

# WORK EXPERIENCE

## 2 - 6 June 2025



### *Parent Guidelines*

Each year all Year 10 students at The Bishop of Winchester Academy participate in a work experience programme where they arrange and attend a one-week placement for themselves with a business or organisation.

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### **Work Experience – Why?**

In 2018 the Department for Education issued statutory guidance for schools laying out the requirement for Careers Guidance in schools. This set out the 8 “Gatsby Benchmarks” that schools must meet to ensure they are providing high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance to all students.

Benchmark 6 is *Experience of Workplaces* and this requires that every student 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. By the age of 16, every student should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have had.

The main aim of work experience is for students to learn employability skills, such as treating customers well and business awareness and this is achieved much more effectively in real work situations. Over 95% of schools and colleges identify employability skills and increased self-confidence as key benefits of experiences of work. We believe students will also gain important insights into their career interests and values, which will help them with their future decision making and that they will relate and apply the skills they are learning at school in the workplace. Career management skills such as organising, negotiating, networking and self-presentation can also be practised.

We believe it is important that our students gain a realistic ‘taster’ of how it is to look for work; the process of applying for a role and of being in the work place. Trying to get a work experience placement is a small indication of what it will be like in the future when trying to get a job. Students will learn that there are often too many people chasing too few jobs.

In today’s workplace paper qualifications, your GCSEs, A-levels, and BTEC courses, are important AND an employer will be looking for more than that. It has been shown that students who have completed a work experience placement have a competitive advantage – about 80% of employers think work experience is essential and two-thirds of employers would be more likely to hire a young person with work experience over someone with none.

Key employability skills include:

- being a constructive member of a working team
- the ability to match behaviour and attitude to the ethos or working values of an organisation, displaying a professional attitude and setting the highest standards for yourself
- having the initiative and resilience to solve problems in the workplace and in life in general
- being able to communicate appropriately, in writing or verbally, with customers or clients
- applying what has been learnt at school and using technology in support of a role or task

**The work experience programme will give students an opportunity to rehearse and practise these skills in a real-life situation.** Whilst every student is encouraged to find a placement that inspires and motivates them, we know that any type of placement a student undertakes can be used to support future applications for college, university, work or training. It can also be used to demonstrate those personal skills developed during the week - confidence, punctuality, team work, organisation or patience, for example.

## Work Experience – Where?

We strongly encourage students to think about where they would really like to do their work placement – this might be related to future career ambitions they already have or in a vocational area they are interested or curious about. Finding their own work experience placement is a great achievement for a student so we suggest they:

- Talk to parents/guardians/family friends – network your contacts and ask if you would be able to do your placement with them or if they know anybody you could contact
- Search for local employers that you would like to work for using the internet or online directories
- Think about companies or organisations that offer volunteering opportunities as they might be willing to offer work experience. There are lots of volunteering roles listed online
- Talk to your Mentor, Head of Year or the Careers & Work Experience Lead for suggestions

To meet the necessary Health and Safety criteria we are following the processes defined by Dorset Careers Hub and using their documentation. Above all, businesses must possess Employer's Liability Insurance. For more information please see the Dorset Careers Hub WEx Guides, which you can find on the [academy website](#). If you have any other concerns, please speak to the Careers and Work Experience Lead or email [careers@tbowa.org](mailto:careers@tbowa.org). Please note there is no guarantee that a student will be able to attend a placement with a particular employer.

All students will need to think about what they might expect to be doing day to day in their placement. They may not be asked to carry out all the responsibilities of a full-time employee over such a short time period but they are likely to be asked to assist with or support activities, to do routine administrative tasks, and shadow or observe the work of others. Fulfilling these tasks is still extremely valuable and is part of the experience for any trainee, new employee or work experience student. It is a great way to demonstrate skills such as enthusiasm, attention to detail or how you can be a valuable member of the team.

### Part Time Employment

Some students already have a Saturday job and may feel that it would be natural for them to do their work experience at that place. Such a situation could be acceptable, but we would strongly encourage students to take this opportunity to try out another, different type of work. If students do undertake their work experience with an existing employer, then the placement will still need to be confirmed as meeting the approval process and they cannot be paid for the time they spend on the work experience programme.

It is important to note that students engaging in part time employment, either at present or following their work experience placement, are legally required to obtain a child employment permit. The agreements drawn up by the Academy for a work experience placement only cover the week placement dates. An application for a work permit can be obtained from the Academy or from BCP Council.

## Work Experience – How?

All students will be given an Academy Work Experience Handbook to support them through the whole process of finding and securing a placement. The handbook includes information and guidance on how to contact employers, preparing a CV and cover letter and on what to expect from the application process. You can find a copy on the Work Experience page on the academy website. Students also have access to **Unifrog**, which is an online careers and employability website with extensive resources to support these activities. You can find out more about Unifrog on the Careers pages of the academy website.

Once a placement has been offered the employer, student and parent/guardian will all need to sign a Work Experience Agreement forms and return these to the academy.

## Work Experience – Support and Monitoring

There are a number of specific monitoring issues:

- The Academy cannot allow students to pursue a job that in any way endangers their health or wellbeing. The Work Experience Agreement form has a section you are required to sign confirming that your child has no known medical condition which could result in an unnecessary risk to his/her health or safety.
- Mentors, Head of Year and the Careers & Work Experience Lead will be monitoring each student to ensure that they are making progress in gaining a placement and that the placement is appropriate to the individual needs and abilities of the student.
- Whilst we accept that parental encouragement is essential, **we would like the students to arrange their own work experience as far as possible.**
- Immediately prior to the commencement of the work experience, all students will be given a Work Experience Diary. Students are given details of the contact name and phone number of the Careers & Work Experience Lead in case of concern or emergency.
- During the placement week each employer is contacted to ensure that the student has turned up for work/been attending and to gain feedback on their progress.
- At the end of the period of work, each student will be given a brief summary report from the employer in a section of the Work Experience Diary. These reports are very valuable as a reference when applying for future college placements, apprenticeships or work. A reflection session will take place when the students return to school.

## Work Experience – Additional Information

- Students will be required to complete a Work Experience Diary whilst they are at the workplace. This Diary can be used as a form of reference to support a student's application for future college and work applications. It is important that this diary is completed on a regular basis.
- Travel expenses will be borne entirely by the student/family as no contribution can be made by the Academy. Part of the pre-work experience planning done by the student should be to identify how they will get to and from work. Those students with a bus pass enabling them to travel to the Academy each day on the bus may **NOT** be able to utilise their bus pass in any way other than coming to the Academy. We recommend you check with your travel provider to confirm.
- Students are expected to attend their work placement in clean, smart and professional clothing as appropriate to the organisation they are working in. Some employers will provide all necessary forms of clothing and footwear while others will expect the student to equip themselves from their own finances. If students are unsure about what they should wear to work, they should confirm this with the employer when arranging their placement.
- **For data and child protection purposes students are instructed not to give any personal information when applying for a placement but should always use the Academy address/phone number and their school email address for their contact details.**
- It is important to point out that it is not a legal requirement for an employer to give payment to a student on work experience though occasionally an employer may reward a student with a small gift on the completion of a successful placement.

## What happens now?

The students will have an assembly at the start of the Year 10 academic year, where they will be told about the Work Experience Programme in more detail and will be provided with a handbook – you can find this now on the academy website. Please read through this with them at home so that you are able to support them through the different stages.

Mrs Bryan-Brown, our Careers & Work Experience Lead, is available for drop-in sessions during break and lunch to support students with their work experience search in the Careers Office. She is also contactable at [careers@tbowa.org](mailto:careers@tbowa.org).

Thank you for your support with this programme.

Mr Tiley  
Head of Year 10

Mrs Bryan-Brown  
Aspirations, Careers & Work Experience Lead