

Work Experience Policy

Rationale

Work Experience gives pupils the opportunity to explore and taste the World of Work whilst they are still at school, through participating in and/or observing work-related activities in the work place.

Purposes

Pupils to:

- gain an insight into industry, commerce and business.
- understand the importance of health & safety regulations.
- meet with and talk to people who are working for a living.
- to be given the opportunity to develop some of the key skills that employers are looking for in their future employees - communication, the application of number, information technology, problem solving and working with others.
- be helped in making decisions about their future career.

Guidelines

From January in Year 10 until the end of October Year 11, pupils are offered the opportunity of participating in up to ten days' Work Experience. (Most pupils take 5 days, but if they request a further 5 days, we ask that this is taken during a holiday period, in order to reduce the amount of time missed from school examination lessons.) Pupils gain from participating in the work environment with its different demands and expectations.

Work Experience is not blocked, but is spread to allow for greater flexibility of placements and to avoid clashes with other schools and Training organisations. Many local employers prefer this spread of time. Pupils are told to avoid arranging Work Experience during the following dates for administrative reasons:

1. The first week of a new term.
2. School holidays.
3. Year 10/11 examinations.

Requests for placements after the October deadline are considered on an individual basis.

Work Experience is introduced to pupils through an assembly by the Careers Co-ordinator (presently the deputy Head of the Vocational Faculty) & the Work Experience Administrator in the Autumn of Year 10 to coincide with tutorial work, the aim of which is to stimulate ideas of work areas for pupils to try out. During this assembly its benefits are pointed out, together with the procedures regarding rules, punctuality, discipline etc. Pupils are expected to copy up missed work and are informed that Work Experience is tied in with GCSE English oral coursework and, optionally, written coursework.

Following the assembly, pupils take home a letter and consent form to parents informing them of the scheme. Included in the letter is a sample list of organisations that have taken our pupils for placements in the past. Parents are also informed of the scheme at the GCSE Information Evening in September. Initially pupils, with parental guidance, are encouraged to contact organisations by telephone/letter in order to make preliminary arrangements, such as dates and contacts. All placements have to be checked for Health & Safety clearance: approved placements are registered on the Trident database. If firms are not registered, parents/pupils are to allow at least eight weeks for Trident to inspect/register the establishment and for the necessary administrative formalities to be completed. This should be borne in mind when fixing dates. A database of approved placements is kept by the Work Experience Administrator and the Careers Co-ordinator; it is updated by Trident three times annually. (These databases can be accessed by pupils and their parents by logging onto the following website:- www.experiencesofwork.co.uk . Parents may also access the school website to view all of the procedures and forms regarding the Work Experience scheme.)

As a continuation, in tutorial lessons, pupils will be shown how to make contact with an employer by letter and telephone; a health and safety worksheets will highlight dangers they may need to watch for in the work place. A video about the benefits of Work Experience is also available to tutors.

The Work Experience Administrator follows-up tutor groups on a rota basis, throughout the Autumn and Spring terms, conducting interviews with pupils who are unable to find a placement or have no ideas, in order to assist in them in making suitable contacts. Pupils may approach the Work Experience Administrator or the Careers Co-ordinator to refer to the Trident database, or the list of previous placements used by the school in order to generate ideas. Work experience is not, however, a compulsory activity.

After pupils return the consent form to the Work Experience Administrator, a letter and Wex Form are sent to employers, providing them with information and aims regarding Work Experience. A similar form is sent to employers who are not on the Health & Safety database in order that they may become registered. If any pupil has a particular health issue, this must, with parental approval, be advised to the employer, to ensure the safety of the student. (This information will be provided by the parent on the back of the consent form. The Work Experience Administrator will also check the school's medical/disability list.)

Information is uploaded onto WEX Manager online, a system which logs and stores full details of all arranged placements and monitors these. Wex Manager provides a good source of reporting statistics regarding placements and also enables reminders and follow ups for any delayed approval forms/ H&S checks etc. It is a valuable communication source between schools, Connexions and indeed Trident.

When the school has received confirmation from the return of the Wex Form, the parents are notified, clarifying arrangements. A tear-off reply slip should then be returned to the Work Experience Administrator. The Work Experience Administrator then informs staff in advance, via email and the staffroom noticeboard, of pupils on Work Experience for a given week.

The week prior to the placement, the Careers Co-ordinator will meet each pupil for briefing in order to clarify details, aims and objectives for the week, to explain the school's Logbook and to ask about the pupil's career plans which will be discussed on return. The aim of the Logbook is for pupils to evaluate the value of their placement, reflecting on the Key Skills they have developed over the week. The booklet includes a Health & Safety section, to be completed by the employer on the first day, and a reference section to be completed by the employer at the end of the week. Activities will vary according to the placement and can involve a combination of participation and observation.

Pupils are told to telephone the workplace and school if they are going to be absent for any day and are told to contact school if any problems arise. The Careers Coordinator monitors placements by phoning each employer on the Thursday/Friday of each placement and passes on the verbal comments supplied by the employers to the relevant tutors by email.

Following the placement, pupils are each debriefed in a timetabled session of 15 minutes by the Careers Co-ordinator in the Careers Library. In addition to reviewing their Logbooks, explaining their tasks, reflecting on the working environment, discussing any problems which arose and evaluating the week, the Careers Co-ordinator will briefly discuss career plans and provide starting points for pupil research into desired career areas - especially by referring to on line careers programs such as PlanIT, JED and Higher Ideas; the Connexions material; local information sheets; the Ridings Sixth Form and FE prospectuses. Any pupils who require specific help can be identified and referred on to the Connexions Adviser.

During the debriefing, the pupils are assessed by the Careers Co-ordinator for their communication skills and are awarded a grade for their English GCSE oral coursework. Work Experience talks by pupils provide interesting and useful information as well as contributing to GCSE English oral requirements. Written English coursework (optional) is to be handed in within three weeks of return from placement.

The Logbooks are signed by the Careers Co-ordinator and kept along with a Work Experience Certificate for the pupils' Record of Achievement Presentation Evening. A copy of the Work Experience reference is then forwarded to tutors, via the Head of Year to be kept in the tutor files. Pupils may have a photocopy of the employer reference on request.

Work Shadowing for Years 12/13 Pupils

Work Experience opportunities are also available to students in Years 12/13 although they need to beware of examination/coursework pressures. However, shorter, Work Shadowing placements tend to be more appropriate for pupils at this age because they are hoping to gain insights into higher levels of responsibility. Again, students are encouraged to make their own contacts, referring to the Work Experience Administrator and

Careers Co-ordinator. The Trident database, the Careers Library and the Yellow Pages are key sources of information.

Conclusion

Work Experience is often very successful in providing a positive sense of direction for pupils with regard to their future plans. Year 10 tutors are involved in encouraging pupil participation and all pupils have the opportunity for an individual interview to discuss their ideas with the Work Experience Co-ordinator.

M Fossett/K Hosegood revised May 07