

Guidance for educational establishments on safety for students on work experience placements

Context

Young people in schools usually go on work experience placements during Year 10 or Year 11. Schools normally organise the work experience placements in partnership with specialist work experience companies, although some young people are able to make their own arrangements with the agreement of their school.

The benefits to pupils of experiencing a working environment are clear – a recent report commissioned by CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) concluded that:

Work experience could lead to clear and realistic career ambitions for 16-year-olds, which reduces the chances of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). The report also found that 68% of teachers felt pupils returned from work experience more motivated to try harder at school, while two-thirds of pupils said their placement helped them decide how to go about achieving their career goals.

Responsibilities of the education establishments

The duty of care that educational establishments hold for students whilst they are attending school continues whilst a young person is on a work experience placement, whoever arranges the placement. This includes safeguarding, health and safety as well as ensuring that the educational outcomes are of benefit to the young person.

In the case of community schools the responsibility lies with the Governing Body in conjunction with Local Authority. To assist schools in carrying out the Health and Safety element of this duty they should ensure that the attached checklist (see Appendix A) is completed and signed off *before* any placement is started.

With non-community schools the responsibility lies with the Governing Body. They must be satisfied that the duty of care extends to the placements and must ensure, as a minimum, that all the areas covered in the attached (Appendix A) have been fully checked.

Responsibilities of the employer offering Work Experience

Some employers are unsure about their responsibilities whilst having a young person on their premises. Appendix B is a supplement to this guidance that is aimed at employers to help and encourage potential placements.

Checklist – work experience

Name of student:

Placement:

Person carrying out checks:

Signed:

Date:

		Tick
Insurance	Does the employer hold: Employers Liability insurance and Public Liability insurance. If no, see note 1 below	
	Where the student will be a vehicle passenger, does the employer hold current business vehicle insurance? Certificate viewed?	
Prohibitions	Does the employer have adequate systems in place for the prevention of under-18s under prohibited equipment and/or chemicals?	
Policy	Do they have a H&S policy in place? See note 2 below	
	Is there an identified person responsible for managing H&S?	
Risk Assessment	Has the employer carried out full risk assessment to consider the risk to the young person?	
	Has the employer adequately controlled any significant risks identified? See note 3 below	
First Aid	Is there a qualified first aider or appointed person?	
	Is First Aid equipment provided and records kept of treatment?	
Accident Procedures	Is there an Accident Book available?	
	Is the employer aware of accident reporting procedures under RIDDOR?	
Manual Handling	Is the young person expected to lift items?	
	If yes, is there appropriate equipment provided?	

	Is manual Handling training provided?	
Environment	Is the workplace suitable and have adequate welfare facilities	
	Adequate heating	
	Adequate lighting	
	Suitable and clean toilets	
	Suitable eating	
	Drinking water available	
	First Aid facilities	
	Hours of work hours of work agreed and suitable?	
Fire	Does the workplace have suitable means of raising the alarm in the event of a fire?	
	Are the adequate escape routes?	
PPE	Is protective personal equipment required?	
	If yes, who is responsible for supplying PPE?	
Other	Have you disclosed any information to the employers that may be required to keep the young person safe? (e.g. medical conditions / allergies etc)	
Safeguarding Usual safeguarding policy and procedures apply (Child Protection Procedures and Working Together)	Is the young person aware of how to report any concerns that arise during the placement?	
	Is the employer aware of the procedure if the young person makes an allegation or other disclosure in the workplace?	
	Is the lead person (as you can ascertain) in the placement a 'suitable person' and aware of appropriate boundaries?	

Note 1: There are some circumstances where this is not required – please contact your insurance provider to confirm that you are covered if there is no Employer and/or Public Liability insurance.

Note 2: There is only a requirement for this if there are more than five employees

Note3: Where the person is under 16 yrs, the employer has a duty to inform parents / guardians of any risks

Guidance for Employers on employing Young People

This guidance document and accompanying sample risk assessment, is designed to assist employers who employ young persons as part of work placements/experience programmes. All people are at particular risk of injury in the first six months of a job as they may be unaware of existing or potential risks. Young people more than any other may fall into this category

- young people may lack experience or maturity or may be unaware of how to raise concerns.
- they may not have reached physical maturity and therefore lack the strength demanded
- they may be eager to impress or please people with whom they work.

Those who employ young people can help them to understand the importance of health and safety at work. Sensible health and safety at work is about managing risks rather than expecting them to be eliminated. It involves ensuring that suitable control measures are in place that will ensure work practices can continue in a safe manner.

Periods of work experience and work-based learning will be the first time that most young people experience the work environment. Good preparation and organisation of placements is essential if these opportunities are to be rewarding and safe introductions to the world of work.

Important definitions concerning young people and children

Health and safety law defines people by age:

- a **young person** is anyone under eighteen years of age (young people);
- a **child** is anyone who is not over compulsory school age. He or she has not yet reached the official age at which they may leave school, also referred to as the minimum school leaving age (MSLA). (NB the oldest pupils of compulsory school age, those born in September for example, may be as old as 16 years and 10 months in year 11 before they leave school on the last Friday in June.)

The **law on working time defines a young worker** as being below 18 years of age and above the MSLA.

Risks to young people at work

How young people are affected by workplace risks: what do you need to know?

All risk assessments need to take account of certain features which apply to young people.

Risk assessment

Before employing a young person, your health and safety risk assessment must take some of the following factors into account:

- the fitting-out and layout of the workplace and the particular site where they will work and all associated hazards that the young person will encounter in the course of their work;
- the nature of any physical, biological and chemical agents they might be exposed to, for how long and to what extent;
- what types of work equipment will be used and how this will be handled;
- how the work and processes involved are organised;
- level of health and safety training to be given to the young person;

NB In all cases, you will need to review the risk assessment if the nature of the work changes or you have reason to believe that it is no longer valid.

Outcome of the risk assessment

In carrying out the risk assessment you should identify the measures you need to take to control or eliminate health and safety risks. In many cases you will find that the risks to young people are adequately controlled if you are complying with other specific health and safety law, e.g. the Manual Handling Operations Regulations, or the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH).

If in doubt, you may wish to get professional advice on identifying and controlling the risks. If a significant risk remains in spite of your best efforts to do what is reasonably practicable to control it, you must not employ the young person to do this work.

Restrictions on the work of young people

The extent of the risks you identify in the risk assessment will determine whether you should restrict the work of the young people you employ. Except in special circumstances, you should not employ young people to do work which:

- is beyond their physical or psychological capacity;
- exposes them to substances chronically harmful to human health, e.g. toxic or carcinogenic substances, or effects likely to be passed on genetically or likely to harm the unborn child;

- exposes them to radiation;
- involves a risk of accidents which they are unlikely to recognise because of e.g. their lack of experience, training or attention to safety;
- involves a risk to their health from extreme heat, noise or vibration.

Information for young people and for their parents/carers

You must tell all your employees, including those under 18 years of age, about the risks to their health and safety identified by the assessment, and the measures put in place to control them. You also need to tell them about the procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger.

Before you employ children of compulsory school age or offer them a work experience placement, you must let their parents or carers know the key findings of the risk assessment and the control measures you have taken. You do not have to provide this information in writing, and in the case of work experience, you may ask the work experience organiser to help you in providing information to parents or carers of any child seeking a placement.

Consent from parents/carers

You do not need parental consent to employ young people above the MSLA, but your local authority does require you to obtain it before you employ a child of compulsory school age. You must provide the local authority with relevant information on the child so that he/she can be issued with an employment permit. The local authority will advise you on your full responsibilities, these include providing written confirmation that you have completed a risk assessment and have written approval from the parents or carers. When you are offering a work experience placement for school pupils/students, the work experience organiser will deal with parental consent.

You should obtain written consent from parents or carers before taking on a child of compulsory school age in agriculture and restrict their activities to those that are permitted.

Training and supervision

Young people need training most when they first start a job; they need it to increase their capabilities and competencies to a level where they can do the work without putting themselves and others at risk. It is not enough to make training available; you should make sure that it is undertaken and also check that key messages have been understood. Young people will also need training and instruction on the hazards and risks present in the workplace, and on the preventive and control measures put in place to protect their health and safety. This training should include a basic introduction to health and safety, e.g. fire and evacuation procedures etc.

As well as training, you will need to bear in mind that young people are also very likely to need more supervision than adults. Effective supervision will also help to monitor the effectiveness of the training young people have received, and there will be clear benefits in assessing whether a young person has the necessary capacity and competence to do the job.

Example

Young Person's Task	Main Risks	Control Measures
Serving food and drink	Slips, trips, manual handling	Company induction training covers safe practice in relation to each of these tasks. Specifically, it covers safe handling and use of knives, safe lifting techniques, use of appropriate protective equipment when using the dishwasher, cleaning floors and disposing of refuse.
Making sandwiches	Use of knives	
Use of dishwasher	Manual handling and use of cleaning materials	
Refuse Disposal	Cuts from broken glass, manual handling	
Cash handling	Aggressive customers	
Use/Cleaning of food-slicers, food-processors, potato-chippers	Injury to hands from moving machinery parts	The risks from all these tasks are considered sufficiently high that children should not be permitted to carry them out under any circumstances. Young people under 18 can do so, provided they have been trained or are being supervised by a competent person. All appropriate precautions must be in place. (see health and safety manual)
Handling of corrosive cleaning materials, including oven and beerline-cleaner	Chemical burns to skin or eyes	
Work at height	Injury from falls	
Use of waste compactor	Injury from contact with moving machinery	
Cleaning, draining and use of fat fryers	Fire and burns from hot oil	
De-boning of meat	Severe cut or stab from knife	