



# Vocational Education & Training Courses

## Parent Guide to Workplace Learning

February 2024

## What is Workplace Learning?

Workplace learning is part of the NSW secondary school curriculum. It provides students with the opportunity to develop vocational skills, knowledge and attitudes in real work environments. Two main types of workplace learning programs are organised and approved by individual Independent schools:

- Work Experience programs
- Work Placement programs

**Work Experience** gives students aged 14 and over the opportunity to learn more about career options in a workplace they have chosen. Work Experience places are usually sourced by families or by the school.

**Work Placement** is a compulsory part of HSC Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses which lead to nationally recognised VET qualifications. In a real work context, it complements the knowledge and skills gained in off the job training at school or external RTO (Registered Training Organisation). The skills and knowledge gained can be used for work-based assessment of specific course competencies. Work Placement is usually sourced by Work Placement Service Providers or by the school.

## How can you help?

### 1. Choosing a Work Experience employer

Encourage students to:

- discuss the aims and objectives of the program
- select an occupation or industry in which they have a genuine interest
- find out about a number of occupations or industries and the lifestyles of people in those occupations
- consider alternatives in the same interest area (some positions are very popular and therefore difficult to obtain)

### 2. When a Work Experience position has been obtained

Assist students to find out about:

- clothing and personal and protective equipment (PPE) requirements
- starting and finishing times (students are expected to work the normal hours of the position)
- first day arrangements (time, place, contact person)
- meal facilities and transport

### 3. When a Work Placement position has been obtained

Encourage students to:

- read the *AISNSW RTO Student Guide to Workplace Learning*
- read the work placement details form provided by the employer
- contact the employer no later than one week prior to the starting date of the work placement to confirm details
- check travel details
- read about the importance of the Student Workplace Learning Journal in the *AISNSW RTO Student Guide to Workplace Learning*

### 4. During Work Experience and Work Placement

Encourage students to:

- complete journals supplied by the school.
- discuss each day's activities
- contact you or the school immediately if there are any difficulties e.g. accident, injury, industrial dispute, harassment

Discuss with students:

- how the organisation works.
- education and training requirements for jobs in the organisation
- working conditions
- the role of the unions
- occupational health and safety
- employees' responsibilities and rights

### 5. After the Work Experience or Work Placement

Encourage students to:

- discuss the employer's report
- review and discuss future employment, education, training and career options

#### Payment

Students are volunteers and therefore will not be paid for either work experience or work placement.

## Student Responsibilities

While in the workplace, students are expected to follow the rules of the workplace and the reasonable directions of the workplace supervisor and other employees.

### 1. Attitude

Students should:

- show enthusiasm and initiative
- accept and complete duties planned by the supervisor
- be willing to learn
- listen to instructions and ask questions when unsure
- accept and act on advice given by workplace supervisors
- ask for jobs when they have nothing to do
- be polite, courteous and well mannered
- avoid distracting other employees unnecessarily from their work
- dress appropriately to industry standards and the workplace

### 2. Attendance and punctuality

Students should:

- Start work on time each day
- take only the allocated time for morning tea, afternoon tea and lunch breaks and return promptly to work
- contact the workplace supervisor and the supervising teacher immediately if unable to attend the placement
- account for any absence to the workplace supervisor and the supervising teacher because the hours lost through absence may be required to be made up at some other time
- attend work for the normal hours of work for that job, unless prior arrangements have been negotiated by the school

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (Stage 6 VET Courses only)

Students who have part-time work in an industry related to their course of study may be able to claim RPL for some, or all, of the work placement requirements. Students should discuss this with their teacher.

## Confidentiality

Students may be exposed to information about the business and clients that will be confidential. They will be expected to maintain privacy by not repeating any of this information. There is a confidentiality contract in the Workplacement Journal that students need to sign prior to workplacement. Find out from the workplace supervisor what is considered confidential.

## Insurance and Indemnity

The school should have a number of provisions which provide protection for both students and employers. These include:

- insurance coverage for students injured while on workplace learning.
- protection for employers in the event of a claim against them as a result of an injury to a student or damage to property caused by a student.

## Travel and accommodation arrangements

If vehicle travel with the host employer is required due to changing worksites throughout the day, please see your teacher for a **Travel Form**.

Also see your teacher if **accommodation away from home** is required.

## Child Protection

Under NSW legislation, students must not be asked by a child related employer to have any **unsupervised contact** with children or young people 18 years old or younger. This means that if you are undertaking your Workplace Learning Program with any of the 17 types of employers listed below, you must **never** carry out a task that requires you to have **unsupervised contact** with **children**. If your employer does ask you to do such a task, you need to politely decline and contact your school immediately.

The legislation covers work .....

- involving the provision of child protection services
- in pre-schools, kindergartens and childcare centres (includes residential childcare centres)
- in schools or other educational institutions (not including universities)
- in detention centres (within the meaning of the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987)
- in refuges used by children
- in wards of public or private hospitals in which children are patients
- in clubs, associations or movements (including of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) having a significant child membership
- in any religious organisation
- in any entertainment venues where the clientele is primarily children
- as a babysitter or child-minder that is arranged by a commercial agency
- involving fostering or other child care
- involving regular provision of taxi services for the transport of children with a disability
- involving the private tuition of children
- involving the direct provision of health services
- involving the provision of counselling or other support services for children
- on school buses
- at overnight camps for children

In these and all other workplaces, the legislation is also designed to protect you from any form of physical, psychological or sexual abuse. Your responsibility is to ensure that you do not allow the employer to place you in a situation where you have unsupervised contact with just one employee. Supervision from at least one other employee can be simply visual or where that person is working in a group with you. If you feel uncomfortable about anything you are asked to do in the workplace, you should politely decline to do

that task and contact your school immediately.

Your employer will have been asked to sign a statement declaring that he/she understands the need to comply with this, and other legislation that affects workplaces, before you commence your workplace learning program.

### **Remember these points:**

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure within the workplace
- You have the right to refuse to undertake tasks that involve one-on-one contact with employees or clients, particularly if this is to be done in limited spaces.
- If you yourself are undertaking child-related work in an area listed above, you must sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration if requested to do so by the employer. Your teacher can give you an example of what this would involve.
- If you feel that you are being harassed or in any way abused in the workplace you must immediately report the matter to your school coordinator. Make sure you have your school's phone number before you commence your placement.

## **Work Health and Safety**

Host organisations have a "duty of care" obligation to ensure students do not work in unsafe conditions or carry out work that could endanger the health or safety of themselves or other staff members.

Students should be aware of the Work Health and Safety (WHS) requirements of the industry before doing your vocational placement. It is expected that your college/school will provide information about WHS legislation and workplace practices. In addition, some host organisations have a structured "induction program" which include WHS issues.

If a student feels they are unable to use equipment or carry out a task in a safe manner they must ask the host organisation for advice or assistance.

Students must NEVER carry out a task that may be dangerous to equipment, themselves, other workers or members of the public. If a student is asked to work in an unsafe environment, they must contact their teacher or work placement coordinator immediately.

Remember, most workplace accidents can be prevented if:

- reasonable instructions are obeyed
- people work safely and wear protective equipment if it is needed
- other workers or the public are not put at risk and
- accidents or near misses are reported

## Duration and Timing of Workplace Learning for VET courses

- **Work Experience** is often of one week's duration. However, schools may organise shorter or longer periods of time.
- **Work Placement** is a mandatory component of VET courses. For most NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) VET courses, students in Years 11 and 12 complete **35 hours for each 120-hour** course. NESA syllabuses should be checked for current requirements for specific courses.

## CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS/CARERS

### BEFORE:

- Become familiar with workplace learning by reading the information provided and attending information sessions
- Encourage your child to discuss their developing career interests and work preferences
- Suggest they go to [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au) to find out more about preferred industries and related careers
- Discuss what they hope to learn from the placement and any questions they might want to ask their host employer or supervisor
- Encourage them to complete all pre-placement activities arranged by their school, such as those on <http://go2workplacement.com>
- Advise the school of any suitable placements you know about or could offer
- Inform the school of any disabilities/special needs that may require adjustments in the workplace
- Complete the Parent Consent section of the Student Workplace Learning Record

### WHEN A PLACEMENT IS CONFIRMED:

- Have the student reschedule other activities to give priority to their workplace learning
- Help them prepare their clothing (eg. enclosed footwear, business attire) and other requirements for the placement
- Help them find out more about Work Health and Safety legislation and make sure they know and understand what it means for them while they are at work
- Assist them plan their travel arrangements to and from work
- Check they have the information they will need on the first day (starting time, address and contact person) including their completed Student Contact Card
- Confirm their meal arrangements. They may need to take food with them.

### DURING:

- Encourage your child to complete their workplacement journal
- Have a conversation about their day in the workplace such as,
  - Tell me about the things you do during the day at work
  - Have you learned anything unexpected and especially interesting?
  - What are the education and training requirements of the job(s)?
  - Have you been told about health and safety procedures in the workplace?
  - Do you think this might be the right industry for you?
  - What are the working conditions like?

### IMMEDIATELY AFTER:

- Encourage your child to discuss their employer's report with you
- Review and discuss their career and work aspirations and their options for education and training
- Encourage them to value the networks they are making and to maintain a record of workplace contacts for advice, assistance and opportunities in the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information in this guide. Your interest in and support for your young person's workplace learning will help them feel more confident and prepared as they take up this valuable opportunity as they transition into the adult world of work.

### Further information

If you would like further information, please contact your school.