

Guide to Work Experience

Why do students do work experience?

Work experience has been an important part of the Curriculum here at the Ellesmere Port Catholic High School for a number of years. It is one of the Personal Development opportunities given to students. Year 10 will spend a week learning in a work environment. Depending on the availability of placements, they may be able to spend time finding out about specific careers. This time also offers a chance to gain transferable skills valued by employers for example, meeting new people, timekeeping and punctuality, working as a team, following instructions. The government also recognise the importance of this and include experience of work in 'Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff '(Jan2018 revised July 2021) The process of applying for Work Experience allows students to practice the skills they will need to prepare for other opportunities, including sixth form, college, apprenticeships, e.g. Completing an application form, going for an interview. At the placement they will have a chance to demonstrate their skills and abilities. Employers provide students with feedback which can be used when applying for jobs or education opportunities after school. Employers may also be prepared to provide a reference to support applications. Details of the work they have done and skills learnt can be useful evidence in an interview for a post school opportunity.

How is work experience organised?

Introduction

School work with Mploy Solutions to organise work experience. Students are responsible for looking for and applying for their own work placement. This is to ensure the student is interested in the placement and has considered practical issues such as travel to the workplace. As part of the preparation the students will register on Mploy's platform called MAPs. Information about the student, the placement etc. is stored on this platform. This is to help students as they make later applications and it is important they update their section before and during the placement and ensure the employer completes their section which includes a report about the student. Students are responsible for choosing and remembering their own password to allow access to MAPs. Once a placement has been agreed students, Parents/carers and employers need to sign a Self-Placement Form to show that they are all willing for the placement to go ahead. Forms are sent to Mploy who will run Health and Safety and Insurance checks on the employers so we are as sure as we can be that our students' are kept safe. After the checks have been done Mploy produce a Placement Agreement Form. This gives all the details of the placement. It shows the student and their parents / carers what is expected of them at the placement. Student, Parent/Carers will sign this and ask the employers to do the same so that everyone is clear what is being offered and agreed to. Details of the employer and any named contact person, hours of work arrangements for lunch etc. are included on this.

What if we can't find a placement?

School expect a majority of Students will find their own placement. It is their responsibility to do this and they have been asked to begin this process in plenty of time. Staff can help with suggestions about local employers, preparation for making contact with the employer etc. For the limited number of, students who are not able to find their own placement school will work with the student and Mploy to look at what may be available. Mploy have contact with local employers and may be able to suggest possible options. These placements tend to be more general and with employers who have not yet agreed to take a student on work experience. They will aim for these to be local but they may not be as accessible as a placement found by the student themselves. Students without a placement will be in school, in uniform and take part in work related learning.

Preparation for Work Experience.

As well as the 'paperwork' and online registration students need to, for example, check if they need personal protective equipment. We have some safety boots and overalls in school for students to use if needed. It is their responsibility to check if they need these and ask for them in plenty of time. If school do not have what they need it can be ordered but this takes time. Any Personal Protective Equipment borrowed remains the property of the school and is signed for. Students are expected to look after items and return them to school after the placement. Students will need to make their own way to the placement and so need to consider this when planning where to go. Some employers may expect them to work different hours to school e.g. starting earlier / finishing later.

What is expected of students during the work experience?

General

While on placement the students are expected to behave appropriately. They should aim to leave behind a positive impression with the employer. They need to remember they are ambassadors for their families and the school. Any inappropriate behaviour may result in the student being asked to leave the placement in which case they will return to school. Some placements will ask students to follow a dress code or have other rules which the students will be expected to follow. These will be on the placement agreement or may be in a letter from the individual employer.

What happens if a student is unwell?

If the student is not able to attend the placement for any reason they need to let the employer and school know. Individual employers will have their own arrangements students need to be clear about the 'rules' with the employer they are working with.

An opportunity to prepare for the future.

These placements are a chance to learn new skills, some of these may be specific to the job and will help students to gain a better understanding of the role and the type of organisation they are working in – a chance to check out job ideas for the future. It is also an opportunity to learn more general work related skills such as meeting new people, different hours, team working, following instructions and problem solving.

Recording to prepare for the future.

Students will be given a booklet to complete a log of their work experience placement. Students will also have the option to use the MAPs platform to complete an online log. This is a kind of diary to help them build a picture of everything they have learnt and experienced. This information will remain available to the student, online, so can be used to help complete applications later on. Students are advised to complete this each day to avoid having to remember everything they have done at the end of the placement. A couple of sentences, such as any staff they have worked with, will help them later if they need to ask for references or give examples of experience at interviews. e.g. "Today I worked with George Smith from the Delivery and Assembly Team. We visited a house and fitted the wardrobes I helped to make earlier. I understand the importance of respecting the customer and their property."

After the placement.

From their MAPs profile students will be able to print off details of their placement, copies of their diary and their work experience certificate, this is helpful if they are asked for references or to include the address of past employment on applications. It is important that they enter information accurately e.g. correct spelling of the employer and any staff who have supported them in the placement and contact information including telephone numbers, postcodes etc.

Other points to consider.

Popular choices will fill more quickly as will opportunities with employers who there are fewer of. Some organisations will not take part in work experience for example if they want to protect client confidentiality or for safety reasons. Some employers will limit how many students a year they will take. Students from other schools will be looking for placements too. Other employers may ask students to complete a company application form as well as the Work Experience form. In some cases, they may ask to meet or interview the student. These processes are also an opportunity for students to practice the skills they will need in the future. Approaching employers, explaining the reasons for their application and being able to show what skills they have as well as the skills and experience they hope to get from the placement. Employers understand this is new to the students but want to see that they are willing to learn. Another reason for looking now is to try to maximise the chances of our students' getting placements in the areas they are interested in.

Work Experience and Volunteering Opportunities

[Cheshire East Volunteering Hub](#) Information on volunteering opportunities in the local area

[Cheshire West Volunteering Action](#) Information on volunteering opportunities in the local area

[Warrington Voluntary Action](#) Information on volunteering opportunities in the local area

[Springpod](#) Free virtual online work experience

[Speakers for Schools](#) Free virtual online work experience