



**SWRAC**

Specialist College

# WORKING TOGETHER: A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

This guide provides an overview of how we work in partnership with employers to create meaningful, supported work opportunities for our students. Together, we help young people build confidence, develop real-world skills and take positive steps towards independence and employment.



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# WHAT WE DO AT SWRAC



## OUR CENTRES

Our centres in Dorchester, Bournemouth and Merseyside are at the heart of our education provision, with welcoming spaces and excellent facilities designed to support practical learning and social connection.

At SWRAC, we offer a range of educational opportunities for young adults, centred around real-world learning and practical experience. Our aim is to support students to thrive by building the skills, knowledge and confidence to:

- Be independent & resilient
- Grow into education, employment or meaningful activity
- Live healthily & sustainably
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships
- Grow socially & contribute positively to communities & local economies
- Be safe

Our courses focus on preparation for employment and preparation for adulthood, supporting young adults with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who may have found mainstream education challenging but are academically capable.



# WELCOME

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE:

This guide is designed to help you feel confident in welcoming students into your workplace. Our aim is to clarify the process, remove unnecessary barriers, and reassure you that work placements are simpler than you might think. With clear information and the support of a workplace mentor, you can offer students a meaningful introduction to your industry, helping them develop valuable skills and confidence for the workplace.

Every year, thousands of students across Dorset and Merseyside need work experience, and the ongoing support of local businesses makes this possible. Your contribution has a lasting, positive impact on young people's futures — and we couldn't do it without you.

**"Learners receive effective careers guidance from specialist advisers who carefully align learners' skills and personal attributes with their aspirations. Staff take care to ensure that the work experience and volunteering placements that learners undertake are purposeful, enabling them to gain the skills and behaviours they need to achieve their long-term work or educational goals" – Ofsted 2026**

# GUIDANCE & OPPORTUNITIES

Government guidance encourages schools and colleges to ensure all students at Key Stages 4 & 5 have access to meaningful work experience, meeting Gatsby Benchmark 6. Statutory guidance highlights that students should ideally have seven experiences of the workplace throughout the 11–18 education phase.

These experiences are proven to help young people:



## Skills

develop skills that employers value



## Pathways

explore potential career pathways



## Confidence

build confidence in the workplace

By providing even one placement, you play a key role in preparing the next generation of skilled, motivated employees.

# OVERCOMING BARRIERS TOGETHER



## Challenges

Finding thousands of work placements each year is no small task, and we recognise the challenges businesses and educators face. Sometimes the process is perceived as complex, health and safety is misinterpreted, or concerns about safeguarding and duty of care arise. Recent changes, such as the pandemic and increased remote working have also affected the number of placements available.

## Solutions

The good news? Most of these challenges are manageable with the right support, clear guidance, and a workplace mentor. By working together, we can remove barriers, make the process simple and rewarding, and create placements that are safe, meaningful, and mutually beneficial.

With your partnership, we can continue to give young people the skills, experience and confidence they need to thrive in the workplace.



# STUDENT BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

1

## **Explore future career options**

Helps students make informed choices about their next steps and career pathways.

2

## **Build Independence**

Encourages self-reliance, timekeeping and personal responsibility in a real workplace setting.

3

## **Boost confidence**

Supports students to feel more capable and comfortable in new environments.

4

## **Develop resilience**

Helps students learn to adapt, problem-solve and cope with challenges.

5

## **Understand workplace expectations**

Gives students a clear view of how workplaces operate and what employers look for.

6

## **Gain practical work skills**

Builds real-life skills such as communication, teamwork, organisation and professionalism.

7

## **Prepare for employment**

Supports students to develop the knowledge and experience needed to move into paid work or further training.

8

## **Raise aspirations and motivation**

Inspires students to aim higher and feel excited about their future.

# EMPLOYER BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

1

## **Access to diverse talent**

Bringing in new perspectives and strengths can support a more inclusive and varied workforce.

2

## **Develop staff leadership skills**

Provides meaningful mentoring and supervisory opportunities for existing employees.

3

## **Support workforce retention**

Work experience can lead to longer-term recruitment and improved staff loyalty.

4

## **Improved attention to detail**

Students often bring fresh focus and a strong willingness to learn and follow procedures.

5

## **Positive attendance & reliability**

Students frequently demonstrate strong commitment and consistent attendance.

6

## **Stronger workplace productivity**

With the right support, students can contribute positively to daily tasks and team output.

7

## **Enhanced company reputation**

Employers who support young people are valued by their community and seen as inclusive and responsible.

8

## **Potential future recruits**

Work experience provides a low-risk way to identify and develop future employees.



# H&S ASSESSMENT

In June 2013, the government simplified health and safety rules for work experience placements. Students on work experience are now treated in the same way as employees for insurance purposes, meaning they are covered by Employers' Liability insurance as long as the insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers.

There are very few work activities that students cannot take part in due to health and safety law. However, as the employer, you hold the primary responsibility for the health and safety of everyone on your site, including students, staff and service users.

To manage this effectively, you can:

- explain any potential risks during induction
- check the student's understanding
- explain how to report health and safety concerns

This helps ensure a safe and supportive placement for everyone involved.

## EMPLOYER'S ROLE

- Plan suitable placement dates, remaining flexible where possible.
- Work in partnership with the college to set up and confirm placement details.
- Support the student application process, where required.
- Collaborate with the college to plan appropriate tasks and activities.
- Provide a clear induction, including health and safety and workplace expectations.
- Inform staff that a work experience student will be on site and explain their role.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are in place and appropriate.
- Provide suitable supervision and support throughout the placement.
- Complete feedback or evaluation forms, when requested.
- Celebrate success, sharing positive experiences and achievements where appropriate.
- Maintain ongoing links with the college to explore future opportunities.

# MANAGING THE PROCESS



- Appoint a named staff member to coordinate work experience placements, often within HR or a people-focused role.
- Ensure they are fully supported, understand the benefits of the programme, and feel confident promoting it within the business.
- Allow dedicated time outside of normal duties to manage the placement effectively.
- Involve managers and colleagues across the organisation to support planning, delivery and day-to-day guidance for students.

# MYTH BUSTING

- You do not need an external health & safety consultant to assess your workplace.
- The college does not need to visit and assess every workplace.
- You only need to provide your current Employers' Liability insurance certificate.
- The college will not request additional paperwork for assurance.
- Low-risk placements (e.g. offices or shops) can be discussed and agreed with the college during placement planning.
- High-risk placements (e.g. where machinery is used) may require additional H&S consultation.
- In these cases, the college will request a risk assessment to confirm arrangements for managing risks.
- A risk assessment will include: induction, training, supervision, site familiarisation, and the use of protective clothing or equipment.
- Even in higher-risk environments, the learner may be placed in a lower-risk area of the workplace (for example, a separate office), depending on the role.
- DBS checks are not usually required, unless the student will spend prolonged time alone with a single staff member.

# TOGETHER, WE BUILD FUTURES



Your involvement in work experience placements is vital. By welcoming students into your workplace, you're not only supporting their learning and development, but you're also inspiring confidence, ambition and independence. Work experience can be the moment a young person realises their potential and begins to see a clear pathway into employment.



Work experience benefits employers too. It helps raise your company profile, strengthens links with the local community, and supports the development of a skilled and diverse talent pipeline. Many employers find that placements lead to long-term relationships, future recruitment opportunities, and a stronger connection with local schools and career hubs.



Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment. Together, we are helping young people to raise their aspirations, increase their confidence, and improve their outcomes. Every placement makes a real difference, and we truly appreciate the role you play in shaping the future of our students.

# STUDENT OUTCOMES

DESTINATION	24/25
Education	54%
In Paid Employment	11%
Not In Paid Employment, Education Or Training	24%
Other	7%
Voluntary Work	4%
<b>Positive Destinations</b>	<b>76%</b>

Some of the organisations that we work with include:



WELCOME TO  
amazon  
DBH3



# WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE SAYING

It's been great having the Supported Internship at Amazon. The interns bring real enthusiasm and have helped the team massively. The programme has been well organised, and I've genuinely enjoyed being part of it. They've been a fantastic addition, and our staff have really enjoyed supporting them.

— **Kelly, Manager at Amazon**

Having interns within BCP Council has changed the way we all work. Their confidence and enthusiasm run through all the departments they work alongside. Having positive outcomes and past interns employed within BCP is great to see. Councillor Richard Burton praised the scheme as a "vital stepping stone" into long-term employment.

— **Helen Lewis, BCP Project Manager**

We always look forward to having the students with us – their enthusiasm, dedication and positivity brighten up our workplace, and they are never afraid to support our team whenever they can.

Watching their confidence grow and seeing how much they enjoy being part of the team is incredibly rewarding. Long may it continue! – **David 'Buzz' Bersantie, Team Leader at The Very Group**

Partnering with SWRAC has been an incredibly rewarding experience for us at the Carlton Hotel. Having students complete their supported internships here has brought fresh energy, enthusiasm, and new perspectives to our team. This collaboration not only benefits the students but also enriches our workplace culture—creating a more inclusive, supportive environment for everyone.

— **Rob Jenkins, Cluster General Manager**



# THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to support our students and for helping them to grow, learn and succeed. Your kindness, patience and encouragement make a real difference, and we are truly grateful for your continued partnership.



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