

London Borough of Havering

Code of Practice and Guidelines for Work Experience arrangements (incorporating QCA quality standards – February 1998)

This code of practice has been established in order to clarify the understanding of all concerned about what constitutes high quality work experience and to promote the highest possible standards of provision for Havering pupils. As such, it accords with the Havering Statement of Commitment. This Code of Practice applies to both pre and post-16 arrangements. It is based on 3 broad principles, which are: -

- 1) Successful, high quality work experience depends on good co-operation and collaboration between schools, governing bodies, parents, employers and work experience providers.
- 2) The health and safety of pupils on work experience is of paramount importance.
- 3) Schools, employers and any agency providing a work experience service to Havering must meet the quality criteria published by QCA and included within this Code of Practice.

In addition to meeting or exceeding their own standards, work experience providers are expected to ensure that schools and employers are aware of and meet the criteria for their respective sections. Section 560 of the Education Act 1996 provides that all arrangements made for work experience must be approved by the LEA, except for pupils in grant maintained schools. In approving such arrangements, the LEA must be satisfied that they will be designed to enable the LEA to discharge its relevant duties.

Amongst the most important of these is Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, which places a duty on all education employers to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the safety of people who are not employees – this includes pupils. In the case of voluntary aided schools, the employing authority is, of course, the governing body. In practice this means that the LEA must be satisfied that the arrangements it approves fully comply with all relevant guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

Furthermore, where such guidance is not complied with, the Council's insurance will be invalid. Head teachers are responsible for ensuring that work experience arrangements at their schools meet with the LEA's approval.

The LEA, through HBEP, provides a full work experience service to Havering schools and it is expected that schools will wish to use this service for reasons of quality assurance. In view of the emphasis placed on health and safety, schools organising their own placements or using an agency other than HBEP must ensure that appropriate risk assessment, insurance, legal and other related requirements are fully met.

Insurance is a pre-requisite and must be purchased. Your attention is drawn to the health and safety paragraphs of each section of the quality standards. Schools organising their own placements are required additionally to meet the relevant standards for work experience providers.

Since 1996, schools and work experience providers have been guided by the document entitled "Quality in Work Experience: the Pan London Standard" developed by London TECs, Education Business Partnerships, TVEI and the Government office for London. This document remains relevant. The following quality standards are reproduced by permission of QCA and have been adopted by Havering as criteria,

which constitute good practice. They should underpin, inform and determine all stages of work experience provision from planning and implementation through to review and further improvement. As such they will be considered alongside other school procedures and practices as part of the Partnership Performance Monitoring Scheme.

Quality Standard for Schools

Curriculum links and learning objectives

- Work experience is integrated into the curriculum and learning progression is planned.
- Curriculum links are identified within particular subjects or courses to show the skills, which, are being developed on the work experience programme.
- Individual learning objectives are agreed with the young person, the teacher and the employer.

Institutional support and administration

- There is a work experience policy statement, which reflects the learning needs of all young people, which is periodically reviewed.
- Work experience is included in institutional development planning and is supported by designated staff who are appropriately trained and given sufficient time to discharge this responsibility.
- Efficient and effective work experience administration is in place, based on close liaison with employers and work experience providers. Agreed deadlines are met within a planned schedule and the roles and responsibilities of each partner are clearly defined and communicated to all concerned.

Health and safety

- **Placements are assessed for risk and are safe for young people. It must be ascertained that this has been undertaken by the employer where relevant prior to the work experience taking place.**
- **Employers are informed about relevant factors affecting particular young people, including those with special needs.**
- **All participants are well briefed on health and safety issues.**
- **Schools follow local authority or governing body guidelines and approval has been granted for pupil placements. Any indemnity forms used should be checked by legal services before being issued.**

Guidance and preparation

- Young people receive guidance on their choice of placement, which promotes equal opportunities, and prepares them for the work environment. They also receive guidance on appropriate behaviour, dress and their own responsibilities while in the workplace.
- The preparation programme focuses on enabling young people to gain the maximum learning benefit from work experience.

Recording learning

- Young people's learning from work experience is recorded and, where possible, confirmed and endorsed by employers.

Placement visit

- During the placement, there is at least one visit from a teacher, which includes a review of the placement against identified learning objectives and involves the young person and the employer.

De-briefing and follow-up

- There is a co-ordinated debriefing strategy, where possible involving employers, and follow-up in careers education and other relevant lessons.
- Work experience achievements of individual pupils are recognised by the school's senior management.

Feedback, review and improvement

- Review and evaluation of the work experience programme, involving all partners, is undertaken annually.
- A strategy for the continuous improvement of the work experience programme is in place.

Pre-16 Work Experience – Legal Responsibility and Health and Safety

Students may go on work experience in the last two years of compulsory education. There has been considerable growth in work experience and most pupils are positive about their placement. However, the expansion in work placements – especially those linked to increased work related learning initiatives – needs to be matched by sound procedures for ensuring all pupils have high quality, safe placements.

Legal Responsibility for Placements

Current legislation states that work experience employment or placements must be arranged either

- **by the LEA, or**
- **by the governing body of a school acting on behalf of LEA.** (Section 112 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

All LEAs should have written policies for work experience covering objectives and placement arrangements including the responsibilities of other partners as well as health and safety and insurance matters. Where LEAs delegate responsibility to the governing bodies of schools they maintain they should make sure that arrangements are up to standard. All schools should in turn have work experience policies setting out the aims and processes of the programme and its link with the curriculum and School Development Plan.

The involvement of other agencies such as Learning and Skills Councils (LSC), Education Business Partnerships (EBPs), Careers Services and Trident does not alter the overall responsibility of LEAs and schools for ensuring that each pupil has a work experience programme, which meets their needs in a safe, and secure environment. Responsibilities must be clearly assigned and there needs to be good communication between all partners involved.

Health and Safety

LEAs and schools have a common law duty to look after pupils in their care. Education employers must also ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the placements they arrange will be safe, (Section 3 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974).

In schools where work experience co-ordinators do not have the necessary expertise to carry out health and safety checks, especially those of high and medium risk, we suggest developing co-ordinated arrangements with local partners. This also offers scope for sharing databases and minimising the number of calls on employers to check the same information.

The inquest into the tragic death of a boy in Dorset on a farm placement reviewed some key areas in the placement process and emphasised the following:

- the importance of pre-placement vetting and subsequent monitoring;
- the importance of schools and LEAs using **only** approved places;
- the need for work experience co-ordinators and other visiting staff in schools to have adequate training;
- the importance of adequate briefing and de-briefing of pupils, both before and after placement;
- the need for satisfactory documentation covering vetting, monitoring, pupil job descriptions, induction and supervision arrangements, including prohibited activities.

Guidance

For further guidance see the documents listed below: -

- Work Experience: A guide for secondary schools. (DFES Publications 2002).
- Work Experience and the Law. (3rd edition 2002. Anthony John and Andrew Miller).
- Work Related Learning and the Law: Guidance for schools and school business link practitioners. (DFES Publications 2004).

Quality standard for work experience providers

N.B. Where no provider is used, schools must ensure these standards are met.

Recruitment

- There are effective procedures for recruiting employers and other work experience providers, and arrangements for informing them, in partnership with schools and colleges, about the curriculum and the focus on learning.
- The balance of placements reflects the curriculum, the local labour market and the needs of young people.

Administration

- There is an agreed schedule and deadlines are met. Paperwork is user - friendly for all partners and, where necessary, various ways of reporting and collecting information are available.
- There is a strategy to match the supply of placements to the demand in order to avoid undue pressure on employers and to provide young people with their choice of placements.
- Information technology is used effectively and the database of placements and job descriptions is regularly updated.

Health and Safety

- **There are effective procedures for ensuring that all employers provide a safe environment for young people. Health and Safety checks should be undertaken during a personal visit by a suitably trained member of staff before placements begin. Written confirmation that health and safety checks have been carried out should be sent to the Insurance section, (Finance Services) one week before placements begin. This confirmation should include a signed statement from each employer that the check/assessment has been completed. Parents of young people going on work experience are entitled to a copy of the risk assessment outcome.**
- **Employers are informed about relevant factors affecting particular young people, including those with special needs.**
- **Local authority or governing body guidelines are followed and approval has been granted for pupil placements. Any indemnity forms used should be checked by legal services before being issued.**

Target setting

- Targets are set for increasing the numbers of young people gaining first or second choice of placements (“negotiated” choice following guidance and preparation where appropriate), and their satisfaction with the placement is monitored.

Networking

- There are regular meetings with school co-ordinators which provide opportunities for disseminating good practice and which focus on improving performance and client satisfaction.

Feedback, review and improvement

- There are procedures for monitoring the quality of placements.
- There is a quality assurance system in which feedback is sought regularly from all young people, employers and schools. Action plans include realistic targets for improvement.

Quality standard for employers

Audit of learning opportunities

- An audit of workplace tasks and activities against the curriculum learning outcomes has been conducted, and structured and varied placement programmes are in place.
(The audit may be undertaken in partnership with the school, or work experience provider).

Induction

- There is a planned induction programme that includes a health and safety briefing, background to the organisation, a tour of the building, (for larger companies), meeting key personnel and an introduction to the main tasks and skills to be used.

Learning objectives

- Young people's learning objectives are discussed and agreed either at a pre-placement interview or on the first day.

Support for young people

- Young people are supported in meeting their learning objectives and in producing evidence of learning.

Support for the work experience programme

- The company explains clearly to its staff why it supports work experience.
- The roles and responsibilities of company staff, particularly those of supervisors and mentors, are clearly understood and communicated to all involved.
- The organisation provides training and support for all staff involved in work experience programmes.

Health, safety and access

- **Health and safety, insurance, legal and other requirements are fully met.**
- **Where health and safety conditions have changed since the most recent check by personnel from the school or work experience provider, such changes must be notified to the provider and all schools concerned.**

Feedback, review and improvement

- Feedback is sought from young people, company staff, visiting teachers and work experience providers on the quality of placements and on the benefits to the young people and to the company. The programme is periodically reviewed.
- Improvement and innovations are made in the light of experience and the review process.

Company staff involvement

- For larger employers, staff are involved in the preparation and debriefing of young people and in work experience advisory groups.