



HOE VALLEY SCHOOL WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY

Person Responsible: Head Teacher
Date Adopted: Autumn 2022
Date of last review: Autumn 2024
Date of next review: Autumn 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the overall Work Ready Agenda (which operates across all year groups), Hoe Valley School is committed to providing high quality Work Experience opportunities for all students in Year 10 and Year 12. This is to be achieved through strong links with relevant employers, matched for suitability with students through a series of questionnaires and interviews.

2. RATIONALE

As a school, we pride ourselves on creating the best life chances for every student, and away from this programme already meet or exceed most of the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Careers Guidance. However, a full work experience programme is required to fully meet Benchmark 6, “Experiences of Workplaces”:

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have. By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have. <https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/the-benchmarks>

Work experience needs to be an integral part of the Work Ready Agenda, giving Hoe Valley students insight into the world of work, increasing aspirations and helping them to prepare for whatever they may do when they eventually leave us. A well-managed programme will help our young people to make decisions about their futures and to develop new and existing skills.

3. MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

The Work Experience Programme will be managed by the Head of Work Ready, and delivered by the Work Experience Coordinator. This standalone role is designed to ensure full compliance with necessary health, safety and safeguarding requirements as well as to match students with suitable placements.

After students have been matched with placements, on an operational basis the programme will operate through the Unifrog placements tool. This comprises a series of forms which need to be completed by specific people at specific times; when one person finishes their form, the system automatically messages the next person in the chain.

Unifrog encourages students to contact employers, conduct certain tasks during the placement and then reflect on the placement afterwards. The same tool will provide employers with a library of guides to help them plan and deliver the best quality placement possible.

It will also enable the employer to confirm that they follow best practices in:

- Insurance;
- Health and safety;
- Risk Assessment;
- Safeguarding;
- Covid safety guidelines;
- Data protection (eg the UK GDPR);

Parents use Unifrog to agree to the placement and stay informed of what's happening.

Operationally, the school will use the tool to have an overview of the process across whole cohorts and to build up a database of employers who have previously hosted placements, showing things like student ratings, the sector, and whether the employer agrees to host future placements.

5. ASSESSING THE RISKS

Potential placements will be assessed initially through a short questionnaire, with answers then informing decisions about the need for fuller risk assessment, site visits, or the need for DBS checks on the people supervising our students during their placement. For instance, risk factors that may warrant closer inspection include employers that are not personally known to students or staff, are not members of professional bodies, are not major corporate employers, where potentially hazardous activities such as light industry are undertaken or where students may be working alone with a member of staff away from others.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health and Safety Executive is clear that employers are responsible for the health and safety of students on work experience placements as they are for their own staff. The Work Experience Coordinator checks any written risk assessments, check for evidence of employer's liability insurance, and checks compliance with UKGDPR and other statutory duties.

Placement providers with more than five employees are required by law to have existing written risk assessments, which are to be made available to the school. They must review such assessments if they:

- do not currently employ a young person
- have not employed a young person in the last few years
- are taking on a work experience student for the first time
- are taking on a work experience student with particular needs

If they have employed a young person on work experience in the last few years, they don't need to repeat that risk assessment if the new student has a similar level of maturity and understanding, with no particular or additional needs. (The school or parent/carer should tell the employer if they have.)

The employer is expected to take account of what the school and the parents or carers tell them about:

- the student's physical and psychological capacity
- any particular needs - for example due to any health conditions or learning difficulties

The employer must explain to the school what the significant risks are and what has been done to control them. The Health and Safety Executive deem that they can do this in whatever way is simplest and suitable, including verbally.

When an employer inducts a student, they must explain the risks and how they are controlled, checking that they understand what they have been told.

The Health and Safety Executive provides specific guidance to employers taking on young people in this document <https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/employer/work-experience.htm> (detailed below). Compliance with this guidance will be established before any placement and again by site visit during the placement (if needed):

For many young people the workplace will be a new environment and they will be unfamiliar with 'obvious' risks and the behaviour expected of them.

They may lack experience or maturity. Make sure they understand what is expected of them, check they understand and are able to remember and follow instructions.

They may not have reached physical maturity and be more at risk if their muscle strength is not fully developed. They may be less skilled in handling techniques or in pacing work according to their ability.

When assessing a young person's physical capability, you could simply ask yourself if a still developing young person could lift the weights older, more experienced workers can.

Young people may be unaware of how to raise concerns, so make sure this is part of their training.

They may be eager to impress or please people they work with, so you should supervise them effectively and make sure they understand any training and instruction.

Levels of risk

Low risk environments

For placements in low-risk environments, such as offices or shops, with everyday risks that will mostly be familiar to the young person or student, existing arrangements for other workers should be enough.

Less familiar risks

For environments with risks less familiar to them (for example in light assembly or packing facilities), employers should make arrangements to manage the risks. This should include induction, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment needed.

High-risk environments

For work in a higher-risk environment such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing:

- *consider the work they will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how they are managed*
- *satisfy yourself that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and work in practice*

Consider specific factors that must be managed for young people, including exposure to:

- *radiation*
- *noise and vibration*
- *toxic substances*
- *extreme temperatures*

Where these exist, you should already have control measures in place.

Harmful exposure means exposure that has long-term health effects on a still-developing young body. You should be aware of the substances they might come into contact with, consider exposure levels and ensure legal limits are met.

Also consider legally required age limits on the use of some equipment and machinery (for example forklift trucks and some woodworking machinery).

7. SAFEGUARDING

Placement providers and their employees are not expected to require DBS barred list checks unless a student under the age of 16 is expected to be working alone with an adult away from a public or crowded place regularly or for an extended period. However, a DBS check may not be necessary in the case of a direct family member supervising the student in this way.

In the unlikely event of a residential component to any work experience, DBS checks will be conducted on those supervising students away from home unless they are a direct family member.

Employers will be told to report any safeguarding concerns through the school's established procedures.

Students and parents will be provided with emergency contact details, and any safeguarding concerns are to be raised through the school's established safeguarding procedures.

8. SEND AND VULNERABLE STUDENTS

There is an expectation that SEND issues should not prevent a student from undertaking work experience, and the Work Experience Coordinator will work closely with the SENCO, DSL team, Head of Year and parent or carer to mitigate any potential barriers. The school needs to be open with placement providers about students' needs or vulnerabilities in order that the employer can appropriately support them. If an employer is open in principle to accepting a student with SEND or vulnerabilities, any assessment of suitability will be explored on a case by case basis.

In extremis, an alternative programme based around virtual work experience may need to be put in place at school for a very small number of students, but this is very much for exceptional cases only.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

All students will be visited on site during their period of work experience by members of staff with copies of any risk assessments in order to ensure that the written assessment matches the reality of the situation. In exceptional circumstances, such as a residential period of work experience away from home then specific permission will be required from SLT and parents for this site visit to be dispensed with.

In all cases, Students and parents will be provided with emergency contact details for the Work Experience Team, and any safeguarding concerns are to be raised through the school's established safeguarding procedures.

After their placements, students will be required to assess their work experience in order that appropriate decisions can be made about the following cohort. Employers too will be contacted to evaluate their experience of the programme and to see whether they may be willing to host another Hoe Valley student in future.