



WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY

Receiving work experience placements

Introduction

The Learn to Live Federation (incorporating Ellen Tinkham School, Ellen Tinkham FE College, and Bidwell Brook School) welcomes work experience students and seeks to offer them a valuable and enjoyable period of activity and learning. It is important that proper preparation and planning is undertaken so that everyone involved can benefit and to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of the student is fully addressed. All staff responsible for work experience students should be aware of the County Council's requirements described below. The Learn to Live Federation does not offer volunteering opportunities.

DCC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy and organisation

Students on placement should be treated as employees under the DCC's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Particular attention must be given to assessing possible risks associated with the projected work.

It is a legal requirement for placement organisers to brief parents when work experience students are below minimum school leaving age, summarising any risks, which might be associated with the work, and noting precautions to be adopted. In any event, irrespective of age, the students themselves must always be briefed.

Supervision and Control

Owing to their inexperience, lack of awareness and possible variations in level of commitment, students on placements must be considered to be at potentially greater risk than employees. This does not necessarily imply that staff should be over-protective towards students on placement but it does require that a **watchful eye** is kept on them to ensure that they continue to comply with any health and safety precautions specified.

The actual level of supervision must be proportional to the likelihood and severity of possible injury/ill health. Particular attention should be

given to combating risks which could arise at lunch breaks or other times when, for obvious practical reasons, the normal level of supervision might be difficult to maintain.

Risk Assessment

Before receiving the work experience student, an assessment of any risk must be carried out and in the event of a student under 16, a copy provided to the parents or guardians, organised by the student's school/college.

A risk assessment has the following stages:

- Identify possible hazards i.e. factors which have the potential to cause harm
- Size up the risks the hazards might create i.e. the probability of an incident coupled with the most likely degree of injury if the incident were to occur
- Introduce appropriate precautions or safeguards, in proportion to the foreseeable risk.

This approach should take into account problems, which might arise from:

- The working environment.
- Knowledge, skill and disposition of the work experience student concerned
- Level of supervision

Precautions selected should be agreed with the Student Coordinator for Ellen Tinkham School, Ellen Tinkham FE College and Bidwell Brook School with the representative of the Work Experience Organiser before the work experience student arrives. A copy of the DCC Work Experience Placement Risk Assessment Form RA28 should be completed and provided to the relevant School, College, or Work Experience organiser.

Health and Safety

When the student arrives introduce the person who will be directly supervising the work experience student as quickly as possible. Together they should tour the work area, pointing out the most significant health and safety factors, including the evacuation procedure.

Work experience students may not always have the same level of awareness or commitment, which might be expected of employees working on the same task. For this reason, the following points must be suitably covered in the initial meeting and/or tour of the work premises, and repeated thereafter as often as is necessary.

- **Heavy objects:** Work experience students should be shown which objects they are permitted to lift or move and have the correct methods demonstrated.
- **Tidiness:** This is a major factor in health and safety and work experience students must play their part in keeping gangways and stairs clear, drawers and cupboard doors shut, loose cables from telephones, typewriters etc. tidy, and removing precariously placed objects which could fall on people.
- **Hazards:** Work experience students should be encouraged to spot and report them immediately to the supervisor.
- **Questions:** Work experience students are to be given every incentive to ask questions if they are unsure about any element of the placement.
- **Hygiene:** Work experience students should be shown washing facilities and the use of barrier creams or other related protective measures adopted locally should be explained. Special attention should be given to washing hands before meals and to any local rules regarding the taking of meals at the work experience, e.g. where chemicals are present.
- **First Aid:** Work experience students should be shown where first aid facilities are kept and notified on who provides first aid.
- **Accidents:** All accidents, however slight, must be reported and recorded. Work experience students should be shown where the Accident Book is kept and how to complete it. (Serious accidents involving absence from work or a visit to hospital must be reported on County Accident Form.)
- **Fire safety:** Each work experience student should be shown the fire precautions notice and have it explained, line by line. In particular, work experience students should know the fire alarm locations; how the signal will be given; the fire drill in terms of the means of escape, emergency exits, assembly points and the name of the person to whom to report. Work experience students must be informed of special precautions at the location against fire risk e.g. for storing flammable liquids.
- **Supervision:** Work experience students should be reminded that working situations are different from being in school or college as a student. Supervision will rarely be 100% and consequently work experience students are on trust to follow advice given. Obviously, this applies during working hours, but it applies especially during lunch breaks.

Accidents to any person on a placement within a DCC establishment.

The Student coordinator is responsible for notifying schools/colleges of any accidents to students undertaking a work experience placement within a DCC establishment and for following DCC's normal accident reporting procedure.

Devon health and Safety Service will be responsible for notifying the HSE in the event the accident is reportable under RIDDOR.

Conclusion

Health and safety is a continuous process. By their actions, particularly when performing tasks, the supervisors must set a good example and follow recognised safe working practices. Allowance should be made for possible lapses in work experience students' concentration and memory. It is dangerous to assume that they are adhering to methods they have been taught – a periodic check is essential for everybody's benefit.

Schools arranging work experience for students

Introduction

Day to day responsibility for the health and safety of work experience students rests with the placement providers, rather than with the schools or the placement organisers. However, the LA and schools do have an overall obligation to approve arrangements and general provisions for work experience.

Responsibilities of a school placing a student

Schools and/or DCC are responsible to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that non-employees, including students placed on work experience, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

Schools are responsible for providing work experience organisers with relevant information about students, for example about their health or suitability to understand and respond to the work environment in which they will be placed in.

Schools should ensure that in the interest of maintaining high standards of health and safety on a work experience scheme, the student is properly prepared and effectively supported during the placement and is fully briefed afterwards.

Schools are responsible for passing on to placement providers any information provided by either the parents or themselves regarding any health, behavioural or learning difficulties the student may have where these may put the student at higher risk.

Responsibilities of the work experience organisers

Work Experience organisers have an important role in vetting offers of placements to ensure suitability in respect of health and safety, in addition to the educational issues.

Work Experience Organisers have the same duties towards students who find their own placements, including where students are placed with family businesses.

Responsibilities of the work experience providers

All employers have the duty to undertake risk assessment. This process involves **identifying hazards** – the potential of a substance, process, activity, etc. to cause harm and **addressing practical risks** – the likelihood that the hazard will actually cause harm in particular circumstances, coupled with the severity and extent of the harm that is most likely to result.

For young people below the age of 18 there are additional regulations. These require employers to pay special attention to young people's potential lack of awareness, inexperience and level of physical and psychological maturity.

An additional responsibility is to let parents/guardians of any student under 16 know the key findings of the risk assessment and the control measures necessary. In practice, this is normally through the documentation provided by the Work Experience Organiser.

Accidents to DCC Students on placement

External placement providers are responsible for notifying schools of any accidents to DCC students undertaking a work experience placement. They will also be responsible for undertaking the formal notification to the HSE.

Schools will need to notify the Devon EBP and DCC of the accident, following the normal accident reporting procedures. In the event of a serious accident, Devon Health and Safety Service will liaise with the placement provider, Devon EBP and where appropriate, the HSE.

Conclusion

The continued success of the arrangements for work experience depends on the good sense and co-operation of all partners: the work

experience organising company, the LA, employers and the schools themselves.

Schools are not expected to know the fine details of health and safety law.

Other sources of information and advice.

Health and Safety:

- Devon Health & Safety Service
01392 382027 healthandsafety@devon.gov.uk
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

General:

- Devon Education Business Partnership
01392 215501 info@devonebp.org.uk