

PARENTS
&
CARE
GIVERS
INFO

A GUIDE TO
WORKPLACE
learning
FOR PARENTS
AND CAREGIVERS



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development





To be issued to parents and caregivers without alteration.

When signing the *Workplace Learning Agreement Form*, parents and caregivers certify that they have read and understood this document.

Referenced against the *Workplace Learning Guidelines (2016)*

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WORKPLACE LEARNING

You might be familiar with the term 'work experience'. Workplace learning is the new comprehensive term which encompasses activities prior to, during and after work placements, reflecting the benefits of the diverse environments in which students learn.

Workplace learning includes work placement and helps students to learn in a workplace without the direct supervision of a teacher, where they will have opportunities to observe a variety of work as well as undertake supervised work appropriate to their age, maturity, competence and skill level.

Workplace learning provides students with valuable opportunities to develop vocational skills, knowledge and attitudes in the context of real work environments. It is also a chance for them to learn outside of the classroom.

Work placements can help young people to learn about what employers expect, what responsibilities workers have and also help them to make decisions about their future career options.

TWO WAYS STUDENTS MAY BE INVOLVED

Workplace learning undertaken by students must be linked to their school curriculum and is governed by the *Workplace Learning Guidelines* (2016).

Structured workplace learning (SWL)

Is linked to a Vocational Education and Training (VET) program being undertaken by the student. This program may be provided on the job, by a teacher or trainer in a school, or by a registered training organisation.

Work experience

Involves the student taking part in a short-term industry placement, which will enhance their experience and understanding of a work environment and may help them choose a career.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

The emphasis during workplace learning is always on trying to provide a safe, interesting and meaningful placement for the student. To make the time spent on a work site a valuable learning experience, a number of arrangements need to be made.

Students are required to:

- ↘ negotiate their work placement with their teacher
- ↘ arrange the completion of the prescribed *Workplace Learning Agreement Form* and promptly return it to the school
- ↘ complete the school's program of workplace preparation and participate in a work-site specific induction before commencing their placement
- ↘ behave as a worker while on placement, conforming to all the workplace rules and instructions from their workplace supervisor
- ↘ remember that while on

work placement students are representing their school, therefore school policies and codes of conduct apply at all times

- ↘ complete activities set by the school before, during and following the placement
- ↘ understand that the work placement may involve confidential and sensitive information that must be kept private
- ↘ wear appropriate clothing and/or footwear/protective clothing/uniform as expected by the workplace provider
- ↘ ask for feedback from the workplace provider at the end of the placement and thank them.

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT/CAREGIVER

You can help your student understand their workplace safety rights and responsibilities before and during their work placement by asking them about their learning at school, their induction into the workplace, by talking about health and safety and by sharing your own workplace health and safety experiences.

The school is required to assess each individual student's suitability for their chosen workplace and the level of risk associated with it prior to the placement.

If you have any concerns about the placement please discuss these immediately with the school.

Young workers are more likely to be injured at work than any other age group because they:

- ✚ don't have the experience, knowledge and skills to fully understand the risks involved in new tasks
- ✚ are still developing physically and emotionally and may be confronted by tasks beyond their current capabilities
- ✚ may be in an environment where the level of supervision and guidance they receive is less than they are used to at school
- ✚ may be asked to do work for which they are not properly trained
- ✚ may not be fully aware of their rights and responsibilities in terms of workplace health and safety and may also lack confidence in asserting their rights.

PREPARATION BEFORE A WORK PLACEMENT

Before young people start their work placement, the school will make sure the student has completed an appropriate program of workplace preparation that covers relevant key aspects of the:

- ↘ *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*
- ↘ *Children's Protection Act 1993*
- ↘ *Equal Opportunity Act 1984.*

These Acts may be amended from time to time.

This preparation includes:

- ↘ the student's right to undertake their work placement in a child safe environment
- ↘ the student's roles, responsibilities and rights related to work health and safety in the workplace
- ↘ insurance arrangements for the work placement
- ↘ the procedure to be followed if they experience illness, injury, unsafe workplace practices, bullying, teasing, violence, sexual harassment, alcohol or drug abuse, or any other issue that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- ↘ the purpose and goals of the work placement
- ↘ their particular requirements when working with children and vulnerable people
- ↘ any other specific requirements of the workplace provider eg. industrial safety matters.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What will the hours of work be?

Where possible the work placement should occur during the normal working hours for the industry in which the student is placed. If these working hours are unusual when compared with normal school hours, this will need to be negotiated between the work placement provider, the school and the student. This is particularly so if students are asked to work on weekends or during school holidays because the school still has a duty of care for their safety and wellbeing.

Travel

It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for getting to and from the workplace.

Where travel in a work vehicle during work placement is required this must be noted on the *Workplace Learning Agreement Form*.

What about pay and insurance?

Students engaged in work placements must not be paid or receive a material or any other reward.

All insurance, legal and industrial arrangements in relation to work placements exist on the understanding that an employment relationship is not established.

What about accommodation away from home during the work placement?

Students attending work placement who need accommodation away from home will have to confirm the arrangements made by their parents/caregiver with their school before the placement. These circumstances must be noted by the student's principal, who will ensure that attention has been given to all aspects of the arrangements including travel, accommodation, workplace supervision and the student's suitability for the work placement.

Are workplaces safe for students?

All students have the right to feel safe and free from harm at all times during workplace learning. Workplace providers are required to provide 'child-safe' workplace learning sites for students. This includes responsibilities for work health and safety, child protection matters, and an environment free of harassment and bullying. Workplace providers need to ensure all staff are aware of the special responsibilities associated with working with students.

Can my child work with family?

Work placement with family is not recommended for students.

What is a relevant history screening?

A relevant history screening is an assessment of information about a person to determine whether he or she poses a risk of harm to the safety or well-being of vulnerable people in the workplace. This includes background checks, criminal history screening and police checks.

Does my child need a relevant history screening?

Students undertaking work placements will generally not be required to have a relevant history screening. However, if your child is entering organisations that provide child care or baby-sitting services, residential or overnight care of children, or perform work in the area of juvenile justice, child protection, disability services, aged care or other vulnerable persons, they will need to have a relevant history screening of the type the organisation requires.

What about relevant history screening for work placement providers?

There is no legal obligation for personnel within workplaces to undergo relevant history screenings when they host a student for work placement (apart from those working in the organisations listed above). Schools however, are required to thoroughly prepare students undertaking work placements to recognise and manage potential risks.

What about work health and safety laws?

Students have the right to a safe and healthy workplace. Under the *Work Health & Safety Act 2012* employers must make sure the workplace is as safe as possible. This includes the provision of a site specific induction for the student, safe use of machinery and equipment, training students as workers on safe work practices and providing personal protective equipment.

As part of the *Work Health & Safety Act 2012*, students as workers are also responsible for safety. They must take care of their own and other's safety by following health and safety instructions, using protective equipment as required, reporting workplace hazards and cooperating with the workplace provider on health and safety issues.

What if my child is involved in an accident or is injured at the site?

Students must report any accident or injury to their workplace provider as soon as possible, even if they think it is minor at the time.

Students are covered by insurance if they are hurt at work as long as they are doing an approved workplace learning program. This means that the *Workplace Learning Agreement Form* must be signed by all parties before students start in the workplace.

Students may not be covered if the injury or damage was the result of their negligence or failure to follow clear and reasonable instructions.

What if students are feeling uncomfortable about the work placement?

If students feel able they should talk about their concern with the workplace supervisor. If the problem still continues or they do not feel comfortable talking with the workplace supervisor they should make contact with the teacher nominated by their school. Their contact details are listed on the *Workplace Learning Agreement Form*.

For further information contact:

