



EDUCATION
SOUTH WEST

Work Experience Policy

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ESW Work Experience Policy
Version 0.2
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1. Introduction

Work experience is an integral part of our pupils' entitlement to CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) and this clearly supports Gatsby Benchmark 6 "Experiences of Workplaces" which states:

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.

[A guide to Gatsby Benchmark 6 | Gatsby Benchmarks](#)

Work experience gives young people vital insights into the world of work, encourages them to aspire to great things, and helps them to prepare for their future. It bridges the gap between school, college and work and helps young people make decisions about their future and develop new and existing skills.

The opportunity to participate in work experience is provided to all pupils by the end of their compulsory years. Pupils are encouraged to find placements linked to career paths that suit their interests, skills and strengths with the absence of stereotypes, which are actively challenged.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), or any other additional needs, will be supported appropriately through liaison with parents/carers and relevant staff i.e. the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and the placement provider.

2. Our aims

Work experience should:

- Enhance pupils' knowledge of the world of work
- Develop pupils' employability skills
- Provide an insight into the skills, qualities and attitudes required by particular sectors and employers
- Provide opportunities for personal and social development – including self-confidence, time management, personal organisation and resilience
- Help prepare pupils for the world of work
- Enable pupils to make cross-curricular links
- Support the School's CEIAG provision
- Provide pupils with an opportunity for self-evaluation

3. Statutory and Regulatory Framework

This policy reflects and should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 (DfE) – statutory guidance for schools and colleges.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance.
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on young workers and work experience
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- The Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990 – treating work experience students as employees for health and safety purposes
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) guidance on regulated activity with children and supervision.
- DfE Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (2025) including Provider Access Legislation (PAL).
- The updated Gatsby Benchmarks (2025), particularly Benchmark 6: Experiences of Workplaces.

4. Provision

The opportunity for a work placement is offered to students during their time in school. The timing varies in each school but is usually during Year 10 and Year 12. Some schools will facilitate work experience on an ad-hoc basis as part of an individual plan to support a child's education. This will be in addition to the universal offer to all students.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board / Local Governing Bodies:

Oversee compliance, receive assurance through annual reporting on work experience delivery, safeguarding and H&S.

Headteachers:

Ensure compliant implementation; allocate sufficient resources and staffing (CEIAG Lead/Work Experience Lead/DSL).

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Ensure safeguarding arrangements, vetting decisions and incident management; liaise with employers and LA safeguarding partners as required.

Work Experience Lead / Careers Leader:

Coordinate placements, documentation, consent, and evaluation; secure meaningful experiences aligned with Benchmark 6; ensure SEND adjustments.

SENCO/Additional Needs Lead:

Provide information on needs and reasonable adjustments; co-plan supported placements.

Placement Provider/Employer:

Responsible for workplace H&S; induction, supervision and risk management; cooperate with safeguarding reporting.

Students and Parents/Carers:

Engage with preparation, attend briefings, follow conduct and safety instructions, report concerns immediately.

6. Management and coordination

Approval of work placements is the responsibility of the School and the School manages all documentation for placements. They can be sourced through a number of different methods including personal contacts, school contacts or external provider contacts, e.g. Careers South West

The following guidance from HSE supports the role of the work experience organiser (inhouse or external).

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/organisers.htm>

Work experience organisers have no responsibility under health and safety law for work experience students. The employer is responsible for workplace health and safety.

As the work experience organiser, you need to take reasonable steps to satisfy yourself that any work-related risks to a student are managed by the employer. Reasonable checks should be kept in proportion to the risks involved without second-guessing the employer's assessments and procedures. Talking with them will help you identify workplaces or tasks that would not be suitable for certain students.

Do not introduce unnecessary additional paperwork that could lead to employers being discouraged from offering placements. It is likely to be far more informative to talk with the employer about:

- what work the student will do
- what the relevant precautions are
- the planned arrangements for the induction, training and supervision of the student

Insurance

Ask the employer if they have employers' liability insurance and whether it covers work experience students as employees. There is no need for you to visit the employer to confirm this. Ask them to let you have a copy of the insurance certificate and make sure it covers the period of the work experience placement. **(HSE Website – 2026)**

National legislation from the HSE and the DfE will be followed to ensure the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils while on work experience. The School only authorises placements which have met all of our safeguarding requirements (see below).

7. Safety considerations

The HSE guidance for work experience and placements is invaluable and should be shared with staff and placement providers.

The following guidance from HSE relates to young workers. When setting up placements employers should be directed to this guidance. It is the role of the employer to manage the risks associated with the workplace taking into the account the age and maturity of the young people in the work place – see guidance.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/employer/risks.htm>

8. Considerations for School

Schools need to read the following HSE guidance carefully to assess their role in the setting up of placements.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/schools-colleges.htm>

Risk assessment

Schools and colleges or those arranging placements for students, for example Education Business Partners (EBPs) or third-party independent organisations/businesses should check the employer has risk management arrangements in place. What they cover in their risk assessment depends [on the level of risk](#).

You do not need additional paperwork for assurance purposes or to second guess the employer's risk assessment or their risk control measures. You are unlikely to have the knowledge to evaluate it and could give the false impression that you have 'approved' it.

Work with parents to make sure employers know in advance about students who might be at greater risk, for example due to health conditions or learning difficulties, so they can consider them.

Pass on relevant information about the student to the employer and advise on the suitability of a student for a particular placement.

Checks

For employers who are new to taking students on work experience, talk through what the student will do and any relevant precautions. It might be helpful to make a note of your conversation.

You do not need to do it all again for a new student where an employer is known to you and has

a good track record, and the student's needs are no different to those on past placements.

Also, don't do duplicate checks on employers. If you are using a third party to arrange placements, work with them to make sure employers are not requested to do things twice.

Where there is a third party organising the placements, they should work with you to ensure there is no duplication in arrangements or processes. (HSE Website – 2026)

9. Considerations for the placement provider

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/employer/risks.htm>

Under HSE guidance (the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990), pupils on work experience are treated as employees for health and safety purposes. The placement provider has the same duty of care to the pupils as it does to its own employees. The provider must ensure that any young person on placement is protected from any risks which are a consequence of their lack of experience or an absence of awareness of existing or potential risks or the fact that a young person has not fully matured.

Employers' existing workplace risk assessments may already cover the risks that work experience pupils may be exposed to. Their existing Employer's Liability Insurance will cover such placements.

10. Assessing the risk

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/employer/risks.htm>

Employers are required to have risk assessments for their employees, although small employers (with fewer than five employees) do not have to have them written down. We will ask placement providers to carry out an appropriate workplace induction, which may include undertaking the risk assessments with pupils, in accordance with the HSE guidance:

- For placements in **low-risk environments**, such as offices or shops, with everyday risks that will mostly be familiar to the pupil, we consider that existing arrangements for other employees should suffice.
- For environments with **less familiar risks** to the pupil (e.g. in light assembly or packing facilities), we will ask the placement provider to make arrangements to manage the risks. We consider this should include induction, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment needed.
- For a placement in a **higher-risk environment** such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing we will ask the provider to consider what work the pupil will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed and to satisfy themselves that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and that they work in practice.
- In addition to this, we will ask that the risk assessments take into account the pupil's potential inexperience, lack of awareness of risks and their stage of development. Where it is appropriate to do so, relevant information (such as a care plan) may be sent to the employer to allow them to consider how best to provide safe methods of working. The advice of the SENCO, Pastoral Leader e.g., Head of Year/Support Officer and other relevant staff shall be

sought in such cases before information is sent from the school.

Briefing our pupils in school:

- Each school will deliver an assembly, prior to the pupils going out on placement, which reiterates the importance of work experience and its benefits. This assembly will also be used to explain about health and safety in the workplace and confirms the procedure for raising any health and safety, as well as safeguarding, concerns.
- Each school will reinforce these messages in the final few days before the pupils go out on placement, through the pastoral system (tutor time).
- The school requests that the placement provider brief pupils on their first day of induction on health and safety; how to identify hazards and control measures that can be put in place to reduce risk of injury or accident.

11. Safeguarding our pupils

Guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Department for Education in the document "Keeping Children Safe in Education" indicates (adapted to contextualise to ESW schools):

- ESW Schools organising work experience placements should ensure that the placement provider has policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. This must include but is not limited to Public Liability Insurance and Risk Assessment(s) related to young people involved in work experience.
- Children's barred list checks via the DBS might be required on some people who supervise a child under the age of 16 on a work experience placement. ESW schools should consider the specific circumstances of the work experience. Consideration **must** be given in particular to the nature of the supervision and the frequency of the activity being supervised, to determine what, if any, checks are necessary.
- These considerations would include whether the person providing the teaching/training/instruction/supervision to the child on work experience will be:
 - unsupervised themselves, and
 - providing the teaching/training/instruction frequently (more than three days in a 30 day period, or overnight).
- If the person working with the child is unsupervised and the same person is in frequent contact with the child, the work is likely to be regulated activity relating to children. If so, ESW schools will either ask the employer providing the work experience to ensure that the person providing the instruction or training is not a barred person by means of a DBS check or, where the situation requires (following assessment of risk), carry out the DBS themselves. Where the Work experience provider, under these circumstances, is a close family member (i.e. parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle), the school may consider that it will not be necessary to carry out a DBS check.
- Schools and colleges are not able to request that an employer obtains an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information for staff supervising children aged 16 to 17 on work experience.

- If the activity undertaken by the child on work experience takes place in a specified place, such as a school or sixth form college, and gives the opportunity for contact with children, this may itself be considered to be regulated activity relating to children. In these cases, and where the child doing the work experience is 16 years of age or over, the work experience provider e.g. school or sixth form college should consider whether a DBS enhanced check should be requested for the child in question.
- Pupils below the age of 16 cannot have a DBS check undertaken.

All placement providers will be given guidance prior to the commencement of the placement (see appendix 1) which highlights good practice for safeguarding staff and how to report a safeguarding concern.

The School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy applies in *all* work experience arrangements which take place during term-time only in line with the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated annually in September).

Young people must know they will be listened to and believed if they report any concerns. They must know that when on work experience they can report to a DSL in their school or any member of staff by phone, email, text or in person, at any time. The member of staff arranging the work experience must ensure this is understood by the pupil beforehand. (Pupils will attend a preparation session with the careers advisor)

Schools must ask employers/providers to provide signed agreement to the following:

If, while on work experience, a pupil discloses anything that gives you reason to suspect that they may be at risk of harm, you should:

- Listen carefully and take what is being said seriously;
- Tell the pupil you have a duty to report concerns;
- Tell the pupil you cannot promise confidentiality; Write down what the pupil says in their own words and record the date of the conversation;
- Contact the pupil's school or college immediately and without delay;
- The school will ask you to follow this up with a written report with details of the time, date and what happened.

A template for a signed agreement from employers is available in Appendix 1.

Online work experience

Most online work experience involves multiple participants organised by companies/organisations such as the NHS, national banks, British Gas, tech companies, the armed services. These provide valuable insights and opportunities for young people to find out more about the workplace and future careers. Risks to personal safety are considered to be low.

On some occasions, a young person may be invited to a 1:1 online meeting with a provider. If this happens within school hours, the school must take all reasonable steps to ensure that,

if such a meeting is organised:

1. the school is aware when the meeting is taking place and the length of the meeting;
2. parental consent has been given; if consent is verbal this must be logged so that there is a record;
3. the young person knows who to report to if they have any concerns;
4. the option of having a member of staff present has been discussed.

The school is not responsible for online meetings arranged independently by a young person or their parents/carers without consulting the school, and for those which take place in the evenings, at weekends or in school holidays. Young people must however be reassured that they can report any concern to a member of staff regardless of when it took place, in line with the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

All pupils who access the work experience programme will be asked to evaluate and reflect on their experiences immediately after they return from their placements. This will take place through, but will not necessarily be limited to, a formal evaluation and other reflective work through the pastoral system.

In addition, the work experience programme is reviewed by leaders responsible for work experience. This review is based on evidence from pupils and placement providers and will be presented to the SLT and the Governors as part of the CEIAG reporting procedures.

The review will:

- Consider the extent to which the programme meets the stated aims
- Consider any health and safety issues that have arisen, including from the induction provided
- Calculate the percentage of pupils arranging their own placement
- Calculate the percentage of pupils completing a placement
- Consider reasons for failure to complete a placement
- Identify areas for improvement, which will be incorporated into the CEIAG development plan.

Appendix 1

The following information (or contextualized version) should be sent to all employers before the start of the work experience placement.

Dear Employer.

Thank you for agreeing to support [Insert school name] and our students with their work experience placement. Please see below some guidance and support in relation to managing the safeguarding and wellbeing of our students. Please ensure that all staff who will be responsible for the student during the work experience placement have read this information and a signed copy (by the work experience supervisor) of this document is returned to the school.

Employer Guidance:

Positive role models:

During the work experience, the employer should act in a mentor capacity and therefore, needs to be an appropriate role model with due regard for appropriate conduct with learners. It is therefore important to:

- Act as an appropriate role model
- Value a learner's contributions and opinions
- Encourage them to reach their desired goal
- Listen to the learner and discuss relevant topics
- Ensure the learner feels supported and safe in the working environment

It is also important that work experience supervisors are not put in a vulnerable position, so it is suggested that, where possible, liaison with learners should:

- Take place in an open space with other people present where possible
- Be within appropriate working hours
- Consider if questions asked about personal or family life are of an appropriate nature.

It is not appropriate for employers to initiate or accept social media contact with a pupil unless this is a function with the role that the pupil is undertaking. If social media contact is necessary, then employers and those working with young people are advised to ensure that this is ceased following the completion of the work experience placement.

Disclosure from a learner:

If you have concerns about the safety, protection or wellbeing of a young person you are working with (for example something the learner has said, their behaviour or emotional state) or they disclose information that leads you to believe that the child has suffered or is suffering harm, then immediately contact the school and ask to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the Safeguarding Team. If your concerns are that the child is at risk of immediate harm, then you as the employer (or member of staff allocated to the young person) has a responsibility to call the police on 999. This should be immediately followed by contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school.

If the employer, or those working directly with the young person, are approached by them

to initiate a disclosure that raises concern that they may be subject to harm, we ask that you:

- Listen carefully and take what is being said seriously;
- Tell the pupil you have a duty to report concerns;
- Tell the pupil you cannot promise confidentiality;
- Write down what the pupil says in their own words and record the date of the conversation;
- Contact the pupil's school as soon as possible;

The school will ask you to follow this up with a written report with details of the time, date and what happened.

Further information regarding safeguarding can be found on our website by following this link: <https://educationsouthwest.org.uk/policies/>

In order to ensure the safeguarding of our pupils we require written confirmation that you:

- i) have policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm;
- ii) understand that it is your duty to respond if one of our pupils discloses something to you which is a safeguarding concern.

This is in the best interests of both yourself and our pupils, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated annually in September); school safeguarding policies and good safeguarding practice.

Contact Information:

School Name:			
Designated Safeguarding Lead		Contact Information	
Work Experience Lead		Contact Information	
Local Authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	0345 151 1071	Out of Hours Contact information	0345 6000 388

Please sign and return this letter to confirm that you agree to this guidance.

Print name of employer: _____

Signed by employer: _____

Date: _____

Print name of designated safeguarding lead (DSL): _____

Signed by DSL: _____

Date: _____