

Work Experience Policy

2025-26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Principal	
Date of next review	September 2026

Introduction and Rationale:

The DfE defines work experience as:

'A placement on an employer's premises in which a pupil carries out a particular task or duty, or range of tasks and duties, more or less as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.'

DfE guidance for school's state that:

'Schools are expected to offer high quality work experience that properly reflects individuals' studies and strengths and supports the academic curriculum.'

Gatsby Benchmark 6 states that:

'Every student should have first-hand experience of the workplace through work visits, or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.'

Work experience is governed by DfE guidance and health and safety legislation. The main features of work experience are:

- only pupils in Years 10-11 are eligible for work experience placements
- placements occur on employers' premises: a placement can vary, but most are for a minimum of one week, with other employer experiences making up the quota.
- Other year groups can be offered workplace encounters or visits but not work experience placements

Intent

John O' Gaunt School is committed to following the guidelines of the Career Education Gatsby Benchmarks <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/understand-gatsby-benchmarks> and aim to offer the following to students from Year 7 to Year 11:

- Every student will have access to at least ONE Work Experience Placement by the time they leave secondary education.
- KS4 students will be given the opportunity to experience the workplace independently through the Work Experience programme.

Work Experience is for many young people the first opportunity they have to experience first-hand what it is like to be in the workplace. It is a valuable and essential part of their education and provides opportunities to learn about skills, work structures, duties and responsibilities that exist within organisations.

Employers value work experience because it helps young people develop interpersonal and employability skills and become more aware of how businesses work. The value of a work placement is that by putting students into real business situations, they start to have an awareness of many aspects of working life which can be extremely difficult to convey in a classroom setting. Hopefully, the experience will make students see their schooling in a new light. Many students are inspired by the experience although some are simply driven toward academic successes and further qualifications because they have seen how mundane the working lives of unskilled staff can be!

Many of the skills that employers want from their employees can be developed, refined and evaluated during a work experience placement. These skills are common to nearly all sectors of the economy and include being:

- good at communicating
- able to work with others
- able to solve problems
- good at planning and organisation
- able to use their own judgement
- self-starters who show initiative

- able to complete a task on time and within budget
- IT literate
- Competent at working with numbers, data and information

Leadership and Teamwork

Research has shown that building these essential skills can not only support the emotional wellbeing and academic success of students but also prepares them to live independently as adults including in their future work and careers. We aim that work experience placements and encounters will, therefore, provide students with the opportunity to both apply and see these skills in a career-related context. These connections will be made through student questioning as well as information shared by employees encountered on the placements. Employers will be given guidance on how to make these references prior to the placements starting.

Aims and Objectives of Work Experience:

Work experience placements offer many benefits and learning opportunities, not only for the students who take part in the scheme, but also for the teachers and employers.

For students:

- The chance to practice knowledge and skills learnt in the classroom in a working setting.
- A better understanding of how organisations work and what a work environment is like.
- A chance to see how skills, alongside knowledge, are applied in a work environment, including speaking to a range of employees about which skills they need and use the most in their role.
- Exposure to 'real' work can help pupils have a more mature attitude to work and increase motivation to study.
- An insight into relevance to working life of school subjects.
- Greater awareness of the range of opportunities within an organisation.

For teachers

- opportunities to learn about different organisations and their employment needs.
- enrichment to teaching programmes by creating different environments in which students learn.
- involvement of local organisations in the life of the school and its curriculum.
- potential to work with other partners in the local work experience community.

For employers

- understanding changes in educational courses and qualifications.
- promotion of their organisation to potential future employees.
- opportunities to develop the skills of staff who act as mentors, supervisors etc.
- influencing teachers to understand the needs of employers.
- ability to contribute to the development of young people and to the local community.

Why is work experience of value to employers?

Individual work experience opportunities will be offered to Key stage 4 students throughout the academic year. The placements will be tailored to the individuals' needs, interests, and ambitions and working in conjunction with West Berks Education Business Partnership.

Work Placement Duties

- Students will carry out meaningful work in accordance with the agreed duties for their placement. A responsible person will plan the work and be designated for the welfare and supervision of the student during the period of the placement.
- Students will not receive any payment for this work. Students will not be allowed to work hours which

are considered unreasonable. In any event the employer confirms the hours before the placement is made in conjunction with the West Berks Education Business Partnership. They will comply with the relevant provisions of the Working Time Regulations for students under the age of 16:

- Students under 16 cannot work more than 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week
 - Must have a 30-minute break if working more than 4.5 hours
 - Cannot work between 10pm and 6am
 - Must have at least 2 consecutive weeks off work during school holidays
- The employer will take into account any relevant information relating to the student's medical condition, or any physical and learning disabilities, details of which may have been provided, in formulating appropriate risk controls to protect both students and/or employees.
 - All tasks asked of the student will conform to the laws governing the Employment of Young Persons and Work Experience (as defined in the Education Act 1996) and any other statutory obligations to the student will be observed. The company is registered with the Health and Safety Executive or Local Authority, as applicable.

Health, Safety, Welfare and Security

- The employer recognises that a student on work placement is to be regarded as an employee for the purposes of Health and Safety legislation and the associated duty of care. A current health and safety policy will be maintained and there will be compliance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and its relevant statutory provisions.
- West Berkshire Education Business Partnership will undertake a 'placement suitability check'. This will include confirming contact details, finding out about the tasks a student will do on placement and will ask some questions in relation to the health and safety of work experience and that of the business.
- The employer will undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in relation to the health and safety of the student while on the placement, taking into account the student's inexperience, immaturity and lack of awareness of risks. At the start of the work placement, the employer will provide students with a health and safety induction, which will include workplace hazards and their control, fire, emergencies, first aid, accident reporting and security arrangements.
- Students will not do work prohibited by law, operate dangerous machinery, carry out any manual handling tasks identified as being a risk to the student's health and safety, or be exposed to dangerous substances, radiation, extreme heat or cold, noise or vibration or any other work environment that may endanger their health and safety.
- Where appropriate, students will be provided with and instructed on the correct use of personal protective clothing and equipment (PPE) and its use will be enforced.
- The employer will notify the parents/guardian and School, by telephone and as soon as practicable, of any accident, of any case of ill health or any other incident which relates to the student's work placement. When appropriate, the employer will comply with the provisions of RIDDOR 2013 (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013). The employer will have access to adequate first aid facilities as required under the Health and Safety (First Aid Regulations 1981).

The students should receive an induction at the start of the work experience placement, which should include:

- A tour of the working area/premises.
- Fire procedures.
- First Aid arrangements.
- Overview of the 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.

Emergency Contact Procedures:

Emergency Contact Information

- Students must provide placements with emergency contact details including:
 - School contact number and named person (work experience coordinator)
 - Parent/carer contact numbers
 - Any relevant medical information
- This information must be treated in line with GDPR and data protection regulations
- Contact information must not be retained by the placement after the work experience has ended
- Students must carry an emergency contact card at all times during their placement

Induction and Emergency Procedures

Students must be briefed by the placement on the first day, before work begins, about:

- Fire evacuation procedures and assembly points
- First aid arrangements and location of first aiders
- Accident reporting procedures
- What to do if they feel unwell or unsafe
- Procedures if they're going to be late or absent
- Who to contact at the placement if they have concerns
- Procedures for contacting people in case of an emergency

Serious Incident Reporting

The placement must contact the school urgently (within 2 hours) if any of the following occur:

- Any accident requiring medical attention
- Safeguarding concerns
- Student sent home from placement
- Serious breach of health and safety
- Student raising concerns about their safety or wellbeing

Contact should be made to the school Work Experience Co-ordinator on 01488 682400.

Student Responsibilities

Students must:

- Carry their emergency contact card at all times
- Inform the placement immediately if they feel unwell or unsafe
- Follow all health and safety instructions given by the placement
- Report any accidents or near-misses to both the placement and school
- Contact school at any time if they have safeguarding concerns

Placement Provider Responsibilities

Placements must:

- Provide emergency contact details to students on day one
- Complete a suitable health and safety induction before work begins
- Contact school within 2 hours in case of serious incident
- Follow all procedures outlined in the placement provider agreement

School Response to Incidents

When contacted about a serious incident, the school will:

- Respond immediately and assess the situation
- Contact parents/carers as appropriate
- Visit the placement if necessary
- Follow safeguarding procedures where relevant
- Complete accident/incident reporting as required

Safeguarding During Work Experience

- Normal safeguarding procedures apply during work experience
- Students can contact the school's designated safeguarding lead at any time
- Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the school's safeguarding policy
- Students will be reminded of safeguarding procedures during pre-placement briefing

The Role of the Work Experience Co-ordinator and Careers Team at John O'Gaunt:

- to co-ordinate the work experience programme.
- to act as contact for students, parents, employers and other teachers involved.
- to monitor the programme and provide support where necessary.
- to provide resources and act as administrator where necessary.
- to help students to choose and arrange the work experience placements.
- to visit prospective employers and visit students on placement
- to help students learn from the placement.
- to evaluate the effectiveness of the placement.

Work Experience Co-ordinator Guidelines:

Sourcing, confirming and monitoring of Work Experience Placements:

Work placements are found by:

West Berks Education Business Partnership, in conjunction with John O'Gaunt School

Own placements are found by:

The students

The parents/carers

1. Work Experience letters are sent to parents/carers of all Year 10 students who attend John O' Gaunt School during Term 3.
2. Parents/carers should give their consent for their child to take part in the programme and agree to the responsibilities/expectations as set out in the letter i.e. punctual attendance/behaviour whilst off school site, advising the school and employer of non-attendance and arranging to collect their child from the work experience placement should they be requested to do so.
3. West Berks Education Business Partnership carries out the placement Health and Safety checks for each organisation where the placement is found so that it meets the criteria required
4. Employers must ensure that they are compliant with all data protection and GDPR regulations in reference to the storage, protection, retention and access to personal information.
5. Information relating to the students' health or any other factors that may affect the placement MUST be passed on to the employer, for the benefit of the student and Employer.
6. Prior to confirming the placement, West Berks Education Partnership will ensure that any personal protective equipment necessary for the placement such as safety footwear, can be provided by the employer, parent/carer should it be needed.
7. The Work Experience Co-ordinator will provide a Health and Safety briefing to every student who is attending a Work Experience Placement. This will be part of the Work Experience carousel that all Year 10 students will attend as part of their preparation in readiness for the placement.
8. Parents/carers MUST give their written consent for every placement that their child is allocated, after having read the information sent out to them specific to the company and any risks involved.
9. During the placement, the Work Experience Co-ordinator or member of staff will visit employers where time allows otherwise phone calls and emails are carried out to confirm any issues or concerns.
10. Any concerns in relation to the visit must be reported to the Work Experience Coordinator as soon as they arise. As a result, an unannounced visit by a member of staff may be put in place to ensure the safety of the student.
11. Letters written by students are sent to all employers thanking them for their support.

12. Employer feedback will be part of the Work Experience Logbook that students will complete as part of their journey throughout the week.

Responsibilities that West Berks Education Business Partnership will undertake:

- Provide the relevant suitability check paperwork for completion by all parties.
- Complete placement suitability health and safety checks in line with HSE guidance
- Support employers and the schools in the evaluation of placements.

Responsibilities of the Parent / Carer in relation to a Work Experience Placement:

- The parent/carer must give written consent and agree to the responsibilities/expectations of the Work Experience Programme for their child.
- Complete the written consent form for the specific Work Experience Placement prior to the student starting which will be on the Portal.
- Ensure that the student has a means of travel to/from, is punctual and attends the Work Experience placement on a daily basis until such time that the placement ends.
- Advise John O' Gaunt School and the Work Experience Placement at the earliest opportunity if the student is unable to attend.
- If the student chooses not to attend their placement because they do not want to, the parent/carer must advise John O' Gaunt School and the employer immediately and ensure that their child attends school instead.
- If personal protective equipment is required by a work placement, the parent/carer must ensure that this is taken/worn by the student for the duration of the placement.
- Discuss the importance of Health and Safety with their child and encourage compliance for the duration of the work placement.
- If the parent/carer has any concerns at all relating to their child's Work Experience Placement, they must inform a member of staff at John O' Gaunt School immediately.
- Encourage the completion of the "Work Experience Placement Daily Diary" by the student – this may have to be completed at home.

Responsibilities of the students in relation to their Work Experience placement:

Students should be respectful, polite, follow instructions and be willing to try new things whilst on placement. Whilst on placement, students must understand that they are representing John O' Gaunt School and so behaviour must be appropriate and acceptable.

- Students agree to being dressed appropriately for their Work Experience Placement and will take guidance on this from the Work Experience Co-ordinator or the employer.
- If student has any concerns whilst on placement, they must report them to their parent/carer and a member of staff at John O' Gaunt School
- Students will be expected to complete the "Work Experience Daily Diary" whilst on placement. This will need to be signed by the employer on a regular basis and an opportunity given for them to provide feedback.
- Students should notify the school if they no longer wish to continue with the placement. They agree to attend school immediately if they choose not to continue with the placement altogether or on occasional days.

Own placement

Students arrange their own placements, providing the following:

- An own placement form is completed by parents/carers and employers
- The employer must have suitable employers' liability insurance with adequate coverage and a copy of this will be requested before confirming a placement. Placements may not be approved if this is not in place.
- The placement is not undertaken at the home of an employer
- John O'Gaunt school reserves the right not to approve any placement

Hours and payment:

- Students will not work more than eight hours per day
- Students should not work more than five consecutive days in a seven-day period
- Employers should make NO payment to students whilst on Work experience

Equal Opportunities – Work Experience

All staff at John O' Gaunt School have a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity, which ensures that all students have an entitlement and appropriate access to work experience regardless of race, gender, religion, ability, disability, social background or sexual orientation. All advice given will be impartial and confidential. Students will be helped to understand the importance of equal opportunities and be made aware of the risks of stereotyping and discrimination.

Safeguarding

John O'Gaunt School has a thorough and comprehensive Safeguarding policy which supports all areas of school life, including the Work Experience Programme, ensuring that the educational experience of our students is the best it can be.

The important role of parents in the whole process of Careers Guidance is recognised as vital, as a result parents/carers are welcome to contact John O' Gaunt School if they have any concerns or wish to discuss their child's career plans or work experience placements.

The employer is responsible for the welfare of the student during a work placement and is aware of child protection issues, particularly responsibility under the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000 to disclose the names of individuals who are disqualified from working with children, where known to them.

Child Protection guidance notes will be provided to employers to ensure that the placement is a secure and productive environment for the provider and the student. This will include advice regarding behaviour guidelines, not being on their own with a young person, adherence to equal opportunities procedures and what to do if a student makes a disclosure in the workplace.

When DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks will be required:

- For **most work experience placements** where students are supervised and not in regulated activity, DBS checks are not required.
- **Enhanced DBS checks ARE required** when students will be:
 - Working in schools, nurseries, or childcare settings
 - Working in healthcare or care home settings
 - Having unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults
 - Undertaking any other 'regulated activity'
- West Berks Education Business Partnership will assess this as part of their suitability checks.
- The school reserves the right to require DBS checks for any placement where there are safeguarding concerns
- For placement where adult employees will be working alone with students, **the employee will be required to have an up-to-date DBS check.**

Impact:

The impact of work experience will be:

- Closing the gap between work and school
- Engaging the disengaged students.
- Socialisation of students.
- Social, Emotional, and Mental Health benefits for students.
- Practical skills development.
- Career opportunities and role awareness.

- Preparing for recruitment procedures and working practices.
- Identifying essential skills, and developing them, can support students with their next steps in all places of work and different careers.

Monitoring:

The Work Experience Coordinator will monitor the Work Experience Programme on a regular basis throughout the academic year to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme and to collect outcome data.

This collection of data to monitor the impact will be through:

- Student voice through their daily diary entries.
- Skills Builder benchmark tool to monitor the development of the essential skills.
- Compass+
- Website and newsletter reports.
- Onward destinations – how has the work experience influenced this?

The Work Experience Policy will be reviewed and amended should any changes/improvements be made.