



## Getting Ready for Work Experience 2024 Student Guide

Preparing for work experience is an exciting but possibly daunting activity. It is good to plan work experience early so you have time and do not feel pressured. Speak to your careers team, mentor, parents, neighbours and friends so you can receive advice and guidance and gain the most valuable experience for you.

### WHY IS WORK EXPERIENCE IMPORTANT?

- Young people are more likely to be successful in their job hunt if they have had some work experience
- It's an ideal way to 'sample' a career option - identify something you like, or don't like!
- You will develop your skills and discover your strengths and areas to develop
- You might impress the company so much they offer you part-time work, or even an apprenticeship when you finish academic study
- It is important to meet new people and increase your network – sometimes, it's who you know, not what you know!
- Of course, it will also give you a great experience to write about on your CV



### HOW DO I CHOOSE WHAT I DO?

For many students, choosing what to do for their work experience week is the hardest part. Remember, work experience is not about choosing a career for the rest of your life - it's about gaining experience of the world of work. The decision should be led by you, but ask your parent/carer, your tutor, and the ORA Careers Team, for support and guidance.

When applying for placements you may get rejections. Do not take these rejections personally; sometimes an employer is unable to help at that time or perhaps they have already offered a placement to someone else.

## **FINDING A PLACEMENT - TIPS!**

- Start early - some employers recruit for work placements up to a year in advance
- Decide what kind of work experience you would like. Use [www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk) to help you with your research
- If you have an idea, tell your parent/carer, friends, teachers or the careers team - they may be able to help you
- If you are unsure, speak to the ORA Careers Team and your tutor
  
- If you don't hear back from your application email, follow up with a phone call – ask someone to help you
- The placement does not have to be local but you will need to be able to pay for any travel or accommodation costs
- You may be asked to attend a short interview – go prepared and practice some interview questions beforehand

## **WORK EXPERIENCE PAPERWORK!**

- Make sure you have a work experience application form – complete the details and ask for your parent/carer and employer to sign it.
- Hand in your completed work experience application **form by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024** to your mentor.

## **SO, YOU'VE GOT A PLACEMENT – NOW WHAT?**

Day one may be a nerve-racking experience, going into an unfamiliar situation can be daunting for anyone. Think about the following key things to minimise your concerns:

**TRANSPORT** – How are you going to get there? Think about the cost; what's the most affordable method? Check timetables if using public transport.

**WHAT TO WEAR** – Make sure you've checked with your employer what you should wear – for example, you may need protective clothing, smart office clothing or non-slip shoes. Think about the appropriateness of your appearance.

**LUNCH** – Do you need to take it with you or can you buy it on site?

**CONTACT** – Do you have a phone number for your parent/carer and the school in case you need to get in touch?

**WORKING HOURS** – If your placement requires you to work specific hours (earlier in the morning or later at night) make sure you confirm this and have transport arrangements in place.

**WHAT TO TAKE** – Remember to take your work experience diary; it is very important to record your experiences & the skills learnt and developed.

## **DURING WORK EXPERIENCE**

Please follow these important points:

**ATTITUDE** – Throw yourself into the placement; be open-minded and inquisitive; take every opportunity that comes your way. Be flexible – it's a chance to learn as much as you can. Ask sensible questions – this will help you gain a wide understanding about the organisation. You are representing the school so ensure your attitude will be a good reflection on everyone.

**SAFETY** – On your first day your employer should provide you with an induction, giving you the details about first aiders, fire safety and general health and safety information.

**MOBILE PHONES** – Most companies have a policy on mobile phones. Keep them in your bag/pocket and only use them at lunch / break times.

**SOCIAL MEDIA** – Be careful about what you say on Social Media – always seek permission before you post. Remember, it is easy for people to get the wrong impression. Don't share user names with other staff.

**SICKNESS** – If you are ill, make sure you call your employer and the school first thing in the morning and let them know.

**RECORD** – Make sure you record what you have learnt and the challenges you have faced. You can always ask if you can take photos (some employers have a no photo policy).

**DON'T LIKE IT?** Or something goes wrong. If you feel you cannot talk to your employer, call the school and discuss your concerns – but don't give up after just one day!

## **AND ON YOUR LAST DAY OF YOUR PLACEMENT...**

- Ask your employer for some written feedback - there is a place for this in your work experience diary. It is useful for you to reflect with your employer on what went well and where you might be able to improve.
- Most importantly, thank your employer - they have put a lot of time and resources into your placement. Perhaps take in a box of chocolates or some biscuits!

For further WEX support, contact Mrs Compton on [fcompton@ormistonriversacademy.co.uk](mailto:fcompton@ormistonriversacademy.co.uk)