

Most young people taking part in their school's work experience programme are aged 14 to 17. A young person is anyone younger than 18 years of age.

Due to their age, lack of experience and maturity pupils may be less aware than adults of potential risks in the workplace and typical working practice.

It is therefore particularly important that you are aware of your responsibilities towards them. During their placement you will be responsible for both their social and physical wellbeing.

These guidelines will help both you and the pupil to have a safe, positive and enjoyable work placement.

Working Environment

Providers have an obligation to provide a safe working environment for their staff and work experience pupils and a responsibility to protect pupils.

This includes supporting and reassuring pupils, many of whom will be new to the world of work. It's important for all staff to remember that young people can sometimes be nervous or impressionable, so any situations or conversations that may cause them embarrassment or concern should be avoided.

Supervision

The placement supervisor should be competent in their work role, mature in their attitudes and able to establish a good working relationship with young people. We recommend that, where possible, you or your staff avoid being on your own with the young person in an isolated or closed environment. Where this is unavoidable you should make sure that you have one of the following safeguards:

- the written consent of the pupil's parent or carer (the school will arrange this); or
- a valid PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) Certificate for the member of staff concerned.

It should be noted that rules on one-to-one working with a young person vary between different local authorities. Some have policies in place which do not allow one-to-one working under any circumstances, however, for those who allow this, the safeguarding measures above will apply.

Physical contact with the young person may sometimes be unavoidable, for example, when showing them how to operate machinery or equipment, but we recommend that you keep this to a minimum whenever possible.

Contact with other children

Pupils are not allowed to work unsupervised with other children under the age of 16. Even when they are supervised, there may be some activities that the pupil cannot take part in. We will provide you with detailed information where appropriate.

Disclosure of personal information

Occasionally young people may relate personal confidential information to a work colleague that gives rise to concern for their physical or emotional safety. In such situations you should speak to the placement supervisor or organiser. They will alert the school's work placement co-ordinator or head teacher.

Health & Safety

Where hazards exist in the workplace, employers should already have control measures in place. Employers should consider whether anything further is needed to control the risks to young people; this will apply to legally required age limits on the use of some equipment and machinery (e.g. forklift trucks and some woodworking machinery) as well as preventing exposure to biological agents or harmful chemicals. For further information, please refer to www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/indg364.pdf

Important information!

- Employers should not receive young people unless they have received relevant confirmation from the school or Local Authority that the placement has been authorised to take place.
- The employer will identify key member(s) of staff from the organisation to support the young person on the placement.
- The employers must ensure that their employees and workplace supervisors know exactly what is expected of them in order to support the student, and be aware of their legal responsibilities. Negotiation and agreement around placement tasks (and restrictions) will be discussed with the local authority.
- All employers are required to sign an agreement or contract (often referred to as a Letter of Understanding or LOU) stating that they understand, and will adhere to, the conditions therein.
- An appropriate level of supervision of young people must be provided at all times.
- The school must be notified immediately of any accident pertaining to the young person while on placement.
- The school must be notified immediately if the young person fails to attend their placement.
- The school must be notified immediately of any instance of indiscipline that requires the young person to be removed from the workplace and returned to school. The school and employer will agree the best course of action and will notify the parent/carer where appropriate.