Self-Placing Work Experience
Parent Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive

DfE guidance states that students on work experience are classed as employees for health and safety purposes. This means employers owe a duty of care to the student, just as they do to any employee. Employers' existing workplace risk assessments and safeguarding policies should cover the risks that work experience students are exposed to and their existing Employer's Liability Insurance will cover young people provided the insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers or Lloyds. However, as the organiser of the placement, you need to take reasonable steps to satisfy yourself that the placement is safe.

What you should check:

-Ask the employer for a copy of their Employer's Liability Insurance Certificate, ensure it's in date and covers the period your child is on placement.

-Ask the employer if they have had work experience students before, or employ young people currently. If the employer has never employed a young person under 18 before (including on work experience), seek further advise from school.

-Ask the employer what the work placement will involve. Use your own judgement on what seems safe or not, but check what precautions are in place if the placement involves:

- Using chemicals including cleaning products;
- Using any kind of cutting equipment or hand tools;
- Requirement to wear protective clothing such as hard hat, steel toe capped boots, ear protection, eye protection etc;
- Travelling during working hours;
- Regular working alone with one person over long periods;
- Working in a remote area;
- Working with animals.

-Ask the employer about induction, training and supervision your child can expect. This will help to assure you that health and safety guidance will be provided.

-**Ask** the employer if they have safeguarding policies in place.

-Ask the employer about the support they will provide for your child's medical conditions or disabilities. It's important that the employer is aware of this in advance of the placement.

For further guidance speak to school and you can also visit http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/organiser.htm.

How to find work experience

It's tough finding that very first work experience placement.

Many employers are reluctant to offer work experience to under 16s because of their limited work ready skills. Most young people lack the confidence to answer a telephone, talk professionally to customers, or even give their opinion so it's a very big ask of employers.

For this first placement, use your network of family and friends to help vouch for your child with an employer, or consider employers that really value young people such as primary schools, community centres/projects, retail and hospitality. Although these might not be careers your child is interested in, they are great for developing work ready skills such as confidence, communication and team work. Once your child has completed this first work experience placement, they will find it much easier to find further placements in careers that do interest them.

If you can't find a placement with family, friends or supportive employers, here is another suggested approach:

– Find employers in your local area by doing a simple google search.

– Look at local job adverts online or in the local newspaper to find employers in your area.

– Look at the businesses you pass everyday. Also look out for signs to local business parks and explore the businesses there.

Contacting employers

Creating a CV to give to an employer is the best way to make contact with employers. Make sure it's your child that makes the initial contact! Employers are far more likely to say yes when the child does the asking!

- If the company is small and in the local area your child should call in with their CV and explain they are looking for a work experience placement and ask if they could leave their CV. This gives the employer chance to talk to your child without having to say yes there and then.
- If your child is really nervous, encourage them to send an e-mail with their CV and follow up with a phone call (see 'sample e-mail to employer' at the end of this guide).
- Larger companies often require you to send a CV. Larger companies tend to put this information on their websites (see 'sample CV' at the end of this guide).

Lots of young people find it a bit scary to call an employer. Even adults get nervous phoning people they don't know. The more your child does it, the easier it will be – they'll soon wonder what they were worried about, so encourage them as much as you can. Here are some tips that might help:

- Get your child to plan out what they want to say before they call, maybe role play a typical phone conversation in advance.
- Make sure your child has the dates and other important information they might need, along with pen and paper ready to take down any names or make notes.
- Make sure they are in a quiet environment.
- Encourage them to be polite regardless of the outcome, and to speak clearly.
- Your child should start by introducing themselves, the school they attend and that they are looking for a work experience placement.

- You child should be prepared to explain why they are interested in a placement with that employer.
- Explain that it's nothing personal if the employer says no and they should always thank the employer for their time.
- Encourage them to keep contacting different employers until someone says yes, don't let them wait for an employer to get back to them.

Interviews

Your child might be asked to attend an interview. Here are some tips for you to pass onto your child:

First Impressions last

Greet your interviewer with a smile, a firm handshake and eye contact. Your interviewer should guide you from there in terms of where to sit and what to do.

Be prepared

Take a folder to your interview with your certificates and evidence of all your achievements. Use this evidence in your interview to back up what you are saying about yourself and to help remind you of the things you can talk about when asked questions about your skills and qualities.

Research the establishment so you are as informed as possible.

Think about why you are interested in this opportunity and what skills and qualities you might be asked about in the interview. For example, if you are being interviewed for a placement in a hospital or nursery or primary school the interviewer may want you to discuss and evidence your caring skills and qualities and why you are interested in working with and helping people/children.

Be confident

Listen carefully to the questions and answer as fully as you can. Don't waffle – take your time to gather your thoughts. It is better to say you need a minute to think about your answer, rather than speak instantly and regret it afterwards.

Why should you be offered the placement over other students?

All interviewers look for the right person for the opportunity on offer. Be ready to talk about your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills. Use your prepared folder to help remind you of what you can talk about.

Be positive

Your interviewer will be thinking about what it would be like to have you work for them for a full week, so they won't want to hear negative comments or lack of enthusiasm. Interviewers like to see someone who enjoys a challenge and is enthusiastic.

Body Language

During the interview don't slouch or lean back or fold your arms or look down. Sit upright and make eye contact. Show energy, a sense of humour and **smile** ☺

Clarify anything you are unsure of

If you are not certain what is meant by a particular question, say so. This shows confidence.

Remember your manners

Be polite to everyone you meet at the interview, from the parking attendant to the boss. Very often the boss will ask the people you meet when arriving what they thought of you. This will be noted and remembered. Remember to say "Please" and "Thank you!"

Questions your child may be asked at interview

Why do you want to do this placement?

Interviewers use this question to see how keen you really are to take up a placement so make sure you show energy and interest when you answer.

What are your strengths?

This is your chance to talk about your achievements. Use your folder and explain the strengths you demonstrated while doing your achievements.

What work experience do you have?
You may have a part-time job, taken part in other work experience opportunities, helped friends and family, volunteered in or out of school etc. Discuss these experiences in detail, what did you enjoy, what did you learn. This will demonstrate to the interviewer that you have a good work ethic.
Tell me about yourself
The interviewer is trying to find out if you will get along with the people in their office for a week. Discuss your ambitions in relation to what career or job you want to do in the future and why you are interested in this line of work.

Questions your child should ask at interview

"I have some paperwork that you need to complete and which I then need to return to school. Can I go through it with you?"
Getting your Self-Placement Form completed is essential and will help to raise key health and safety issues with your employer. If your employer has any questions you can't answer please get their details and school can contact them to get any issue resolved.
"Will I be taking part in any high risk activities and if so what will they be?"
It is good to know what activities you'll be doing that the employer considers 'high risk' in terms of safety and you need to make sure you're comfortable with what you will be required to do.
"Is there anything I can read or take way with me that would give me a head start?"
This is a good question to ask as it shows you're keen to help and be useful when you start.
"Who will be the best person to contact if I have further questions?"
This will be the person you as a parent will want to contact to get more questions answered so that you feel assured the placement is safe. Your child will also need to contact this person nearer the time to check details such as what to wear, what to do about lunch, where to go and who to ask for on their first day.

Suggested Sample CV for School Leavers

See overleaf a suggested CV layout. The black type are headings, the writing in grey is guidance on how to fill out that section. There is no right or wrong when it comes to design, however, you should choose a design that helps the reader to easily pick out key information at a glance.

Hints

Employers are looking for someone who:

- Has a proven interest in pursuing a career in their area (eg. Business Admin, Engineering)
- Has a keen eye for detail
- Has a good work ethic (hard workers)
- Is efficient and productive
- Is a good team worker

This sort of information should run through your *personal profile*, your *key skills*, your *employment history* and your *hobbies and interests* sections. Also, It is not enough to say you have these skills, you need to be able to explain where you have demonstrated these skills, either through work experience, employment, volunteering or through achieving qualifications or certificates.

Your CV should be spellchecked, then looked over by at least 2 other people. It should be easy to read at a glance so design is very important and **no more than two sides long.**

Do not lie: anything you put in a CV will be checked and discussed at interview.

Example Personal Profile (**DO NOT** copy word for word)

"I am currently in year 11 at high school and hope to achieve 10 A* GCSE qualifications. I have set myself the goal of becoming a Doctor as I have always been interested in and excelled at science. I also consider myself to be a very caring person and feel passionate about providing the right care and support people require in their day to day lives. This drive and passion is demonstrated through my volunteering work and grades achieved in school. I would welcome any opportunity to develop my skills and passion further within the Health Care Sector.

Example Key Skills

- **Communication** – good oral and written skills, developed through school and my time working in a retail environment. I have regularly received 'Employee of the Month' awards.
- **Organisation** – adept at planning and co-ordinating my workload, all my assignments are completed and submitted on time. I regularly receive reward points at school for my organisational skills.
- **Reliability** – I have a 100% attendance and punctuality record at school from year 7.
- **Work Ethic** – I have a strong work ethic which I have demonstrated both at work and in school. My current employer has recently provided me with a written reference explaining my strong work ethic.
- **Problem Solving** – proven record of dealing with customer complaints and problems.

Name
Date of Birth
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Town
Postcode
Telephone/Mobile Number
Email

Personal Profile

A personal profile is used to 'sum you up'. It details who are, what you're currently doing and why you are particularly interested in the job/work experience/ course/volunteering opportunity you are applying for/interested in.

Key Skills

Bullet point a list of skills and abilities you possess that the organisation might be looking for, giving details and information that evidence or demonstrate them.

Education and Training

Dates	School

Estimated Grades are as follows:

Subject	Grade
Subject	Grade
Subject	Grade
Subject	Grade
Subject	Grade

Dates	School	
	Subject	Grade

Work History

(Always start with most recent first. This can also be any volunteering you've done)

Dates	Employer Name/Person you did volunteering for
Responsibilities & Duties	

Hobbies and Interests

Describe any hobbies that show you have the kind of skills/personality relevant to the job
eg. playing in sport teams shows team working ability and commitment.
being a scout or any other volunteering shows that you are caring and motivated
Remember this is a professional document – going out with friends, playing computer
games or going shopping is not relevant.

References

You need at least 2 referees, but 3 would be better and it has to be someone in a position of authority and should not be family or friends.

Name	Name
Job Title	Job Title
Address Line 1	Address Line 1
Address Line 2	Address Line 2
Town	Town
Postcode	Postcode
Telephone/Mobile Number	Telephone/Mobile Number

Sample e-mail to an employer asking for work experience

Dear Sir/Madam [or name],

I am a Year 10 student aged 14/15 currently studying at All Saints Catholic High School in Rawtenstall. I'm looking for a work experience placement from the 5-9 July 2027.

I'm really interested in your company because ….

I consider myself to be a hardworking individual. I am also [list relevant skills and attributes], which can be shown in my [real-life examples that demonstrate your skills].

In my spare time, I like to [list relevant hobbies and interests], and I've also had some experience in/am a member of [list any groups/clubs/other work experience].

As an enthusiastic student with a keen interest in your organisation and a passion to progress within this industry, I would be very grateful to be considered for any opportunity.

[If you have enclosed a CV state so here with 'Please find enclosed my CV'.] I can be available for a face to face interview or telephone call any time outside of school hours.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this e-mail.

Yours sincerely

[Your name]

[Your contact number]

[Your e-mail address]