

Work Placement Policy



Legislation/guidance that inform this document

- Work Experience - a Guide for Secondary Schools (2002)
- Education Act (1996) amended by:
 - Standards and Framework Act (1998)
 - Education and Skills Act (2008)
- Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers (DfE, 2018)

Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one

- Careers Guidance
- Disability and Discrimination
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
- Risk Assessment
- Transition

Responsibility for Implementation:

The Head/Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that work placement opportunities are available to students as appropriate (though not compulsory) and that all such placements are effectively monitored. The day-to-day responsibility for overseeing and implementing this work may be delegated to an identified member of staff.

Statement of Intent:

As stated in our Careers Guidance Policy, through effective careers guidance, Red Balloon seeks to widen students' horizons, raise their aspirations and challenge stereotypes. We aim to equip every student with the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to make successful transitions to the next stage of their lives and to flourish in an ever-changing employment environment.

Practice Guidance:

Although 'Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers' (DfE, 2018) is not statutory in independent schools, Red Balloon has regard to this guidance where appropriate and relevant to the particular needs and circumstances of our students. As a key element of transition planning, Red Balloon staff identify those students for whom it is appropriate to undertake a work

placement and ensure that such placement is integrated into the student's individualised programme.

There are various types of work placement (see below) but this policy focuses mainly on work experience placements. Work experience is defined as, "a placement on an employer's premises in which a student carries out a particular task or duty, or range of tasks and duties, more or less as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience". (2002 guidance)

If such an experience is deemed appropriate for a student, a designated member of Red Balloon staff works with that student and her/his parents/carers to identify a suitable placement. This may be for a block period or at regular agreed intervals. Students are encouraged to play a key role in approaching prospective 'employers' and negotiating placements.

It is important that work experience provides worthwhile learning outcomes. The student and responsible staff members (both from Red Balloon and from the placement) should identify intended outcomes, in terms of both general work-based skills and knowledge and those specific to the placement. Students should be enabled to understand the need to assess risk within the workplace and to recognise any potential hazards and risks to health and safety.

Staff and student should develop a placement plan that includes:

- what is to be learned;
- how it is to be learned;
- evidence of learning to be presented;
- assessment measures to be used.

These should be revisited during the placement and modified as appropriate.

Equality of Access:

Red Balloon pursues a policy of equal opportunities in its work experience programmes, ensuring both that they are free from overt and covert stereotyping and that students with a disability are appropriately provided for. Any placement is considered within the context of our Disability and Discrimination Policy, particularly in areas such as countering gender stereotyping, increasing students' confidence and challenging under-achievement. Students are encouraged and given extra support when choosing non-stereotyped placements (eg. girls choosing engineering, boys choosing childcare).

Hours of work:

The number of hours worked and the pattern of work during a work placement are normally matters for agreement between the employer, school, parents/carers and student. In accordance with Red Balloon's common law duty to look after students, staff should ensure that students are not asked to work excessively long or unsocial hours. Unless there are strong reasons to the contrary, students should not work more than a standard eight-hour day. Students should not work for more than five days in any consecutive seven-day period.

Risk assessing placements:

Staff complete a risk assessment for every placement in accordance with Red Balloon's Risk Assessment Policy. This includes evaluation of the work placement provider's policies, procedures and observed practices. If any risk is considered unacceptable, the placement is not pursued.

Communication with parents/carers:

The designated member of Red Balloon staff must provide parents/carers with:

- the purposes and aims of the placement, including links to the curriculum;
- learning benefits for the student, including skills to be developed;
- when and where the placement will take place;
- details of travel arrangements and any associated costs;
- description of the nature of the work involved;
- precise working hours;
- any significant risks to health and safety and the control measures in place to protect the student, as identified by the placement provider's risk assessment;
- the name of the member of Red Balloon staff responsible for the placement, both for general communication and in case of emergency or complaint;
- how they can support their child during the placement period;
- the name and contact details of the person responsible for the student in the workplace.

Communication with placement provider:

The member of Red Balloon staff responsible for overseeing the placement maintains contact with the placement provider during the placement at pre-agreed intervals. The purpose of such communication is to monitor progress against learning objectives and to resolve any issues that arise, whether practical (eg. transport arrangements) or other (eg. student reluctance to engage with appropriate tasks).

Supporting the student:

The designated member of Red Balloon staff makes him/herself available to the student during the placement and provides any support required. The student may also maintain access to any well-being or other staff during the period of the placement.

Insurance arrangements:

The designated member of Red Balloon staff must ensure that the placement provider has appropriate insurance in place. A range of risks may arise in the context of student visits to the workplace. The principal ones are:

- injury to the students themselves;
- injury to others on the premises (employees, visitors, customers, etc);
- injury to others not on the premises (including customers and members of the general public);
- damage to, or loss of, employers' property;
- damage to, or loss of, other property.

The ABI, the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association and Lloyd's of London agreed as a matter of convention that students on work experience programmes that meet the requirements of the Education Act 1996 should be treated as employees for the purposes of insurance against personal injury (that is, they will be covered by the Employers' Liability Policy), provided that the insurer has had appropriate notification. Red Balloon staff must ensure that any 'employer' has notified their insurers of the placement.

- Student injury arising from other forms of attachment would normally be covered (as per all injuries to visitors etc) by the employer's Public Liability Policy.
- Any injuries caused to employees or students, provided that they arise out of activities undertaken in the employer's name, should normally be covered by the employer's Public Liability Policy or the Employers' Liability Policy.
- Damage to the employer's property should normally be covered by the Material Damage Policy.
- Damage to the property of others on the employer's premises should normally be covered by the Public Liability Policy.

Red Balloon staff must ensure that the employer possesses such policies (public liability, employers' liability and material damage) and has notified each insurer of the placement.

Student induction:

Red Balloon staff must assure themselves that the student will receive full and proper induction to the workplace. If a placement is the first with that employer, it is good practice for the Red Balloon member of staff to attend the induction.

Induction varies according to the nature of the workplace but areas that should typically be covered are:

- line management;
- safety procedures (to include who the key health and safety staff are);
- prohibited areas;
- workplace hazards (eg. dangerous substances, machinery);
- good lifting/manual handling practice (if required);
- general housekeeping - maintaining a safe and clean work environment;
- hygiene;
- first aid;
- accident procedures;
- fire procedures;
- evacuation procedures.

Safeguarding issues:

The responsible member of Red Balloon staff should assure him/herself that the workplace staff have a basic understanding of safeguarding procedures. There need not necessarily be a written policy and staff do not have to have undertaken safeguarding training but conversations should be had with managers, staff who will have regular contact with the student and particularly any member of staff who is likely to be alone with the student for significant periods of time:

- a) to check that staff understand their responsibilities;
- b) to monitor the general approach within the workplace.

If it becomes clear that there is limited awareness of or disregard for safeguarding values, the placement should not be pursued. Red Balloon staff should always err on the side of caution with regard to safeguarding.

Other types of placement:

Work experience is not the only type of work placement that Red Balloon staff consider for students. Other placements may include:

- work shadowing - in which an individual student is assigned to 'shadow' an employee going about his/her normal activities, allowing close observation

- of jobs that, for reasons of complexity, safety or security, cannot be actively undertaken by the student;
- work observation - in which individuals or groups of students are guided round the workplace to watch a range of employee activities or work processes;
 - projects - in which individuals or groups of students carry out projects on employers' premises (eg. work-related problem-solving exercises);
 - mock interviews - in which students are given experience of interviews.

Restrictions upon placements:

The Education Act 1996 placed limitations on the sorts of work with which students can engage. The Act prohibits work experience placements where the work concerned is subject to a statutory restriction based on age limits expressed as a number of years. The Act also makes it clear that restrictions apply to work on ships. However, young people can do work otherwise prohibited by age under the 'Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act 1920', provided they are on approved programmes of work experience. Staff should seek advice from the appropriate local authority if they have any concerns about the legitimacy or safety of any placement.

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