

POLICY FOR TRANSITION YEAR WORK EXPERIENCE

Policy statement: St Paul's Secondary School includes appropriate work experience as an integral element of the Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes.

Purpose:

To introduce the students to work experience/work shadowing within a supervised framework that provides learning objectives and assessment as well as realistic and positive feedback.

Definitions:

For this policy, **Work Experience** involves spending time in an employer's premises, carrying out tasks and duties, in order to gain insights into the roles associated with a particular job.

Work Shadowing involves accompanying and observing an employee at work rather than engaging in tasks. The student learns about the role associated with a particular job by observing rather than doing.

Stakeholder: In this document, the stakeholders are the people associated with work experience.

Aims:

- To understand the many elements in working life.
- To develop job seeking skills.
- To introduce students to the world of work.
- To aid personal and social development.
- To provide insight into future career options.
- To increase students' self-confidence in relation to applying for employment.

Objectives:

Articulate the purpose of work experience.

Integrate work experience into the Transition Year Programme.

Allocate responsibility for organising work experience to a work experience co coordinator

Ensure all stakeholders are informed about work experience.

Keep documentation for work experience clear, coherent and consistent.

Prepare students prior to placement.

Effectively monitor students when they are on work placement.

De-brief students after the placement.

Assess work experience at student, employer, parent/guardian and teacher levels.

Build evaluation into the work experience programme.

Acknowledge employer assistance and ensure employers receive feedback from the school when work experience concludes.

Stakeholders:

The following stakeholders are involved in Work Experience

- Allianz Insurance Company
- Parents
- Students
- Employers

- TY Coordinator
- Work experience Coordinator
- Principal
- Board of Management

Procedures for Work Experience in St. Paul's Secondary School:

Timings and Format

LCVP Work Experience Placement occurs for one 3-day week placement during the February mid-term.

TY Work Experience Placement occurs for three 1-week periods each year. A placement is scheduled in November, March and May. These dates are variable each year dependent upon the DES Standardised School Calendar. Once the specific dates are decided in advance, they are recorded in the school Calendar and TY students and parents are notified.

Applications

It is the responsibility of students to find their own work placement. Parents are provided with an information letter detailing potential placements and the rationale of the programme. The work experience co-ordinator will support and recommend placements based on the students' interests. The Work Coordinator issues a letter endorsing the request for Work Experience (Appendix 1 – Letter for the Employers).

Documentation to be submitted

Students are also provided with a details of insurance letter, a letter of introduction, a parent/guardian consent form and an employer evaluation form. The student must return the parent consent form which contains details of the placement to the co-ordinator prior to the commencement of the placement. All documents are accessible on the Teams platform.

Placements with specific requirements

Certain specific work placements have specific requirements, for example, certification in Manual Handling, First Aid or 'Safe Pass'. Garda vetting will be necessary for students seeking placement in situations where they may be working with children or vulnerable adults. Any students requiring Garda vetting for their placement must ensure it is done in sufficient time for the vetting process to be completed prior to the start date of the placement.

Student Behaviour on Placement

Prior to the commencement of placement students are reminded that while on work experience they remain subject to our school's Code of Behaviour and, in addition, should comply with any guidelines laid down by the employer. Students must take responsibility for their own learning while on work experience, in order to gain the maximum benefit from the time spent in the work environment.

Appropriate Placements

It is advised that work experience placement should be in a different work environment to that of a family business/part time job/our school building. Students are informed that work on a construction site or is prohibited unless they have completed a SAFE Pass course.

Prior to placement students will

- identify their skills and qualities
- research possible career or work opportunities
- investigate and put into practice methods of securing placements
- familiarise themselves with employers' expectations re. hours of work, dress codes etc. prior to placement.

Communication about the Placements to Staff

List of students and their placements is posted on staff notice board the week the placements commence.

SEN Students

Employers are made aware of students with special educational needs if necessary. If a student with SEN qualifies for a special needs assistant, then the SNA may attend all or part of the placement to provide support for the student. A parent may schedule an appointment with the principal to discuss this issue if desired.

Health & Safety

While St. Paul's Secondary School continues to have responsibility for students on work experience, the employer has the same responsibilities for their health, safety and welfare whilst the student is on an employer's premises. As most students undertaking work experience will be under the age of 18 years and in some cases, may be under 16 years, employers facilitating work experience should review the relevant sections of the 'Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996' to ensure compliance. Parents/Guardians must give full consent for the work placement to take place and be satisfied that these placements are appropriate and safe for their son/daughter.

Preparing Students for Placement

The following material is covered with students during work experience class.

- Researching careers of interest
- CV Preparation o Job Seeking Skills Interview Skills o Letter writing O Interviews
- Health and Safety
- Evaluation and debriefing

Guest speakers will be invited from time to time to offer specialist advice on some of the above.

The school has a large resource of local employers who have taken part in the programme before. A high proportion of these are past students or parents of the school.

Monitoring of Work Experience

Our students are monitored during the week by the work experience coordinator with students visited at their place of work, or alternatively, the employer is contacted by phone. Particular attention is paid to new employers participating in the work experience programme for the first time.

Remuneration

Employers are not expected to remunerate students during work placement, or to pay travel or subsistence costs incurred.

Confidentiality

Students must respect confidentiality in relation to observations made while in the workplace. Any issues of concern should be discussed only with their work experience coordinator.

De-briefing

On returning to school, following work experience, students complete a diary based on their experience.

The diary focuses on:

- The job tasks
- Health and safety in the workplace
- Challenges faced by the student
- Roles and duties of people in the workplace
- Evaluating the experience

Evaluation

Students' assessment

After their work experience students assess their experience. Their assessment is then compared with the employer's assessment of them.

Parents' assessment

Parents are encouraged to give continuous feedback to the work experience coordinator about the TY work experience programme. This can be done during Parent-teacher meetings, phone or by email. Parents are provided with the work experience co-ordinator's email address at the beginning of Transition Year.

Employers' assessment

Employers receive an assessment/evaluation sheet and are asked to complete it and return it to the Work Experience Coordinator.

Acknowledging Assistance of Employers

Students are encouraged to write a letter of gratitude to their employer. A template is provided to the students to help them with this task. The school also acknowledge the vital support of the employers through the school social media account.

Student responsibilities on Work Experience

- Be on time and adhere to employers start and finish times.
- Inform the employer and school of any unavoidable absences.
- Respect and comply with all rules, procedures and reasonable requests from the employer.
- Adhere to all health and safety guidelines and procedures.
- Maintain the good name of St. Paul's Secondary School.
- Respect the employer.
- Respect the place of work e.g., clean up after yourself.
- Report anything that makes you feel uncomfortable to the employer, your parents or the school at the earliest possible time.
- If something arises that causes distress seek support from your parents or the school.
- Pilfering, stealing or interfering with employer's equipment or stock will result in immediate dismissal from work experience and will be dealt with appropriately using the school's code of behaviour.

- Students must work closely with their work experience coordinator, work experience and LCVP teacher and keep them fully informed.

Procedures if a problem arise

1. When a student is sick

If a student cannot attend the placement they are asked to ring their employer first and then the school. The TY work experience coordinator must be contacted via school email or Teams.

2. When the student must take part in a school activity.

The employer is informed prior to the work placement about the school activity and asked if they would allow them to take time off for such.

3. When the student is not happy with the type of work they are doing.

Students are asked to continue with this work and also inform the work experience coordinator as soon as possible so that it can be investigated. The student is asked not to directly engage with the employer about their grievance.

4. When an employer is not satisfied with the student's level of work

The TY work experience coordinator will meet with the student to discuss the matter. If no improvement is noted the student's work experience will be terminated and this will be dealt with by the principal

Procedure for feedback to parents/guardians

If a parent would like direct feedback about their son's/daughter's work experience they can contact the principal's office and arrange a meeting with the work experience coordinator or discuss the matter during the Parent-teacher meeting.