

Work Experience Guidelines

Students in Year 12 will be taking part in Work Experience in the Summer term.

Work Experience Week is Monday 22 June to Friday 26 June 2026.

Benefits of work experience include:

- Gaining an insight into the world of work
- The chance to discover different work areas within a company
- Giving you something positive to tell future employers
- Helping you to explore your career ideas and make decisions about your future direction
- Building and practicing your employability skills such as communication, team work and problem solving
- Understanding what is expected when you are working with people of different ages

You will experience:

- The routines of a normal working week
- A working environment outside the classroom
- Working with adults from different backgrounds and all walks of life
- Using new skills, techniques and equipment

You will learn:

- More about your personal skills, qualities and interests
- To increase your self-confidence
- To be more organised
- Time management
- About the relationship between school subjects and the world of work

Forms to complete

Parental Consent Form

All students and their parents/carers need to fill in a consent form – please return this to Mrs Robinson in The Hive. Please ask your parents/carers to state any medical details which might affect your choice of placement and write this on the back of the form. You will not be allowed to go out on work experience without this form having been signed by both parties.

Confirmation of Work Experience Form

If your chosen company is able to offer you a placement, give your contact there the Confirmation of Work Experience form. The form consists of questions on Health and Safety, Insurance, Risk Assessment and Accidents/Incidents. There are also questions on your work experience activities, hazards and risks associated with the work you will be doing, measures to minimize the risks and finally, prohibited tasks, e.g. any machinery/equipment you are not allowed to use. Return of this form is mandatory. We cannot allow the placement to go ahead unless we are in receipt of this completed document.

- Complete your name and mentor group, and placement details
- Give the form to your contact at the placement for completion
- Return the form as soon as possible to Mrs Robinson in The Hive
- Until this form is completed, your placement is not confirmed.

Information Form

Please complete this form at your interview with your employer, and **keep it for reference**. This contains your chosen company's contact details, job description, working hours, lunch break, whether there are refreshments available on site, dress code, special kit required such as apron or boots, and public transport.

Medical Form

Your employer will need to know your Medical and Emergency Contact details. Please complete this form and give it to your Supervisor on your first day. Make sure you write clearly and that contact numbers are up to date.

Thinking About Your Placement

You need to think about the type of placement you would like, which could be linked to your future career choice. If you are hoping to go to a popular placement such as the media (TV/Radio/Newspaper), Veterinary Practice, IT, Museum etc., you need to work quickly as these areas are oversubscribed. Many companies fill their places months in advance. Some companies only offer placements to students who are aged 16 plus, so you have an advantage over younger students looking for work experience.

How to Find Your Own Placement

Once you have decided what sort of company you are looking for, you can find contact details in a variety of places. You could look through the Yellow Pages or Thomson Local for local listings, search on the internet - type 'Solicitors Reading' or 'Library Caversham' into a search engine such as Google - or look in the local paper in the advertisements to see if any companies advertising are of interest to you.

You must ensure that your placement has the following: up to date Employer and Public Liability Insurance cover; is able to provide a supervisor for you at all times; will provide you with a good insight into its workings; has a risk assessment in place and is aware of the regulations involved in offering a placement to a young person.

How to Contact a Company

You can contact your chosen company in four ways:

- In person. If you are going in person, for example to a local shop, make sure you look neat and tidy and remember to smile. Ask if the manager is available and say who you are and why you would like to work for the company.
- By phone. It might help you to write down what you would like to say, such as 'Hello, my name is xxx xxx, I am a Year 12 student at Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre. I am very interested in xxx and I wonder whether you would be able to offer me a work experience placement for one week.'
- By letter. Be careful with spelling, grammar, presentation and make sure you have the correct name and title of the person you are writing to, ie a Manager or Head of Department. See Appendix 1 for a sample letter.
- By email. Look at your chosen company's website to find an email address. Again, be careful with spelling, grammar and presentation.

Attending an Interview

Attending an interview is very important, even if your placement is with a family friend or relative – this is your opportunity to find out everything you need to know about your work experience week. You can discuss details such as:

- What time do I start and finish?
- How long is my lunch break?
- How many refreshment breaks do I have?
- Who is my Supervisor?
- What do I wear?
- Do you have a uniform?
- What about protective clothing? Do you supply gloves/boots/aprons?
- Where do I go on my first day? Do I report to Reception?
- Who do I phone if I'm not well?

Before your interview

- Research the company – look on the Internet or phone and ask the receptionist for information
- Phone a week before your interview to introduce yourself, ask directions and check whether there is anything you should take to the interview with you.
- Practise the journey
- Practise likely questions and answers
- Dress smartly – first impressions last.
- Leave plenty of time to travel to the interview. If you find that you are going to be late, you **MUST** phone the company to apologise and say how long you expect to be

The Interview

Remember the following:

- Be courteous and polite to ALL members of staff – they are doing you a favour
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist and give the name of your interviewer
- Be friendly and enthusiastic – and remember to smile
- Once the interview is over, thank the interviewer for his/her time

Possible Interview Questions – always be positive when answering!

1. What are you studying at school? What do you enjoy most and why?
2. What do you do in your spare time?
3. Have you held any positions of responsibility? (at school or outside)
4. Why do you want to work at our firm?
5. What do you know about our company / products?
6. What qualities do you think will be required for this job? You could mention communication, interpersonal (getting on with people), problem solving, analytical skills.
7. What can you contribute? Same as above - prove you have these qualities, i.e. "I get on easily with people and am a member of..."
8. They might ask you if you have any questions to ask them, so think of some before you go.

Confirmation of Placement

Your placement is confirmed when:

- Your Confirmation of Work Experience form has been signed by a representative at your company
- You have attended an interview and are happy with your choice
- Your chosen company's insurance (Employer's and Public Liability) details have been checked by School

During Work Experience Week

You must attend work experience for the whole week, during the hours agreed with your Manager or Supervisor, unless you are unwell. If you cannot attend you must contact both your placement AND School.

Health and Safety

In line with current legislation, a duty is placed on each employer to undertake a risk assessment for each work experience placement. All placements must have Employer's and Public Liability Insurance Cover and are checked for both health and safety and general suitability.

Please remember to take extra care whilst on work experience, as you have a duty of care to yourself and to others. You will be given an induction on your first day, which will include a talk on workplace hazards, safety precautions and emergency procedures. For example, you will be told where the first aid box is kept, where the nearest fire exit is, what the fire alarm sounds like and the location of the emergency assembly area.

You might be worried about travelling to and from your work experience placement, whether it is by bus, train or cycling, especially if you have always been driven to school. Practise the journey before you start so you can work out the best and safest route. Your safety to and from your placement is your own responsibility, as it is when you travel to and from school.

Questions and Answers

May I choose any job?

Avoid building sites since these can be high risk. Most students choose low risk areas such as retail, business, education, finance etc. If you choose a placement in a high risk area, special checks will need to be carried out.

How many hours will I have to work?

It depends on your placement. Schools tend to ask for 8.30-3.00 whereas shops and businesses will be longer. Students should work no longer than 8 hours in one day, with at least 30 minutes for lunch and a 20-minute break morning and afternoon. Students should not work before 7am or after 7pm., unless a parent or guardian has given permission. Theatres and sporting venues, for example, have late starts and late ends.

Am I insured whilst on placement?

Yes, you will be insured whilst at your placement – all businesses taking students for work placements must have insurance.

Am I insured whilst travelling from home to my placement?

No. The journey to and from a placement is not insured, in the same way that the journey to and from school is not insured. Safety is paramount, so please make sure that you are happy with your journey. Think about how far you are able to travel and whether you are confident enough to make the journey on your own.

Will I receive payment for working?

By law, students are not allowed to accept payment whilst on your work placement. This is because work experience is regarded as part of your schooling.

Will someone look after me at my placement?

Yes, a supervisor will be allocated to you.

Is lunch provided?

Each placement differs. Sometimes the employer will provide lunch – you can check this whilst at your interview. Most students take a packed lunch or money so they can buy lunch in a local shop or in the staff canteen.

What happens if I don't like my placement?

This is highly unlikely. You will have gone to your placement for an interview, met your colleagues and been shown what you will be doing.

What if I feel ill whilst at my placement?

If you feel ill, your supervisor will phone home – just the same as if you were sick at school. No placement will allow a student to leave without having spoken to his/her parent. If you are sick and cannot go to your placement, you must telephone school AND the placement before your usual start time.

What should I wear?

This is the question that causes most panic in the run up to the 'big day'! Discuss the company's dress code whilst at your interview. Look at what the employees are wearing. If your placement is in the Media for instance, the dress code is usually very casual, whereas if your placement is in a City bank, you will need to be extremely smart. Generally, most placements are happy with smart black trousers/skirt and a white shirt, plus flat, sensible, closed-in shoes. Find out if you will be given a uniform and if so, when you collect it.

What should I not wear?

- No jeans, low cut tops, bare shoulders or bare stomachs
- No dangly or large hoop earrings
- No body piercings
- No long or acrylic nails for health and safety and practicality reasons – this applies to all medical and catering placements, and those with children

Will I have to provide protective clothing?

Most placements will provide protective clothing, e.g. an apron for a catering placement or gloves for a gardening placement. Some placements - garden centres or warehouses - ask students to wear steel toe-capped boots.

May I use my mobile?

Please do not use your mobile whilst working on placement. Treat it as you would at school, i.e. you may use it at breaks and lunchtime only. It's best to check with your supervisor exactly when you are allowed to use it.

May I take photos?

You must always ask first. **Confidentiality is essential – do not take any photographs without permission.** If your placement is at a school or nursery do not take photos of the children unless you have permission from the child's parent AND the head teacher/supervisor. You are only allowed to reproduce photos for the purpose of your coursework and **you must not reproduce the photos in any other media.**

What if I have a problem?

Ask your supervisor at your company for help. He or she will be used to supervising work experience students and should be able to assist.

What will happen on my first day?

Having turned up on time, looking smart and eager, you will be given an induction by your supervisor, who will show you your work area, explain the company to you and introduce you to your new colleagues. You will also receive a health and safety talk where you will be briefed on workplace hazards, safety precautions and emergency procedures.

What will happen on my last day?

Your supervisor will talk through your report with you. Thank everyone you have met and say how much you have enjoyed your work experience week. If you feel you performed well, think about asking for a Saturday job!

Who should I see if I have a query about work experience?

Check through this booklet carefully, to see whether your query has been addressed. If your query is still unanswered please see either Mr Flynn or Dr Capaldi.

Mr Lilley

Second in Sixth Form (Academic)

Appendix 1.

SAMPLE LETTER TO EMPLOYER REQUESTING WORK EXPERIENCE

Your name
Your address

Manager's name
Company name
Company address

Date

Dear (name) or Sir/Madam

Re: WORK EXPERIENCE REQUEST

1st paragraph

I am a student at Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre and am 16 (or 17) years old. The year 12 work experience week is from Monday 26 June to Friday 30 June 2023 and I wonder whether you would be able to offer me a work placement for that week.

2nd paragraph

Say why you would like to spend your work experience week with the company.

3rd paragraph

Give details of the subjects you are studying at Highdown and say which ones you particularly enjoy. Give details of any activities (sport/drama) or areas of responsibility (club rep/leader) you have at school.

4th paragraph

Give details of skills or interests you participate in or outside of school, i.e. sport, musical instrument etc.

Finish

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely (if you know the name of the person you are writing to)

Yours faithfully (if you have put Sir/Madam)

(Your signature)

Your name (typed)