe the current legislations relating to health and safety, equality and safeguarding. Other things to consider are:

- Communication – Encourage your son/daughter to phone the employer at least a week prior to the placement to get any last minute requirements. It also acts as a gentle reminder that they are coming.
- Transport – Ensure transport arrangements have been confirmed and bus times known if necessary.
- What to wear – Ensure your son/daughter has checked with the employer what they should wear.
- Lunch – Do they need to take a packed lunch or is there somewhere they can buy lunch? Remember lunch breaks can be taken off-site at some places of work.
- Contact – Do they have a contact number for the school and for you? Remind them that mobile phones are to be used outside of work only.
- Hours of Work – the Young Workers Directive limits time to 8 hours a day and max 40 per week, normally these can be between 6am–10pm. CSW advises that specific arrangements between the school, parents and employer should be in place for placements that occur outside of 8am-8pm. A young worker is entitled to a 30 minute rest break if they are expected to work for more than four and a half hours at a stretch.

Safeguarding

The safety of your son/daughter is very important whilst on work experience. It is a legal requirement that all placements undergo a 'Duty of Care' check. This is organised by the school and is carried out by Careers South West (CSW).

CSW provides advice and guidance to the employer so they can deliver a quality experience. Your son/daughter will be classed as an employee for the period of their work experience and covered by the employer's policies and procedures, including having up-to-date Employers Liability Insurance, at the time of the placement. The employer is required to provide an induction to include health and safety and risk assessments.

Employment law restricts certain types of activity depending on age and this will be discussed with the employer during the Duty of Care check.

If an Employer does not fulfil the requirements of a Duty of Care check, the school will not approve the placement and the student will need to secure a different placement.

What to do during the placement

- Be supportive, your son/daughter may have some tough days; work is very different to school so they might need some encouragement from you.
- If you have any concerns about their placement, contact the school.
- If they are ill during their placement ensure both the school and employer are informed that they will not be attending.

Important Deadlines

London placements – 13 February 2020

Out of Area placements – 13 March 2020

Local placements – 20 April 2020

Late fees

You should make every effort to submit your request before the deadline but if the deadline is missed, a late fee of £20 is charged by CSW which is passed on to parents. There is no guarantee that a late placement can be checked and approved in time. If this is the case a refund will be organised and the student will need to find an alternative placement.

The placement is over, is that it?

No! It's really worth spending time with your son/ daughter at the end of their placement reflecting on their experience.

- Ask about the best bits, the tough bits and if they have any career ideas after their work experience
- Encourage them to send an email/letter to the employer thanking them for the opportunity
- Make sure they complete their work experience work book that their school will give them

The process a quick recap

You've read all the above. What do you need to do – a simple process looks like this:

