

Part of the Branches Education Group



WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY



Approved By	Rebecca Warhurst	Head Teacher	March 2026
Amendments Made			
Linked Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Careers and Work-Related Learning Policy		
Signed	<i>R Warhurst</i>	Head Teacher	March 2026
	<i>L De-Nayes</i>	Governance Chair	March 2026
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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Rationale

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Careers and Work-Related Learning Policy.

The Willows School is committed to developing pupils' employability skills and ensuring they are equipped to gain and sustain meaningful employment in their future lives. Work experience is a key component in the process of developing the skills, qualifications, and experience necessary to succeed in the workplace.

This policy outlines our approach to work experience. All Key Stage 3 pupils have access to at least one week of work experience activities delivered in a variety of ways, across Years 7 to 9. All Key Stage 4 pupils will be supported to undertake at least one week of genuine and meaningful work experience activities. Ideally this will be an external work placement.

If a pupil is not ready to complete a work experience placement, they may undertake a virtual work experience activity, work taster, social action project, enterprise activity, simulated work environment or an internal work placement within the school or wider Group, Branches Education Group. These will include preparatory activities to prepare these pupils for external placements. Virtual work experience activities are also an appropriate alternative if external work experience activities are not appropriate due to government restrictions or other changes in working practices caused by factors beyond our control, e.g. a Pandemic.

1.2 Policy Aims

This policy guide is intended to support school staff with managing programmes of work experience safely and effectively. It includes:

- Reference to the relevant legal framework, including guidance from the DfE, Health and Safety Executive and EFSA,
- the duty of care of we share with work experience providers for following an identified work experience agreement,
- guidance on planning and overseeing work experience.

2.0 PURPOSE OF WORK EXPERIENCE

It is vital that pupils have the opportunity to develop the employability skills demanded by employers. This policy seeks to provide a high-quality vehicle for students to develop those employability skills.

Work experience will be:

- in line with DfE guidance and HSE requirements,
- aligned with the National Careers Strategy and Gatsby Benchmarks,
- available to all students where appropriate,
- vocationally relevant and meaningful to each pupil's ability, needs and interests, including their intended destination,
- risk assessed effectively as safe, from both a health and safety and safeguarding perspective,
- monitored and supported by appropriate curriculum lead staff,

- integrated into the Key Stage 4 curriculum plans and schemes of work,
- subject to appropriate pupil preparation and induction,
- a key component contributing to an enterprise culture in the curriculum,
- subject to standardised paperwork, recording and quality standards,

We are committed to ensuring that provision of a work experience opportunity which is also beneficial and rewarding for employers. We will ensure pupils on a work placement perform and conduct themselves in an acceptable manner. When we need to, we reserve the right to refuse or withdraw a work experience opportunity where a pupil is not able to meet acceptable standards of conduct in a workplace.

3.0 RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,
- Health and Safety Policy,
- Careers and Work-Related Learning Policy,
- Department for Education: 16 to 19 study programmes
- Careers Strategy, DfE 2017
- Work Experience and Work-Related Activities in Schools and Colleges, DfE 2017
- A Guide to the Key Responsibilities and the Delivery of High-Quality Work Placements, EFSA 2017

4.0 PLANNING AND MONITORING

4.1 Planning

As a small, specialist school, we make it our business to know pupils' needs, skills and interests. Our Tutors work closely with pupils and their parents/ carers, providing regular reviews and reports about strengths, interests, and difficulties.

As pupils progress throughout Key Stage 3, they will have been exposed to a variety of work-related learning experiences, delivered through assemblies, tutorials, PSHCEE and broader curriculum. We want pupils to be able to meet and hear from people from a wide range of professions, whether it is dolphin training, customer service or emergency services, for example. We will ensure that pupils know that they can create a career path based on their interests, with the right support to gain entry requirements.

By the time pupils reach Key Stage 4, our Careers Lead will work with pupils, staff, parents and carers to prepare a careers and work experience plan for every individual pupil. Subject leaders will complete the plan, which will identify the type of work experience activity planned for each study programme course within their curriculum area. Pupils will be required to undertake relevant checks where this is a requirement of the place of work.

As a new school, we are constantly busy compiling a directory of opportunities for pupils to:

- meet and hear from visiting speakers from a diverse range of professions and workplaces,
- visit a range of workplaces to see people working in a variety of roles,

- undertake taster sessions and work experience as appropriate to needs and interests.

4.2 Monitoring

The Careers Lead will:

- ensure that this policy is effectively and safely implemented,
- produce standardised documentation, to support and evidence work experience,
- ensure that IOSH qualified staff carry out health and safety checks of employers hosting work placements. This includes confirmation that the employer complies with the Equality Act 2010,
- review with Tutors and pupils, careers and work experience plans,
- seek pupils and employer feedback, acting on suggestions to improve the experience,
- monitor the overall quality of placements through feedback and pupil work experience logs,
- report to the Head Teacher on their evaluation of the work experience programme, including identifying strengths and areas for improvement, measuring compliance and how effectively the needs of pupils with SEND are met,
- ensure that any work/ industry placements are of high quality and meet the gov.uk framework. [guide to the key responsibilities and delivery of work placements.pdf](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61221/guide-to-the-key-responsibilities-and-delivery-of-work-placements.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

5.0 TYPES OF WORK EXPERIENCE ACTIVITIES

5.1 External Work Placements

An external work placement is a period of supervised work, where pupils have the opportunity to experience performing tasks as part of a specific role with an employer/ company. Placements should be with one placement employer or, where occupationally relevant, with two employers to ensure a meaningful insightful placement can be delivered. An external placement is usually undertaken as a one- or two-week block, or as one day per week over several weeks.

Placements will be sourced and co-ordinated by the school. Staff will liaise directly with employers to establish what placement pattern they can offer, for how long and for how many pupils and whether pupils' needs can be met. Pupils and families might suggest a placement, but these must undergo rigorous vetting checks by the school to establish suitability, as for all placements.

Placements will be of high quality with employers who are committed to the development of the pupil taking part in regular reviews and feedback. Reviews will take place at least fortnightly throughout the placement, to assess progress towards targets agreed at the start of placement.

5.2 Virtual Work Experience Activities

Our school is committed to using a variety of media to enable pupils to develop employability skills and experience the world of work. This includes using virtual reality where it can be sourced as being safe and appropriate to the individual pupil needs.

Virtual opportunities will be used to supplement and enhance work-based learning and employability skills. Virtual tasks might include:

- live speaker sessions,
- tours of workplaces,
- pre-recorded videos and modules,
- project briefs,
- CV building,
- interview practice and tips.

We recognise that some of our pupils may have social and communication difficulties, however our aim would always be to support them to take part in the full work-related learning and work experience offer we provide as part of the curriculum. This is essential if we are truly seeking to prepare pupils for adulthood and life beyond school. A bespoke programme will be organised for all pupils, in line with their ambitions, needs, skills and interests.

5.3 Work Taster Sessions

A Work Taster Session is an opportunity for pupils to observe a day in the life an employee in an external company, to experience the daily routine of the that particular role. We would seek to build in opportunities for pupils to ‘interview’ the employee to discover more about their role.

Taster Sessions can also be a shorter visit, with pupils spending up to half a day visiting a workplace, having a tour and meeting an employer. Other tasks might include role play, completing agreed functional tasks to gain more insight and team building. These days are attended by pupils in small groups, accompanied by school staff.

5.4 Simulated Work Environment

A simulated work environment involves an employer setting a work brief for a group of pupils. The employer can set the brief face-to-face, either by the students visiting the workplace or the employer visiting school. Alternatively, the brief can be set virtually. The pupils then undertake the work brief at school or at home, then be supported to present their work back to the employer, either face to face or virtually.

5.5 Social Action and Community Projects

Social action projects involve taking practical action in the service of others to create positive change. In a work experience context social action might involve pupils using their work-related skills and behaviours to have a positive community impact. Activities might include volunteering, campaigning, fundraising, mentoring, in which the activity has a ‘double benefit’ to both the pupils and the community they are serving.

5.6 Internal Work Placement

An internal placement is a work experience placement offered to pupils another team or department within the school or wider Branches Education Group organisation. Opportunities might involve experience with Human Resources, I.T. technicians or the Marketing team. Equally, the Directors and C.E.O. are passionate about providing real opportunities for pupils and will talk to pupils to give inspiration and insight into their own school and career pathways.

The school will establish with the team/ department the placement pattern they can offer and will consider providing interview practice for pupils who have applied for work experience or who have been put forward by staff. An internal placement would be a one or two week block, or one day per week over several weeks.

5.7 Enterprise Skills

Enterprise skills and activities involve either an individual pupil or a group of pupils setting up and running a pupil enterprise, using the skills they are developing as part of work-related learning and employability.

Pupils will experience how to budget to make items, market them (internally or locally as appropriate) and experience profit and loss. Any profit will be used for future projects or would be donated to a charity agreed by the School Council.

Examples might include designing and making items to sell, such as:

- cakes made in Food Technology,
- wooden garden items or toys in Design Technology,
- photography with photoshoot sessions for peers and staff as appropriate, as part of Art,
- printing t-shirts as part of Art and Design,
- writing a play and/ composing or playing music to an audience.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ensure that the Careers Lead and school staff:

- follow this policy and related procedures,
- ensure work experience opportunities are suitable for pupils' aptitudes, skills, needs and interests,
- check with rigour the insurance, policies and procedures of prospective employers, including any DBS as required,
- provide pupils, parents/ carers, support staff and employers with the necessary information for the type of work experience activity arranged,
- co-ordinate and administer any necessary DBS checking and parental / pupil consent paperwork (with the support of the H.R. team),
- ensure that all health and safety risk assessments have been undertaken by an IOSH trained staff member, for ALL work experience activity types, whether external, internal or virtual,
- ensure that employers can demonstrate that they comply with the Equality Act 2010,
- liaise with pupils, parents/ carers curriculum leaders and support staff to ensure that employers can be made aware of any additional needs and that reasonable adjustments are made where necessary,
- complete all necessary and appropriate documentation, including personal risk assessments, work experience agreements and consents,
- provide a contact point at all times for pupils, parents/ carers, and employers during work experience activities,

- provide support for any pupil experiencing difficulties during work experience activities, in conjunction with their Tutor,
- facilitate the evaluation of work experience, both from the pupil and employer perspective at the end of each period of work experience, and also at the end of each academic year,
- advise the health and safety lead of any accidents, following Company policies for this,
- report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), following our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

6.2 The Careers Lead

The Careers Lead will work with Tutors to:

- identify the preferred timings, patterns, and content of work experience as part of curriculum planning and assessment, sharing this information with pupils, parents/ carers and employers,
- ensure that students are suitably “work ready” for the work experience activity being arranged,
- undertake pregnancy risk assessments where appropriate,
- liaise with the employer to ensure that any reasonable adjustments required are put in place,
- ensure pupils will have access to free meals and support with travel to work-based placements, as appropriate to individual needs,
- liaise with employers and pupils to resolve any ‘issues’ that arise about the placement activity. Often, a ‘problem’ situation can easily be resolved if raised in a timely manner,
- visit pupils at the workplace if the work experience activity lasts for one week or longer, and do drop in visits at random to ensure pupils needs are being met and they are safeguarded,
- ensure students complete all placement tasks, including checklist, daily journal entries, attendance.

6.3 Employers will

- ensure they have relevant insurance, policies, and procedures in place to support work experience,
- provide a safe and appropriate environment in which the pupil can experience work,
- make reasonable adjustments required for pupils with special and/ or additional needs,
- ensure a young person’s risk assessment is in place for pupils under the age of 18,
- ensure pupils are managed under the direction of a supervisor,
- inform the Careers Lead or Tutor if the pupil does not attend, or if they have any concerns regarding the pupil,
- confirm daily attendance with the school,
- provide feedback to the Careers Lead and school, about the pupil’s progress and engagement,
- provide feedback about the standard of service and support the school is providing, via an online survey, as part of our evaluation, improvement, and governance processes,
- report to the Careers Lead immediately any accident where a pupil has been injured at the workplace.

6.4 Pupils will

- follow the application process set out for the work experience activity they are undertaking,

- dress in agreed workplace clothing, e.g. wearing the uniform or safety items provided by the employer,
- attend each day on time,
- notify their Tutor or the Careers Lead of any problems,
- conduct themselves appropriately in the workplace,
- complete the placement checklist, add journal entries,
- provide feedback on the placement to help the school improve pupils' experiences.

6.5 Parents and Carers will

- support their child to be prepared for attending the work placement or related activities,
- notify the employer and school on day one of any absence, in line with the Attendance Policy,
- notify their child's Tutor or the Careers Lead of any problems or support suggestions.
- provide feedback to the school to help us ensure a high-quality experience in the future.

7.0 REVIEW

Our work-related learning and work experience provision is under continuous review to ensure the best possible provision for pupils. Every placement and experience is assessed rigorously and reviewed regularly to ensure standards continue to be high, so that pupils are safe and they can enjoy achieving their targets relating to employability skills.

The policy and related procedures will be reviewed annually as part of the governance process.

Please refer also to the Careers and Work-Related Learning Policy.