

Section B

Roles and Responsibilities

Section B: Roles and Responsibilities

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Principal

The principal has a pivotal role in the organisation of work experience programs. Although the principal would rely on the work experience coordinator to organise the arrangements for the placement, nevertheless it is very important that the principal is aware that all relevant guidelines and procedures are followed.

Principals should ensure that work experience coordinators and teachers are familiar with the conditions laid down in Part 5.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and Ministerial Order 56 – Work Experience Arrangements. Failure to abide by these conditions may render the arrangement null and void, and leave the student vulnerable.

Before the placement

The principal should ensure that:

- the proposed work experience will provide workplace learning suitable to the needs of the student, within the time frame specified and according to the student's capabilities

It is important that the principal is aware of the needs and requirements of students with special needs (and in particular, of students with disabilities) and that the work experience undertaken by these students is within their capabilities

- the Work Experience Arrangement Forms are signed by the principal (or acting principal) of the school

The principal may not authorise a member of the principal class at the school to sign the Work Experience Arrangement Form on his or her behalf.

- the employer acknowledgement on the Work Experience Arrangement Form has been completed to his or her satisfaction

If the employer certification is not completed to the principal's satisfaction, the principal may choose not to proceed with the arrangement, or to negotiate with the employer – either directly or through the work experience coordinator – to resolve the matter.

For example, if an employer is unwilling or unable to ensure the student will be provided with safety footwear, and the principal is satisfied that apart from this the student will be undertaking a quality placement, then the principal may proceed with the arrangement and ensure the student is provided with safety footwear from elsewhere.

The principal therefore has to use his/her discretion if the employer certification is not completed satisfactorily – however, at all times the welfare of the student must not be compromised

- the distribution of work experience days during the current calendar year under the proposed arrangement, or any other arrangements which have occurred or are likely to occur, does not disadvantage students with regard to the rest of his/her educational program at school

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- the student has the capability to undertake the work experience as specified within the arrangement and to do so without exposing themselves or others in the workplace to any unacceptable risk
- all students are aware of common courtesies and responsibilities towards their fellow workers
- all students have successfully completed the requisite occupational health and safety training ([safe@work](#) or, in the case of students with disabilities or impairments, *A Job Well Done*) provided by the school prior to the commencement of the work experience and this is acknowledged on the Work Experience Arrangement Form
- both the employer and the nominated supervisor of the student in the workplace are aware of their obligations to the student under the arrangement
- all students are aware that they are representing their school while on work experience and must continue to observe school policies and codes of conduct. **In particular, students must not use the Internet or other electronic communications for accessing illegal, offensive or inappropriate material**
- all students are aware that they should follow general workplace rules and understand protocols regarding the internet. They should be aware that some work placements might use sensitive information that must remain private and confidential

It is recommended that all parties in a work experience arrangement are aware of their obligations to each other and, in particular, the employer and/or the nominated supervisor should also be aware of their responsibilities to the student as set out in Ministerial Order 56.

- appropriate arrangements have been made for the student to travel to and from the workplace
- the principal should be notified of travel arrangements and be satisfied that these are adequate and that parents, if the student is under 18 years, are also aware of these arrangements
- the employer has been provided with guidelines for employers and has acknowledged these on the Work Experience Arrangement Form (Refer to Section E)
- if the student is aged 14, that a Criminal Records Check has been completed prior to signing the Work Experience Arrangement Form by the employer and any other person who will have direct supervision of the student
- if the student is aged 14 and is going into a Declared High Risk Industry area, the hazard identification form and appropriate permit have been completed and issued by DIIRD (refer to Sections C and F).

During the placement

The principal should ensure that:

- the student is contacted by the work experience coordinator or a teacher from the school

- the work experience coordinator or other staff member has been designated as the contact person if work experience is conducted during term holidays
- payment is made to the student according to the work experience guidelines.

After the placement

The principal should ensure that a debriefing session is held for the student (the student could present a report and feedback may be provided on the student's performance in the workplace), and a letter of thanks is sent to the employer.

Work Experience Coordinator

The work experience coordinator provides the link between the student, the school and the employer and is the key figure in any work experience program.

The role of the work experience coordinator is to find work experience positions for students, liaise with employers, prepare students for work experience, provide support during the placement to both student and the employer, be the main point of contact between the student, employer and the school, and promote work experience programs to employers.

Note: It is imperative that before a work experience program is developed the work experience coordinator must be familiar with the conditions laid down in Part 5.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and Ministerial Order 56 (refer to Section F).

The work experience coordinator:

- develops curriculum and collaborative relationships with other teaching staff to ensure work experience is a valued part of the mainstream school curriculum
- ensures that processes are in place for students to complete the DEECD occupational health and safety program prior to work experience
- where appropriate, liaises with N.S.W. and S.A. Education Departments for students seeking work experience interstate
- ensures that students can make phone contact with the coordinator easily should they have any problems while on their placement
- coordinates contact with workplaces, either by themselves or with other staff
- obtains details of the workplace supervisor(s) who will have responsibility for the student
- organises a database of employers with contact details for school reference
- where possible, visits new employers prior to work experience to ensure that an appropriate program is organised for the student
- ensures that employer guidelines are provided to every employer
- assists in making work experience a meaningful activity for students, teachers and employers

- develops programs that incorporate quality evaluation and reflection through work experience assignments/log books/journals
- is responsible for the accurate dissemination, completion and archiving for five years of the Work Experience Arrangement Form
- in case of an accident during work experience, facilitates the completion of the necessary WorkCover documents.

Before the placement

The work experience coordinator should:

- identify the students who are to complete work experience and the industry areas where the placements are required
- identify employers interested in offering work experience and arrange contact with those employers
- where possible, arrange a meeting with employers to explain the procedures and processes related to work experience
- prepare the student to be aware of occupational health and safety (OH&S) issues and requirements by ensuring the student has successfully completed the requisite DEECD OH&S program prior to the work experience (A Job Well Done for students with disabilities and [safe@work](#) for all other students)
- where possible, prepare the students to be conscious of potential risks and give them strategies to deal with these risks, such as the need to report perceived hazards or concerns to their supervisor without delay
- ensure students are aware of equal opportunity and unlawful harassment and discrimination and have been given strategies to deal with these, e.g. discuss with teacher who contacts them or with the work experience coordinator
- ensure that workplace supervisors have been allocated for each student and that there are adequate levels of supervision of the student to ensure their welfare and safety in a non-discriminatory and harassment free working environment
- match students to workplaces where possible
- where possible, involve the employer in the selection of the student
- ensure the Work Experience Arrangement Form for each student is completed correctly and signed by all relevant parties, and that copies of the form have been given to the employer and to the student and, if the student is under 18 years of age, to the parent
- ensure the employer and the student have clear expectations about the activities the student is expected to undertake in the workplace
- ensure the student is 'work read' and understands workplace behaviour and etiquette, including the appropriate use of workplace tools and dealing with sensitive workplace information, in particular students should not use the internet or other electronic communications for accessing illegal, offensive or inappropriate material

- ensure the student and the workplace supervisor are aware of the “school tasks” the student has to undertake while on work experience, for example, completion of a journal
- ensure the student understands his/her rights and responsibilities and is aware of strategies to deal with problems which may arise, as well as knowing who to contact if there is a problem at work
- ensure that student knows what to do in case of lateness at work, absence and/or an accident.

During the placement

The work experience coordinator should:

- make contact with the student during the placement or ensure the student is contacted by one of the teachers from school
- provide ongoing support to the employer/workplace supervisor if required
- be available to be the first point of contact in case anything goes wrong and ensure that all correct procedures are followed if anything does go wrong.

After the placement

The work experience coordinator should:

- conduct a debriefing session for the student which allows the student to evaluate and reflect on the placement
- ensure that thank you letters are written to the employer by the student and the school
- follow up with the employer upon completion
- review the work experience program and report on any issues, concerns for future planning, and debrief with principal and staff on outcomes of the work experience program.

This is an excellent way to retain the employer for future placements. Employers also like to know what the student has gained from the experience.

Employer

The employer must acknowledge on the Work Experience Arrangement Form that he/she has read the guidelines for employers provided by the school (refer to Section E).

The employer and any other person who will have direct supervision of a student must undertake a Criminal Records Check if providing a program for a student under 15 years of age (refer to Section F).

The employer should set up a work program for students that:

- inducts the student in the correct occupational health and safety (OH&S) rules for their designated workplace on the first day of placement
- gives them an opportunity to experience a variety of tasks in the workplace
- familiarises them with the running of the organisation and introduces key staff involved
- familiarises them with the “school tasks” the student has to undertake while on work experience, e.g. completion of a journal.

The employer will:

- ensure the student is supervised throughout the placement
- ensure the student has access to their supervisor(s) and knows how to report any problems or concerns
- ensures that the student can readily contact the school should it be required during the placement
- consult the school if it is deemed necessary to terminate the arrangement before the specified time
- undertake to pay the student a minimum of \$5 per day
- provide feedback about the student's performance, i.e. complete a student work experience evaluation and/or include a student reference, before the student completes the placement
- liaise immediately (or as soon as possible) with the school work experience coordinator regarding any issues arising in the workplace. If a student is absent without notification, the employer should contact the teacher in charge of work experience immediately
- in the case where a work experience student is injured, the employer must contact the school, either the principal or teacher in charge of work experience immediately.

Before the placement

The employer should ensure that:

- the work experience coordinator and the student are aware of any special requirements (for example, starting and finishing times, special items of clothing, the need for confidentiality)
- a workplace supervisor or mentor has been allocated to the student and that this person is aware of what is required during the placement
- they familiarise themselves with the work experience legislation as it relates to them.

The work experience coordinator will provide some documentation including guidelines for employers (refer to Section E).

During the placement

The employer should ensure that:

- students are given an opportunity to complete the required school allocated work experience tasks, e.g. completing a journal, meeting with staff to complete interviews
- students are familiar with their daily tasks during the work experience
- students are provided with appropriate clothing and protective equipment where required
- opportunities are provided for the student to acquire or to enhance skills
- the student is given adequate support and supervised at all times
- if the student is injured, the correct procedures are followed
- if any problems arise, the work experience coordinator is contacted immediately so the problems can be addressed promptly.

After the placement

The employer should ensure that:

- the employer evaluation is discussed with the student
- a copy of the employer evaluation is completed and forwarded to the work experience coordinator at the student's school
- the work experience is discussed with the student to find out if the student was satisfied with the placement.

Student

Students must be aware that they are representing their school while on work experience and must continue to observe school policies and codes of conduct.

Students should also follow general workplace rules and understand protocols regarding the Internet. **In particular, students should not use the internet or other electronic communications for accessing illegal, offensive or inappropriate material.** They should be aware that some work placements might use sensitive information that must remain private and confidential.

Before the placement

The student should:

- complete the DEECD occupational health and safety (OH&S) safe@work general and industry specific module. Students with disabilities should complete A Job Well Done
- ensure they are fully aware of their obligations in relation to OH&S issues for the industry in which they will be placed

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- complete and sign the Work Experience Arrangement Form with the guidance of the work experience coordinator
- meet with the employer to discuss the tasks they will undertake. This will provide the opportunity for the employer and student to express their expectations of what the work experience will involve
- remind the employer at least two weeks prior to commencement, of the upcoming placement
- ensure they have the details of the designated contact person from the school if work experience is being undertaken during term holidays or after hours.

During the placement

The student should:

- inform the school and employer of expected absences from work, or late arrivals
- inform the school and employer if any unexpected absence or lateness occurs
- report all accidents, 'near misses' and hazardous situations in the workplace to their supervisor and work experience coordinator
- seek advice from their supervisor immediately when unfamiliar with workplace procedures in regard to occupational health and safety, or how any job should be done
- report any grievances to the work experience coordinator, before attempting to handle it themselves in the workplace
- maintain a diary or log book and/or complete work experience assignment and other tasks which have been set by the school
- undertake activities allocated to them by their employer and/or supervisor in the workplace, *as long as they have been given clear instruction and information about the task and how it may be done safely*
- attempt to complete allocated tasks to the best of their ability
- reflect their school rules and procedures in regard to courtesy and politeness while on work experience
- keep contact numbers of their parents/guardians, school and employer with them at all times during their placement. This is to allow students the opportunity to notify either of the parties above regarding any changes to working times or other issues which may arise.

After the placement

The student should:

- complete all related journals, assignments and school assessed tasks ready for submission at the completion of work experience placement

- evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of the workplace, and inform the work experience coordinator as to the suitability of the placement
- keep a copy of the employer evaluation for use in personal portfolio and future placements
- complete a letter of thanks to the employer, detailing skills they have learned during the placement.

Parent

Parents have an important role in the successful delivery of work experience for their children. They play a vital role in discussing with their children suitable work experience placements and assisting in the understanding of roles and responsibilities in the world of work.

Before the placement

The parent should:

- discuss information about occupations and industries that their child could consider as a work experience placement
- assist in finding a work experience placement
- sign the Work Experience Arrangement Form
- assist their child in organising safe travel to and from work experience
- provide the school with contact details of a person designated with supervision of the student after hours, if the work experience placement requires overnight accommodation
- discuss the workplace and school work requirements at home and assist their child to gain an understanding of expectations in the workplace (if possible)
- share their own experiences of work and allay any uncertainties the student may have
- provide necessary medical information relating to the student, including any condition that could require treatment.

During the placement

The parent should:

- discuss the day's activities with the student and, if any problems are identified, encourage the student to follow correct procedures to deal with the problem
- keep details of the workplace with them in case they need to contact their child.

After the placement

The parent should:

- assist in the debriefing process on completion of work experience and encourage the student to reflect upon his/her experiences in the workplace
- encourage the student to continue their exploration of careers and occupations.

Teacher undertaking contact during the placement

The Act requires the principal or their delegated representative, *e.g.* the work experience coordinator or subject teacher, to contact the student during their placement. Contact may be made by either **visiting** or **telephoning** the workplace, and speaking to both the employer *and* the student.

Contacting students during their placement provides the opportunity for the teacher/coordinator to:

- find out more about the workplace
- find out if the student is adequately supervised, either by the employer or the nominated supervisor
- ensure the student is provided with opportunities to undertake tasks in the workplace which will enable them to master the required skills and competencies
- ensure the students' work is evaluated and the evaluation form returned to the work experience coordinator
- find out more about the workplace, and about the particular industry and enterprise.

The teacher making contact should:

- contact the employer to arrange a suitable date and time for the work experience visit once students are assigned
- notify the school administration of the date and time of any visits
- complete a report on the work experience visit and ensure that both the student and supervisor are spoken to during the contact. The teacher should ask to speak to the student in private (refer to Section E for a Sample Record of Contact Form)
- ensure there is suitable supervision and appropriate tasks for the student to undertake
- ensure the work experience guidelines are being complied with, such as the appropriate ratio of staff to students (one work experience student for every three employees or part thereof at the workplace)

- report any concerns immediately to the work experience coordinator on return to school
- seek the employer's permission to take photos of students in the workplace, to be used for school displays or school and community publications
- ensure students have the details of the designated school contact person for emergencies, especially if work experience is undertaken during term holidays.

Suggested questions to use for telephone approach

The following questions are intended as a useful guide to assist teachers when making contact by telephone with students on a work experience placement. (Refer to Section E for the record of contact form.)

1. Introductory remarks

Introduce yourself to the employer/supervisor of the student and explain that you would like to speak to the student in private.

Introduce yourself to the student and explain the purpose of your contact. For example:

I'm contacting you to check on your progress. How are you finding your experience so far?

2. Orientation in the workplace

How are you going settling in to the workplace? Have you had any problems getting to the workplace – if so, how have you sorted them out?

Who is supervising you? Are you working with any other staff?

Are you clear about what is expected of you?

Do you know who to report any problems or concerns to?

3. Planned school tasks

Have you talked to your supervisor about your planned school tasks? Has this been scheduled into your experience?

What tasks have you performed? (This question is intended to solicit potential high risk industry issues with regard to use or operation of equipment.)

What have you learned?

4. Satisfaction level

How would you describe your experience so far?

What do you feel you've done well?

Was there anything you thought you could do better or improve on?

5. Feedback

Do you have any worries or concerns about any aspect of your workplace, or about any individual person? (This question is intended to give the student the opportunity to raise any harassment and/or bullying issues.)

6. Further contact

Remember you can always contact me during your placement (give telephone number).

If ever I am not available ring (give school contact number).

Suggested approach for a site visit

There are three important functions when visiting:

1. Checking to make sure both the employer and the student is happy with the way the placement is working out.
2. Encouraging the student to reflect on what he/she is learning from this quite different educational experience.
3. Checking that students are filling out their work experience log books and have given the evaluation form to the employer.

Note: You are covered by WorkCover while conducting school business off campus.

Contacting the student supervisor

You can talk to the student's immediate supervisor first in order to ascertain any problems. In general, employers are quite frank in their opinions and they will indicate any shortfalls in the student's performance.

If any such shortfalls are mentioned, they should be discussed tactfully with the student as a means of resolving the problem. Students should be reminded of the importance of the general nature of work experience, *i.e.* finding out about work and its general demands, and observing the working environment.

Contacting the student

Talking to students is usually quite easy, as they are only too willing to talk to someone from the school about what they have been doing.

A general question such as "*How are you enjoying the placement?*" will, in most cases, get the ball rolling.

Other questions might include:

Is this what you expected to be doing? If No: What's different from your expectations?

Have your feelings changed about this job? If Yes: How?

What problems, if any, have you encountered with the placement?

What has been the most surprising thing you have learned from this placement?

Occasionally, students will raise negative aspects, which can generally be put under one of three headings:

1. Boredom, especially if they are doing the same thing constantly.
2. Too much observation and not enough actual work, which can be the result of having too high an expectation about the placement.

In these cases you could see whether or not the student has talked with the employer about their role, or suggest strategies for becoming more involved (offers of help). If these have already been tried, you may suggest to the employer that the student would like to do more.

3. Realisation that this occupational area or industry is not what they thought and doesn't really suit them.

In this case, you should stress the general nature of the placement and the personal importance of working through the full work experience.

It is important that you ensure students in their placement are not at risk (either health, safety, moral or exploitative). This may be a less likely problem with experienced and/or large employers, but could be encountered more often in workplaces which have not had many student placements in the past.

Administrative Notes

Work experience coordinators may find the following administrative points useful when preparing documentation for teacher contact during work experience programs:

- Teachers should be advised about the number of visits they are required to make, and of student placement details.
- If there is more than one student within the same work place – that could be considered as ONE visit, e.g. if two students are at Owen Dixon Chambers, that is considered one visit.
- Every attempt should be made to accommodate staff requests regarding student visits. For example: some teachers may request to visit specific worksites related to their teaching subject matter.
- Ensure a courtesy call to students on the first or second day to see if they are okay.
- It is vital that the employer is given notice of the teacher's intention to visit.
- Visits should be made towards the middle of the placement.
- Ensure that the school knows when teachers are going out on work experience visits.
- Notify visiting teachers of a student who may be absent from work, so they may reschedule their visit.
- Ensure students have given the employer evaluation form to their employers

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- Check that the student is filling in his/her work experience logbook. A sample work experience logbook can be found by following the links from:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/>
- If there are any serious problems, let the work experience coordinator know as soon as possible so that remedial action can be taken.
- Keep a record of kilometres travelled if using your own vehicle. This travel is tax deductible.

Regional Careers Network

Victorian regional careers networks traditionally provide important professional development and “best practice” advice and support to work experience coordinators. Many networks coordinate their block dates for release, on an annual basis, to minimise clashes, thus maximising placements with employers in their region.

Many networks pool resources and knowledge to develop and print forms such as the work experience evaluation form or the student workbook/journal/evaluation form, for distribution to their members. Sample copies of these forms can be located at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/>

Regional groups are a good source of information about which employers to approach for work experience, and how to go about liaising with business and industry. Other contacts for workplaces include bodies such as Local Learning & Employment Networks (LLENs), Rotary, Lions and Apex clubs.

Telephone the Careers Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) on (03) 9349 1900 to identify your local careers network.

Educational Sector Administration

The regional offices of DEECD, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and the Association of Independent Schools in Victoria have a role ensuring that all schools and teachers under their jurisdiction are familiar with *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and Ministerial Orders 56 relating to work experience. If you have any queries contact the relevant office listed below.

Contact phone numbers

DEECD – Regional Later Years Consultants	
Barwon South Western 52728348	Gippsland 5127 0400
Goulbourn North East 5761 2117	Loddon Campaspe Mallee 5440 3110
Central Highlands Wimmera 5352 5644	Northern Metropolitan 9488 9433
Eastern Metropolitan 9881 0228	Western Metropolitan 9291 6504
Southern Metropolitan 9794 3538	
Non – Government Schools	
Catholic Education Commission Victoria 9267 0265	Association of Independent Schools 9857 7222

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