



2024 Work Experience FAQ

For supporting parents/carers & students



What is a work experience placement?

You go out to work for an employer, observing and carrying out tasks in much the same way as any employee, with the emphasis on learning from the experience. Work experience provides opportunities for learning about the skills, behaviours, careers, roles and structures that exist within a workplace. From **5th- 8th February 2024** you have the chance to spend 4 days in a workplace of your choice.

How will I benefit from a work experience placement?

Work experience can help you develop employability skills which support successful transition into college, university, apprenticeships, and the workplace. It can also help you consider career choices/

Work experience can help with....

- Confidence
- Self-esteem
- Communication
- Timekeeping
- Practical work skills
- Team working
- Problem solving
- Time management and organisation
- Knowledge of jobs and industry
- Finding out about yourself

It is also a lot of fun!

Finally, it offers valuable experience for those who want to go on to vocational courses or take up apprenticeships after Year 11 such as healthcare, childcare, mechanics and hairdressing showing you have spent time in those environments.

How do I find a work experience placement?

So you can get the most from your experience we want **you** to find your placement. This will usually be with help and support from your family. **See the 'How to find a placement' guide to get started.** The launch assembly will also offer guidance.

What happens if I don't do it?

We want to encourage all of you to be out in the community taking part. If you are not at an approved placement during that week, **you will be expected to come to school where you will follow your usual timetable.**

What if my employer can only offer certain days?

Ideally you want to do a 4-day placement to get the full experience. If your employer can only offer 2-3 of those days please get in touch with us via careers@durring.com to let us know and we will advise on what to do.

What should I do when an employer has agreed to offer me a place?

1. The employer will need to complete both sides of the **Own Placement form** in full
2. The employer **must keep** the yellow letter of understanding page
3. The fully completed own placement form should be returned to school before **Monday 25th September 2023** with payment – This will guarantee the placement can be processed – Any deadline extensions will be communicated.
4. The placement will be processed and you will be informed if there are any problems

What should I do before my work placement?

It is recommended that you arrange a pre-placement meeting before the placement starts. This will allow you to have a practice run for the travel element, to see the business premises and meet with your contact so it is not so daunting on the first day. It will also provide a valuable opportunity to ask questions such as;

- What time should I arrive and what time will I finish?
- Where to report to on the first day and to whom?
- What are break/lunch arrangements – is there somewhere to buy lunch or should I bring a packed lunch?
- What is the dress code, and do I need to provide any PPE (Personal protective equipment e.g. protective footwear)?
- Do I need to bring anything with me?
- It is a good idea to keep a diary of your experiences while on placement and any feedback from your employer as you may be able to use this at college or job interviews. The employer may also be willing to provide you with a reference when you are applying for jobs, so make sure you give a good impression!

What about travel?

It is your responsibility to get to and from the placement. You should;

- Be aware of how you are getting to your placement
- Ensure you know and understand any timetables for public transport and the costs
- Consider any potential problems with travel i.e. Roadworks, public transport strikes
- Have a back-up plan to your method of travel in case of an unexpected scenario i.e. bicycle has a flat tyre

What about Health and Safety?

You need to take responsibility for your own Health and Safety and those around you. At the start of the work experience placement, you should receive an induction which as a minimum should include:

- Tour of the working area/premises
- Fire procedures
- First aid arrangements
- Overview of expected tasks during the week
- Prohibited tasks and/or areas
- Requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Introduction to colleagues
- Confirmation of working hours and breaks
- Shown welfare facilities

What will my employer expect of me?

Prior to the placement, it is a good idea for you to research your employer to gain a basic knowledge of the company to understand the possible expectations that the employer will have. Employer expectations will also be discussed at the pre-placement meeting. However, you should be aware of the expectations that all employers will have, including;

- Have a positive attitude
- Show interest in the work
- Be polite and friendly
- Listen well and follow instructions
- Be hard working
- Be punctual and reliable
- Have good appearance and hygiene – Be appropriately dressed

What should I expect?

You may have a different expectation of what a placement will be like compared to reality.

Therefore, you should have realistic expectations. Be aware that...

- Age, lack of experience, lack of training, knowledge, skills and safety restrictions may limit some tasks that you can do.
- Time may be spent observing others especially in environments that are high risk, such as building/construction, garages, and engineering. This is **not** wasted time. Every observation is useful.
- You may need to carry out routine tasks such as cleaning, tidying, filing etc
- A full working day will be undertaken in most placements and not 'school hours'

How can I make the most of my experience?

You may find that once your placement gets underway that it was not what you expected it to be. Or maybe you are on a placement which was not your first choice. There are 2 ways to deal with this.

The wrong way - You can lose interest and give the impression that you don't want to be there. This will mean that both you and your employer have negative outcomes from the experience.

The right way - You can lean into the work and prove to them, and to you, that you are able to adapt and learn from any situation. Think about...

- Asking questions & showing interest
- Volunteering to carry out tasks
- Showing enthusiasm & commitment

This strategy will ensure that the time is beneficial. You will find that you learn stuff that you had not even intended to.

How can I present myself well?

You should ask questions to show interest and be aware of negative and positive body language. Examples of positive body language are:

- Making eye contact
- Sitting up straight
- Paying attention
- Relaxed posture
- Keeping hands out of pockets

Examples of negative body language are:

- Staring
- Slouching
- Yawning
- Crossed arms and legs
- Looking at your watch

What about my smartphone?

Use of mobile phones will not be allowed during the placement 'working hours. You may be asked to place phones in bags or lockers or as a minimum, phones should be turned off or placed on 'silent'. Mobile phones are not permitted in childcare/school placements due to safeguarding procedures. Inappropriate content and use of social media whilst on placements may result in placements being terminated.

Will I get paid?

You will not be paid whilst on work experience, as it is a learning experience not employment.

What will my working hours be?

This will vary and will be agreed before your placement starts. You should not work for more than 5 days in any consecutive seven-day period, and it is a requirement that students should not work more than a standard eight-hour day or forty hours in a week. You will get appropriate breaks. You will be informed of the exact times of the placement by your employer.

What do I do if I can't go in?

If you are going to be late for your placement, then you should:

- Contact the employer
- Apologise to say that you will be late and explain the reason
- Provide an expected arrival time

If you are unable to attend the placement

- Contact the employer
- Explain the reason for absence
- Provide an expected return date
- You should also contact the school reception to let them know

How can I reflect on my placement afterwards?

Work experience should be treated as a 'learning experience' and not just a week out of school. Therefore, you need to reflect upon your placement to consolidate what you learnt and apply to your future career planning and goal setting. You should ask yourself;

- Did you enjoy the placement and was it beneficial?
- What new skills did you learn and develop? What did you learn about how a workplace operates?
- Do you now have an idea of what employers require from their employees and how staff interact?
- Has it given you a better idea of what career path you want to take?

If you didn't enjoy the experience this is also a positive thing! Now you can investigate other career paths which may be of interest. We will help with this process on **Friday 9th February** when we will be having careers activities in school.

Above all, use the experience to learn about yourself and help you make informed choices about your future.

If you have any other questions, please email careers@durring.com during term time and one of the team will help.