

## *'Learning about work through observation'*

### What is work experience?

Work experience is part of the schools' educational program where students experience working life, often for the first time. It is the short term placement of secondary school students with employers, to provide insights into the industry, and the workplace in which they are located. Students are placed with employers primarily to observe and learn – not to undertake activities which require extensive training or expertise. It is undertaken at the employer's premises and has enormous benefits for students as it gives them a chance to:

- Work alongside adults as part of a team gaining an understanding of work
- Develop and practice a range of new skills
- Become more independent and confident
- Relate the school curriculum to the workplace
- Increase motivation to continue their study and/or undertake further training
- Explore career options

A teacher will contact the student during their placement and parents are welcome to contact the school if they have any concerns. Contact details are provided on the last page.

### When can work experience be done?

Work experience is usually completed during Years 9 and 10. The timing depends on the school. Many schools have a set time, others release small groups of students during the year and some schools encourage students to take their placements during the school holidays. However, work experience cannot be undertaken during the end of year holidays.

Students can do work experience for a maximum of 10 days per term or 40 days per year.

### How can parents help?

It is an exciting time when your son/daughter first enters the world of work via work experience. There are several things you can do to assist with this:

- Help your child understand the employers' goodwill in offering the placement.
- Encourage your child to have realistic expectations about the type of work they will be undertaking. Your child will not be able to do hands on work, but can do simple tasks after proper induction and always under supervision. The days will be longer than a school day.
- Complete the Work Experience Arrangement form accurately and return it to the school promptly. Both the employer and student will receive a copy and the school keeps the original.
- Advise the school of any health matters that may affect your child's work experience.
- Talk to your child about the importance of OHS and their responsibilities. Ask to see the safe@work Certificate awarded to students by their school, once they have completed the required modules and before they start their work experience.
- Help your child organise safe travel to and from work.
- Discuss your child's work experience placement and help with any potential or perceived difficulties.
- Notify the school immediately if your child is absent from work or is having difficulties with the placement.
- Talk to your child about work and careers. Encourage them to consider as many options as possible.
- Talk to your child's careers coordinator at school.



## What are the expectations of the student?

The emphasis during work experience is always on trying to provide an interesting and valuable placement. To ensure a valuable learning experience, a number of arrangements need to be made. Students are encouraged to:

- Find their own placement, wherever possible. The school, however is able to help the student.
- Fill in the Work Experience Arrangement Form and return it to the school promptly.
- Before work experience, complete the appropriate safe@work occupational health and safety modules. Students will receive a Certificate.
- Behave as an employee while on placement, conforming to all the workplace rules and instructions from their supervisor.
- Remember while on work experience students are representing their school, therefore school policies and codes of conduct apply at all times.
- Complete activities set by the school during the placement.
- Understand that the placement may involve confidential and sensitive information which must be kept private.
- Understand that all office equipment, use of telephones, internet and photocopying is for work purposes only.
- Wear the appropriate footwear/protective clothing/ uniform as requested by the employer.
- Seek feedback from the employer at the end of the placement and thank them.

## Payment

The minimum rate of payment to students is \$5 a day.

Students will not be paid if their work placement is with a Commonwealth Department or a body established under a Commonwealth Act, an educational, charitable or community welfare not-for-profit organisation.

## Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities may extend their work experience placement if it is decided that within their individual educational program, extra time is required to develop particular skills.

## What are the employers' obligations?

Like any employee, students are covered by all state and federal laws governing safe and discrimination free workplaces. Workplaces must conform to all occupational health and safety regulations and provide induction training and adequate supervision of your child. The training and supervision should relate to the tasks your child is expected to observe or perform while on placement. If your child is injured during the placement, the employer must contact you or the guardian, and the school as soon as possible.

## Work Experience

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For more information, contact your local school.