

What is Work Experience?

It is an unpaid opportunity for young people to experience working life while they are still in school. It gives them the chance to:

- Work alongside adults as part of a team
- Develop and practice a range of new skills
- Become more confident in their abilities
- Relate their school curriculum to the workplace
- Make more informed decisions about their future

Young people will learn and use a range of transferable skills, personal qualities and competencies that will contribute towards their employability.

They will be helped to develop some of or all of the following key skills:

Communication - Listening, speaking clearly, asking and responding to questions, discussing, using the telephone, reading and responding to written material, producing written materials, including the use of diagrams.

Application of Number - Using numbers, collecting and recording data, interpreting and presenting data, handling money accurately, measuring, and estimating.

Information Technology - Using a fax machine, using computers to search, select, explore and prepare information, processing, developing and presenting relevant information.

Working with Others - Getting along with others, working in a team, taking responsibility, working co-operatively with colleagues.

Improving Own Learning and Performance - Target setting, action planning, managing time, learning from others, working to a planned program, developing confidence, reviewing and evaluating progress.

Problem Solving - Recognizing and describing problems, seeking the right information, making decisions, selecting and carrying out appropriate solutions.

What does Work Experience Involve?

- The student will be expected to telephone the employer before the placement starts.
- The student may be asked to have an interview with the employer before the placement starts.
- The student should keep a diary to record his/her experience and identify the skills they have used and developed during their placement.
- When in the workplace, the student will be expected to behave and carry out tasks as any other employee of the organisations.

How Can Parents Help?

- Help the student understand the goodwill of employers offering the placement opportunities
- Advise the employer and school of any health matters which may affect the student's work placement
- Discuss with the student the implications of the job they choose
- Sign and return the paperwork promptly
- Encourage the student to undergo any pre-placement interview
- Ensure the student attends the placement regularly and punctually
- Ensure that both school and employer are notified if the student is unable to attend
- Encourage the student to have a positive approach to the placement, even if it isn't quite what they expected.