

Section C

Procedures and Guidelines

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This section outlines the requirements of a quality work experience program in secondary schools. Work experience (WE) coordinators, school administrators and curriculum developers should consider the procedures outlined in the following section to ensure a quality work experience program is developed for students in their care. The guidelines apply to all students in *government, catholic and independent schools* who participate in work experience programs under Ministerial Order 56.

It is important that WE coordinators are familiar with the content of both these orders before the development and delivery of a work experience program. Work experience programs which are embedded in curriculum and are an integral part of students' compulsory learning will be equipped to implement the procedures in this section more readily.

Age of student

Students are eligible to undertake work experience if they are of or over 14 years of age and have the written consent of a parent/guardian. Students up to the age of 21 are eligible to undertake work experience.

When a student aged 14 is undertaking work experience, the employer, and any other person who will have direct supervision or control of the student where that supervision is not in itself directly supervised, is required to undergo Criminal Record Checks before work experience can commence. All of the requirements of Ministerial Order 56 must be complied with when an Arrangement is made for a student aged 14.

A principal of a school can make a work experience arrangement about the placement of a student of or over the age of 21 years with an employer only in the following circumstances:

- when the student is an adult returning to school after a period away from study; or
- when the student is classified as a refugee from a war-torn country and has had little exposure to the workplace or to work culture.

All of the requirements of Ministerial Order 56 must be complied with when an Arrangement is made for a student of or over the age of 21 years.

Occupational health and safety

Safety in the workplace is important to everyone. DEECD considers the safety of students undertaking work experience activities of paramount importance. Any workplace hazard not effectively managed could cause injury to the student or other person(s).

Before a student undertakes a work experience program, it is vital that the student is made aware of the occupational health and safety (OH&S) rules and regulations that relate to their workplace.

Students are required to successfully complete the requisite OH&S program [safe@work](#) or *A Job Well Done* for students with disabilities or impairments.

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[safe@work](#) is designed to help students improve their knowledge and understanding of OH&S matters before they enter a workplace. It consists of two modules: a 'General' module and a module specific to the industry in which the student will be placed.

Workwise – workplace safety for students is a DVD developed by the Office of Learning and Teaching that highlights OH&S issues in the industry areas of hairdressing, engineering, automotive, primary industry and hospitality. The DVD, located in the front of this Resources Manual, can be used in conjunction with other resources such as [safe@work](#) and *A Job Well Done* (refer to Section G).

A safety-conscious employer will also have regular workplace hazard inspections and a program of effective risk controls, understood by everyone in the workplace. Warning signs should be displayed prominently wherever they are required, and the meaning of the signs must be known to employees and visitors including students.

Where possible, students should be taught how to identify, assess and report possible risks in the workplace. For example, in an automotive workshop it would be dangerous if oil spills are not soaked up and cleared immediately, if car hoists are left up for extended periods, if hoses are not coiled up or electrical leads are defective. Students should be told that if they have any concerns or do not know how to use any equipment, they must speak to their workplace supervisor before proceeding with the task. Safety at the workplace should be the employer's, and the student's, first priority.

Procedures to follow in the event of injury to students on work experience can be found in Section E. More information on the delivery of the [safe@work](#) program and *A Job Well Done* can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/>.

The work experience coordinator should also check that the employer has acknowledged they have read the guidelines for employers and will provide appropriate information, training, instruction and supervision to the student in respect of OH&S, and will provide any protective equipment and/or clothing required.

Work Experience Arrangement Forms

All arrangements for work experience must be recorded on the Work Experience Arrangement Form attached to Ministerial Order 56. All sections of this form must be completed and signed before the work experience commences. One copy is to be forwarded to the employer and one to the student, or if the student is under 18 years, to the parent of the student. The principal should retain the original copy.

The Arrangement Form must be signed by:

- the employer
- the student
- the parent or guardian of the student (if the student is under eighteen years of age). Parent, under section 3 of the Act, includes guardian and every person who is liable to maintain or has actual custody of a child or any person with whom a child resides or who is the occupier of a house in which a child resides

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- the principal or acting principal of the school (this authority cannot be delegated to a deputy principal or other teacher).

Variations or amendments may be made to the Arrangement Form in writing and signed by the principal, the employer, the student *and*, if the student is under 18 years of age, a parent of the student.

Retention of Work Experience Arrangement Forms

As there is no statutory limit on the length of delay in submitting claims for workplace compensation, Work Experience Arrangement Forms must be held for a period of **at least five years** in a bound register by the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled. This register is to be retained in sufficient detail to allow elaboration if a particular case is challenged at a later date.

Remarks relating to the work experience (including the claim number in the event of injury and details of any injury or illness) should be included in the register with the relevant forms. Copies of all relevant medical certificates are to be retained at the school.

Criminal Record Checks (CRC) and applying for a Child

Employment Permit for students aged 14

Further information for students aged 14 undertaking work experience is available in Section F.

Students aged 14 are allowed to undertake work experience in factories or other declared high-risk industries **only** if they gain prior approval from the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

Definition of factory

Students aged 14 must be supervised at all times in factories, which is defined as any premises or place where any manufacturing process is carried out and where:

- 1) steam, water, gas, oil or electric power (exceeding 0.4 kilowatts) is used in any manufacturing process; or
- 2) any process is used involving the mixing or pasting or smelting in connexion with the manufacture or repair of electric accumulators or involving the use of a compound of lead; or
- 3) any bread or pastry is made or baked for trade or sale or any confectionery or cereal food for human consumption is prepared or manufactured for trade or sale; or
- 4) fish or poultry are prepared for trade or sale by wholesale; or
- 5) electricity is generated or mechanically transformed for the supply of heat or light or power; or
- 6) where coal gas is made; and
- 7) any clay pit or quarry worked in connection with and occupied by the occupier of any pottery or brickyard.

Declared High Risk Industries

The following industries and activities have been declared to be a class of employment where there is a higher than usual possibility of a student being exposed to the risk of injury:

- 1) Agriculture (Primary Industries) and Horticulture
- 2) Automotive - retail, repair & service
- 3) Aviation
- 4) Building and Construction (Commercial and Domestic/Residential)
- 5) Childcare
- 6) Electro technology (electrical, refrigeration and air-conditioning, electronics, computer systems, instrumentation and data communication)
- 7) Fishing, Diving, Seafood, Aquaculture and Maritime (including charter and commercial shipping)
- 8) Food Technology (Manufacturing)
- 9) Forestry and logging industries
- 10) Hairdressing and Beauty
- 11) Health, Medical and Community services
- 12) Hospitality - café, restaurants, fast food & accommodation
- 13) Manufacturing (inc. aerospace, automotive, biotechnology, chemical, electrical, pottery, environmental, plastic extruding and injection moulding, materials, mechanical, manufacturing or mechatronics)
- 14) Retail
- 15) Security services
- 16) Sport & Recreation
- 17) Transport & Distribution (including Warehousing)
- 18) Veterinary, Parks and Wildlife.

Students may, however, undertake some activities in the declared high risk industries.

The document *Work Experience Students Aged 14: Health and Safety Guidelines, Criminal Records Checks, the Declared High Risk Industries and Other Mandatory Procedures* outlines activities that students are prohibited from undertaking, and also some activities that students may undertake under direct supervision. **Work permitted in high risk industries should be subject to direct supervision at all times.** This document is available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/safety>

or in Section F of this Resources Manual.

Criminal Record Checks Procedure

When a student aged 14 is undertaking work experience, the employer and any other person who will have direct supervision or control of the student, where that supervision is not in itself directly supervised, is required to undergo Criminal Record Checks before work experience can commence. All of the requirements of Ministerial Order 56 must be complied with when an Arrangement is made for a student aged 14.

Criminal Record Checks for work experience purposes will be at no cost to employers, schools or students and results will only indicate whether the employer has met the required standard - no details of findings will be released to any party.

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Where students aged 14 are proposing to undertake work experience in any other (non 'high risk') industry, Criminal Record Checks will be arranged by DEECD and will also require signed consent from the employer and/or supervisors affected.

Students aged 14 proposing to undertake work experience in a 'high risk' industry must apply to Industrial Relations Victoria for a work permit. The application must be accompanied by signed consent from the relevant employer and/or supervisor(s) to allow Criminal Record Checks to be carried out by Industrial Relations Victoria.

The Table below outlines the process – more detailed information is available in the document *Work Experience Students Aged 14: Health and Safety Guidelines, Criminal Records Checks, the Declared High Risk Industries and Other Mandatory Procedures* available in Section F of this Resources Manual, and at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/safety>

TABLE: CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS (CRC) PROCESS

<p>DECLARED HIGH RISK INDUSTRIES (as listed in Ministerial Order 56 and <i>DHRI Guidelines</i>) CRC required for a Child Employment Permit</p>	<p>NON HIGH RISK INDUSTRIES No Child Employment Permit required CRC required</p>
<p>Schools send employer the Information Sheet located in the <i>CRC Guidelines</i></p>	<p>Schools send employer the Information Sheet located in the <i>CRC Guidelines</i></p>
<p>Employer, Supervisors and School:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete <i>Application for Child Employment Permit</i> http://www.irv.vic.gov.au Applying for a Child Permit. 2. Complete a <i>Risk Assessment Report Form</i> – see Section F of this Resources Manual or available via: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/ 3. Complete <i>Consent to check and Release National Police Record</i> http://www.police.vic.gov.au/ (See Forms & Permits in this Resources Manual.) Write WORK EXPERIENCE clearly at top of form. <i>(Continues next page)</i> 	<p>Employers and Supervisors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete <i>Consent to Check and Release National Police Record</i> http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/res/crimcheck.htm 2. Provide 100 point identification - attend school or send certified photocopies to school.
<p>Both Government and Non Government schools send all forms with accompanying letter from principal to Industrial Relations</p>	<p>Government Schools Apply to DEECD Conduct & Ethics Branch online via Crim Trac</p>

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<p>Victoria (IRV):</p> <p>Child Employment Officer Industrial Relations Victoria Department of Innovation, Industry & Regional Development GPO Box 4509RR MELBOURNE VIC 3001</p> <p>A template for the principal's letter can be found in the <i>CRC Guidelines</i></p>	<p>https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/PROCS/</p> <p>Non Government Schools</p> <p>Apply to DEECD Conduct & Ethics Branch <i>via</i> post, with covering letter stating that check is required for Work Experience.</p>
<p>IRV will liaise with Victoria Police.</p> <p>If approved a copy of the Child Employment Permit will be sent to the Employer, Parent/Guardian and the school. If approval is not granted, the school will be informed by phone.</p> <p>If CRC does NOT meet IRV standards, Work Experience WILL NOT go ahead</p>	<p>DEECD will notify school of the outcome.</p> <p>Schools should keep the notification for records and send a copy to Employer. If CRC does NOT meet DEECD standards, Work Experience WILL NOT go ahead</p>

Adapted from the summary chart developed by Joe Pollock (DEECD Eastern Region) and Heather Thompson (DEECD Western Region)

The key to success in applying for Child Employment Permits when arranging work experience students aged 14 is allowing sufficient time. Students who will be under 15 at the time when the work experience program will be run must be identified early, and arrangements and documentation prepared well in advance, preferably one to two months ahead.

Due to the range of documentation required in processing Child Employment Permits, Child Employment Officers often need to check some items on the forms submitted or request additional information from the school or employer. This can cause delays in getting the police checks processed and a Permit cannot be issued until the National Police certificate is received.

To facilitate the process of issuing Permits, schools are also advised to provide one covering letter authorising payment to Victoria Police for each Child Employment Permit application. **There is a risk in including just one letter with a batch of applications, in that if there is a problem with any one of the documents, they will all be delayed.**

Child Employment Officers are happy to assist teachers with requirements for gaining Permits, via telephone or through a visit if desired. Enquiries: 1800 287 287.

Prohibited employment for work experience for students aged 14

The following industries are considered to be prohibited employment for the purposes of work experience for students aged 14:

- door to door selling (selling any goods or services at a private or commercial residence (including making a contact sales agreement within the meaning of the *Fair Trading Act 1999*)
- employment on a fishing boat other than a boat operating on inland waters

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- employment on a building or construction site whether commercial or residential at any time before the buildings on the site are at lock up stage
- equine industry
- civic construction (roads, bridges etc.)
- defence force and emergency services
- abattoirs
- the following retail areas: butchers' shops, fishmongers, tattooists and sellers of guns and ammunition
- mining (above and underground), quarrying, extraction, recycling plants foundries and tips
- transmission & distribution (linesperson and/or cabling)
- sex industry
- security industry.

Prohibitions and Restrictions for all students undertaking work experience

Prohibited Industries

Work experience students must not be permitted to undertake work in:

- Security Industry
- Sex Industry
- Tattoo parlours
- Any retail or other business where guns or ammunition are sold
- Abattoirs
- Fishing boats (other than boats operating on inland waters).

Prohibited Activities

Work experience students must not be permitted to:

- Hand out medication or discuss condition of patients
- Administer medication either internally or externally

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- Bathe patients
- Undertake any task that requires training or special skills to avoid a risk to safety - e.g. operating machinery, using explosives, welding, brazing or flame soldering
- Undertake work relying on safe worker behaviour (for example, the correct use of personal protective equipment such as respirators) rather than risk controls that protect everyone (such as a fully enclosed ventilation booth to isolate the hazard)
- Hold or transport cash and negotiable items – such as cash, stamps or cheques – with a value exceeding \$100. (This excludes the student's personal items)
- Hold keys, codes or ciphers except those required to operate standard office machines and other permitted equipment
- **Use ANY dangerous plant and equipment:**

(The examples listed here do not form an exhaustive list of items in this category)

- Powered mobile plant (students must never be permitted to drive any vehicle or mobile plant while on work experience – this includes tractors, forklifts, all-terrain vehicles, ride-on mowers, bulldozers, excavators, skidders)
- Powered cutting or grinding tools (excluding those used for key cutting and engraving on items such as trophies)
- Ultra Violet (UV) equipment
- Gas fuelled cutting equipment
- Chain saws
- Welding, brazing and open flame soldering equipment
- Rubbish compactors
- Power presses – unless press has laser guarding or a remote control, and training and close supervision are provided
- Powered lifting equipment
- Excavators
- Elevating work platforms
- Compressed air power tools
- Abrasive blasting equipment
- Explosive powered tools
- Brush cutters with attached metal blades
- Scaffolding
- Power saws, including docking saws and circular saws
- Buzzers
- Thicknessers

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- Guillotines
- Spindle moulders
- Power wood shapers
- Nail guns
- Jack hammers.
- Plastic moulding machines
- Lathes
- Petrol sales consoles.

Workplace Hazards

Work experience students must never be exposed to the following hazards:

- Asbestos (including exposure through inadvertent disturbance of, or contact with, asbestos or asbestos-containing material)
- Biological/medical hazards (such as exposure to needle sticks from syringes or other 'sharps', blood or other body fluids, Legionella bacteria)
- Confined spaces (areas where it is difficult to enter or exit and which may have a contaminated atmosphere, low oxygen levels or stored substances that could cause engulfment)
- Exposure to occupational sources of ionising radiation (such as x-ray machines)
- Exposure to non-ionising radiation hazards (associated with devices such as UV sterilising equipment and laser devices)
- Electrical hazards associated with faulty, unsuitable or inappropriately placed leads, electrically powered plant or equipment, contact with live underground or overhead cables
- Excessive noise
- Exposure to hazardous substances and dangerous goods
- Extremes of heat or cold that could result in physical harm through illness or impaired performance
- Falling objects (such as objects falling from platforms, loads slung from cranes)
- Debris (for example, waste material generated by milling or grinding operations)
- Falls from, or collisions with, fork-lifts or mobile plant
- Falls from heights of two metres or more
- Trenching and excavation operations, including digging of post holes

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- Exposure to high pressure liquids or gases, (associated with gas cylinders, compressed air tools, boilers and pressure piping)
- Hazardous manual handling involving the application of repetitive, sustained and/or high force, awkward postures or movements, exposure to sustained vibration, manual handling of people or animals, manual handling of unstable loads that are difficult to grasp or hold
- Impalement hazards, such as protruding angle iron
- Sharp objects and cutting equipment (not including scissors and secateurs sold for general use)
- Plant hazards including moving machinery or equipment, unguarded machinery where clothing, hair, limbs or fingers could be get caught, cut or crushed
- Bullying, occupational violence, work-related stress, sexual harassment.

NOTE that there are 30 Workplace Hazards Fact Sheets dealing with hazards encountered in many of the industries and occupations in which work experience may be offered. These Fact Sheets are located by following the links from:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/safety.htm>

Anti-discrimination and Work Experience students

Anti-discrimination requirements under Victorian law (*Equal Opportunity Act 1995*) should be complied with in regard to the student as if the student is an employee. There should be an adequate level of supervision to ensure the safety and welfare of the student in a non-discriminatory and harassment free working environment

It should be noted that under Victorian law, the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* and the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*, and Commonwealth law, *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, it is unlawful for employers and educational authorities to sexually harass, victimize or discriminate against employees and students.

If a student encounters problems with discrimination while undertaking work experience, they should raise their concerns with their school as soon as possible.

Workplace harassment, bullying and occupational violence

Work experience coordinators and school administrators should familiarise themselves with issues related to harassment, bullying and occupational violence in the workplace. The information which follows aims to guide practitioners towards identifying forms of workplace harassment and bullying, and offers strategies and guidelines to assist in the development of appropriate policies in this regard.

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Workplace bullying and harassment must not be tolerated in the workplace. Employers have legal responsibilities to do as much as is reasonably practicable to eliminate or reduce risks to employees' health and safety. Employees also have legal responsibilities about how they behave toward others in the workplace. Unfortunately, harassment of different kinds does take place in the workplace, as does bullying in various forms.

Harassment and bullying are acts connected to the abuse of power: the less power a person has in a workplace, the more likely the chance of harassment. A work experience student is often the least powerful person in a workplace and therefore could be highly vulnerable.

Forms of harassment, bullying and occupational violence

Harassment (including sexual harassment) and occupational violence can take many different forms. It can be physical or verbal abuse, requests for sexual favours or assault. It can be behaviour which offends, humiliates or intimidates the victim.

Bullying is generally defined as repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an employee (or group of employees) and creating a risk to health and safety.

Forms of harassment include (but are not limited to) sexual innuendo, comments about looks or body parts, asking for dates, enquiries into a person's sexual activities, displays of pornography or material of a sexual nature, posters, magazines, photographs or screen savers on computers. Bullying or harassment can take the form of assigning inappropriate duties, *e.g.* a female work experience student being asked to wash naked older men in a nursing home. It can also include name-calling, threatening behaviour, shouting or general intimidation such as exclusion or isolation.

Occupational violence is generally defined as any incident where a person is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace. Occupational violence can include the physical acts of pushing, hitting, slapping or grabbing of clothing.

All harassment and bullying should be treated in the same manner by schools, whether the harassment or bullying is prohibited by law or not. Some incidents of bullying and harassment may be illegal under criminal law. If so, students have the right to involve the police.

How does harassment and bullying occur?

A student may be harassed or bullied in a number of ways: by a manager or supervisor, by other employees, by contractors, by customers – or in cases where more than one student is employed, by other students. The incidence of work experience students harassing other workers is quite rare. **The school and the employer are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to protect work experience students from harassment.**

The most common form of harassment is male to female sexual harassment, but this is not the only kind. Sexual harassment does take place male to male, including heterosexual male to heterosexual male. Sexual harassment can also take place female to male and female to female.

Where does harassment and bullying happen?

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Harassment and bullying can take place in any setting, potentially anywhere that work takes place. Harassment and bullying are not necessarily more likely in some workplaces than others: it is wrong, for example, to assume they are more likely to happen in a 'blue collar' work environment.

Particular care should be taken when placing a student in a residential situation, *i.e.* students working on distant farms where residential accommodation may be the norm, or when the student has an employer who works from the relative privacy of a home office. Nor is harassment necessarily less likely to occur in situations involving larger enterprises or more prominent employers.

The principal must ensure that the student is supervised at all times, that the placement will not be detrimental to the welfare of the student and that the student will be visited as frequently as is reasonably practicable.

Students should be advised never to drink alcohol while undertaking work experience, even in social situations.

Responsibilities to protect students

Each school has a responsibility to 'take all reasonable steps' to protect students on work experience from harassment and bullying. 'All reasonable steps' may include:

- having a school policy and procedure on sexual harassment and bullying which is understood by the whole school community
- having a policy and procedure within the school for the organization of work experience which includes protecting students from harassment and bullying
- visiting the workplace, where possible or discussions with the employer.

Should a work experience student suffer harassment, the school must be able to demonstrate immediately that it takes the issue of harassment seriously. This can be achieved by the establishment of a policy and set of written procedures forwarded to each party involved in the student's work experience. The procedures should include step-by-step instruction on what is required to protect students on work experience. The policy should include the written endorsement of the current principal. Employers can also be vicariously liable should a sexual harassment complaint be made. This should be pointed out at interviews with prospective employers.

Wherever possible, the workplace should be visited. Discussions should occur with supervisors and the culture of the workplace should be observed, including language, the way people relate to each other, and the display of posters, magazines, screen savers, *etc.*

It is *not* safe to assume that workplaces do not change from year to year. A new supervisor may detrimentally alter the workplace culture.

Among the issues discussed with potential employers of work experience students should be the prevention of harassment and bullying of the student. Included in the discussion should be the standards that the school expects of the workplace and processes to deal with harassment and bullying should they arise. It is understood, of course, that this possibility should be raised with tact and sensitivity.

All teaching staff involved in work experience programs for students, school management and the students themselves should receive instruction in the area of harassment and bullying, in

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particular as it relates to work experience. This instruction should include the many different forms that harassment and bullying can take, where it may come from, who it happens to, how it affects victims, and how it should be dealt with. The role of the teacher and the school should also be included.

Schools need to have a process that empowers the student to deal *at the time* with harassment and bullying if it occurs. The student must understand that if they are made uncomfortable during their work experience, they have the right to leave the workplace immediately. Bags and other belongings can be collected at a later time.

Under no circumstances should a student be expected to deal with harassment and bullying themselves. If a student does leave a workplace, they should notify their school immediately.

Strategies that students may use* include:

- expressing dislike of their treatment to their harasser(s)
- reporting their treatment to other people at the workplace – co-workers, supervisors or managers
- reporting their treatment to parents/family
- reporting their treatment to their work experience coordinator, teachers or the school principal *and*
- in matters of sexual harassment, making a complaint under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*.

*** No student should be expected to be able to do any of the above by himself or herself.**

Each school should have a process for dealing with work experience students who claim to have suffered harassment. This process should involve the following elements:

- each complaint should be accepted at face value
- concerns and/or complaints must be acted upon without delay
- in the first instance, care should be taken to address the welfare of the student rather than the facts of the matter – “*are you OK?*” is a better response than “*were there any witnesses?*”
- if appropriate, conciliation may take place between the employer, the student and the school.

This should not involve the parties necessarily being in the one room at the same time. If agreement can be reached between the parties, this should be recorded and followed accordingly.

- where conciliation is inappropriate or not possible, the school should attempt to investigate the complaint to the extent possible. The onus of proof needed is that of civil law, *i.e.* the balance of probabilities, not beyond reasonable doubt *and*
- all the evidence relevant to the complaint should be given to the principal for assessment. If the principal is of the belief that the evidence sustains the complaint, a decision should be made about the ongoing relationship with the employer. In some cases, further placements

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will need to be closely monitored, while in others the relationship will be suspended or terminated.

At the completion of the work experience, the school should conduct a debriefing process wherein each student has opportunity to comment on their experiences during their placement. Each student should also have the opportunity to raise any issues privately with a teacher, without other students being present.

Schools should have a monitoring process while work experience is in progress. Each student must be contacted during their work experience to ensure that they are having no difficulties while at the workplace.

Note: Work experience coordinators and school administrators should note that taking “all reasonable steps” may involve actions before, during and after school work experience.

Students with disabilities or impairments

The preparation of students with disabilities or impairments for work experience should be the same as for regular students but with some important additional aspects.

Organising a work experience placement for students with disabilities or impairments

When organising the work experience, the work experience coordinator should:

- know exactly what the student can and cannot do, and communicate this to the employer
- be honest with the employer about the student's abilities and do not promise anything the student cannot deliver, anticipating the employer's possible questions and be able to answer them honestly
- suggest a trial before starting the placement if an employer is hesitant
- indicate some examples of strengths of a student which an employer may value, including:
 - a strong desire to work in the industry
 - a good history of punctuality and reliability
 - a capacity to learn well when shown how to do a particular task
 - ability to concentrate and work on repetitive tasks
 - the knowledge that parents are supportive and encouraging of the placement
- prepare a letter to the employer clearly explaining what you are trying to achieve for the student and what the employer may expect from you
- visit the workplace to generate creative ways of dealing with any problems

Remember that the employer is in business. Be flexible and listen to what people on site are saying, be aware of concerns and discuss options for dealing with them. Encourage

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co-workers to brainstorm ideas to solve workplace problems – they will often prove to be very supportive.

- ask to speak to the supervisors and co-workers to prepare them. Encourage them to voice any concerns, and respond to these if raised. Talk about how the student will be prepared for the duties and about any modifications to work arrangements which may have to be made
- have emergency contact numbers and a medical management plan clearly set out for any medical emergencies, *e.g.* explain exactly what must be done should a student has an asthma attack.

Note: DEECD has produced an occupational health and safety program for students with disabilities or impairments entitled '*A Job Well Done*'. Copies of this resource have been sent to all schools however; information on this program can be obtained from DEECD regional consultants or at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/>.

Schools should take all practicable steps to prepare a student for work experience; *A Job Well Done* is a tool to support schools in this preparation. In some circumstances, however, sections of *A Job Well Done* may need to be modified to suit individual students.

Inspecting a workplace before a placement

When inspecting a workplace before the commencement of a placement, the work experience coordinator should:

- discuss all aspects of the placement and what the student will be asked to do
- clarify the skills required to perform the tasks required
- check the accessibility of the workplace and equipment to see if physical considerations will be catered for, *e.g.* wheelchair access if needed
- establish the degree to which the employer will allow any school support systems to operate, *e.g.* on-the-job assistance with an aide or signing interpreter
- determine the accessibility of the workplace by public transport, roads to be crossed, steps, heavy doors and any other potential constraints

In general, a teacher can get an idea of how a wheelchair will get into a place by comparing it to a loaded shopping trolley. They have about the same manoeuvrability and weight. Corners, steps, little passageways and doors that open outwards may present barriers.

- check the workflow and pace of work, as the extra demands on a disabled student may mean they become fatigued earlier than might be expected. By building in rest times, they may be able to work longer and just as hard for the same result
- consider the consequences of making errors in each task, and reconsider assigning any task to the student where major damage can be done through minor error.

Preparing students

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Students should be prepared for the type of work and the nature of the tasks they will be undertaking. They should be made aware that workplace rules, including occupational health and safety rules, must be observed. Students must complete the requisite [safe@work](#) modules prior to their work experience.

Workplace dynamics need to be considered. Student communication skills can often be very literal and they may not realise when a supervisor is making a joke. They may need instructions given in slow clear terms, with practical demonstrations and reasonably close supervision at first.

Students need to have the employer/supervisor/employee relationship clearly explained, so that they can accept constructive criticism, follow instructions and know who to ask for help. They need a good understanding of what the work is and what is expected of them in the workplace.

It is a good idea to give students some hints on acceptable social topics such as sport, the weather, films or music and to stay away from religion, politics or other controversial topics. They should also be given clear instructions on what to do and who to contact if they need any help.

Photographs of the student at work will be useful for a resume in the future. Prior consent from the student and/or parent must be obtained.

Preparing parents

Parents are used to having meetings with teachers concerned about their son or daughter and may not realise that an employer will not be as welcoming. Parents need to be aware that the work experience coordinator is the appropriate contact and they are not to approach the employer about any concerns, nor go to the workplace. Encourage them to contact the school if they have any worries.

Parents can discuss the difference between school and workplace expectations and their own work experiences with the student. Parents should bear in mind that if the student is sick, the student is responsible for ringing the employer and the school as soon as possible.

Information provided by students, parents/guardians and employers is obtained for the purposes of coordinating the work experience for a school student, in meeting the duty of care and child protection responsibilities. Information provided by students must be kept confidential.

Workplace adaptations for disability

The level and nature of support will vary from student to student and workplace to workplace. Good matching of students to placements should eliminate many problems and records should be kept so that each new placement will become easier to organise.

Sensory impairment – hearing, vision, and physical

Most students with physical limitations are able to voice their needs and cope very well with work experience when the problems of physical access have been attended to. Utilise the advice of the integration teachers or integration aides in setting up work experience. These people will probably already have encountered and solved many of the issues that may arise. Use the expertise of people who are available. Visiting teachers for vision and hearing impaired students

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can visit workplaces and assess the issues for the school as well as providing advice on borrowing equipment for the work experience if it is needed.

The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (<http://www.rvib.org.au/>) and Deaf Children Australia (<http://www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au/>) are excellent resources.

Hearing impairment

The following information could be given to employers to support hearing impaired work experience students:

- provide a swivel chair so students can turn easily for lip reading
- give instructions face to face
- never speak from behind the student
- background noise may drown out your voice: try to speak in quiet periods or give written instructions to ensure comprehension
- ensure the student is concentrating on what you are saying
- don't stand with your back to strong light or a window as the student will not be able to see your face
- speak slowly and clearly
- try to use visual cues
- consider use of a TTY – a telephone for the deaf to assist with office skills.

Vision impairment

Where possible, utilise the services of the visiting teacher and/or the orientation and mobility instructor from the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, especially for the travel and workplace familiarisation. Even legally blind people tend to have some minimal sight and the student should be able to communicate any difficulties he or she is experiencing.

The following information could be given to employers to support vision impaired work experience students:

- try to provide well lit surfaces with minimal glare
- don't stand with your back to a window as the student will not be able to see you through the glare
- provide all written material in at least a sixteen point font, particularly safety instructions
- look for good contrast, yellow on green or black on white – avoid instructions written in pale colours and avoid pastels
- set up the workspace in a quiet spot outside traffic flow
- watch out for any projections at head height or eye level

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- remember the student can't see but they can hear perfectly well, so try not to speak loudly and slowly to them
- when giving directions, ensure that your 'left and right' match their 'left and right'
- bright yellow lines painted along the edge of dark steps will assist the safety of all workers.

Cognitive impairment

The following information could be given to employers to support students on work experience with cognitive impairment (brain injury, learning disability or intellectual disability):

- use simple, clear instructions
- demonstrate processes, model appropriate behaviour
- monitor on a regular basis
- be prepared to repeat instructions several times
- don't assume that the student will transfer knowledge gained in one task to another
- use visual cues; break each task into steps and illustrate each step (1, 2 etc.)
- provide lots of encouragement.

Dizziness, fainting or seizures

If a student is susceptible to these then activities that may bring the student into the proximity of risks such as heights, dangerous equipment, moving machinery, cooking with hot oil, or using sharp knives must be considered and avoided.

However, it should be remembered that a seizure may only last a few minutes so that for 98 per cent of the day, the student is 'normal' and the possibility of seizures should not be allowed to dominate attitudes to planning the student's activities.

Coordination, movement

There are many aids for people with these problems: tools with wider handles, use of non-skid mats or grips, weighted handles, large print scales, talking calculators, voice operated computers, strategically placed mirrors *etc.* Find out what the student already owns or uses.

Note: Information regarding students with disabilities applies to:

- all students in Government schools who meet the eligibility criteria for the program for students with disabilities and impairments as set out by the DEECD Student Wellbeing Branch
- all students in Catholic schools who meet the eligibility criteria for the program for students with disabilities as set out by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria

- all students in independent schools who meet the eligibility criteria for the program for students with disabilities as set out by the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria.

Timing of a Work Experience program

Work experience can take place during the gazetted school year, that is, between the first and last days of the gazetted school year. Students may undertake work experience during the holidays in Terms 1, 2 and 3, but not during the holidays at the end of the year.

If work experience is undertaken during the school term holidays, the school should make adequate arrangements to ensure that both the student and the employer have the contact details of a staff member who would be available as the contact person during the period of the arrangement.

Cancellation of Work Experience

An arrangement may be cancelled at any time by written notice from the principal, the employer, the student and, if the student is under 18 years of age, a parent of the student, sent to each of the other parties. It is effective immediately upon delivery by the notifier of the notice to any of the four parties involved in the arrangement.

An employer must consult with the principal wherever possible prior to cancelling any arrangement.

Contact during the Work Experience placement

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* requires that the principal or their delegated representative eg. work experience coordinator or subject teacher contact the student during their placement. Contact may be made by either *visiting or telephoning the work place* and speaking to the employer and the student. (Refer to Section B or Section E for a record of contact form).

Hours of work

Students are permitted to undertake work experience during normal working hours:

- students **aged 14** are not permitted to work between **9.00 pm and 6.00 am**
- students **over 15 years of age** are not permitted to work between **11.00 pm and 6.00 am** and beyond a time which is ten hours before the start time of a work experience day, or a school day which a student is expected to attend.

Students may undertake work experience during the weekend only if:

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- the placement cannot take place during the week
- the principal is satisfied that it is appropriate for the work experience to take place, and is satisfied that it does not interfere with the welfare and the educational program of the student
- the principal and the parent, if the student is under 18 years of age, are satisfied with the arrangement.

The employer must ensure that the minimum conditions and entitlements that apply in Victoria in relation to a meal break are adhered to, *i.e.* at least a 30 minute break after working continuously for five hours.

Duration of Work Experience

The total number of work experience days is 40 days in a school year. A student can undertake work experience for up to 15 days per term but the total number of days must not exceed 40 days per annum.

Minimum number of Work Experience students

An employer is permitted to employ one work experience student for every three employees or part thereof at the workplace. However, where the placement of a student in a workplace where the above minimum ratio cannot apply, then that placement can proceed if:

- the employer certifies that all work experience students will be adequately supervised
- the principal is satisfied that the placement is not detrimental to the welfare of any work experience student in that work location
- the principal or his/her representative undertakes to attend the work place as frequently as is reasonably practicable
- the number of students will not exceed one student for each employee.

Employer supervision of Work Experience students

It is important that work experience students are supervised while they are in the workplace. The employer should nominate a supervisor of the student who will be responsible for carrying out the employer's obligations under the work experience arrangement. The supervisor may be the employer or a person employed by the employer.

Student debriefing after a Work Experience placement

Students should be provided with the opportunity to debrief after their placement. This will involve reflecting on:

- their learning in the workplace

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- the impact on career planning
- assisting them prepare their pathway plans or portfolios
- assisting in senior school subject selection
- their work readiness
- comments made by the employer/ supervisor on the evaluation form.

Work experience coordinators / teachers should collect written or verbal feed back from employers, parents and staff members. (Refer to Section G for sample parent and student evaluation forms)

These comments provide insight into the value of the placement for the student from the perspective of parents and employers. Where required, students should complete any school work requirements for assessment. Work experience coordinators and teachers should encourage students to share their experience with other students. At the conclusion of the work experience placement,, students should be encouraged to write a letter of appreciation to the employer/supervisor.

Commonwealth Departments

Victorian students are able to undertake work experience with a Department of the Commonwealth Government or a body established pursuant to a Commonwealth Act provided that prior arrangements have been made with the particular Commonwealth government establishments.

If the placement is with a Commonwealth Department or a body established under a Commonwealth Act, no payment will be made.

It is the responsibility of the school to explain this in clear and unequivocal terms to the student and the parent/guardian. If the student or the parent/guardian is not prepared to accept this condition, then it is their choice not to proceed with a Commonwealth placement.

Schools should complete the usual work experience arrangement form. The line "rate of pay – \$5 minimum" should be completed with the words "Commonwealth establishment – exempt from paying".

Refer to WorkCover procedures in section C for details of WorkCover arrangements with Commonwealth Departments.

Payment and taxation

The minimum rate of payment is \$5 per day. If the student is paid the minimum rate of \$5 per day during the period of the work experience arrangement, the Australian Taxation Office will not require the student to have a tax file number or complete an income tax return, nor will the employer be required to issue a Payment Summary to the student at the end of the financial year.

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However, if the student receives more than the minimum rate, this could affect the exemptions specified above.

Where the student is under the age of 18, if the payment made to the student is \$112 or less per week, the employer will not be obliged to:

- make any withholding
- collect tax file number declarations
- issue payment summaries
- report payment details to the ATO.

Students aged 18 years and over will be required to provide a Tax File Number (TFN) declaration to the employer. The employer will be required to withhold amounts in accordance with the tax tables (where applicable), issue payment summaries and report these payments to the Tax Office, as they would do for their employees.

Educational and not-for-profit organisations

If a placement is with an organisation which is engaged wholly or mainly in an educational, charitable or community welfare service not conducted for profit, which as a condition of engagement requires the student to donate back the payment, then the student and the parent of the student (if the student is under 18 years), can decide to donate back the payment to the organisation.

Privacy legislation

Victorian privacy laws, the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001* protect the personal and health information of students.

The information provided by students, parents/guardians and employers is obtained for the purposes of coordinating the work experience placement for a school student, in meeting the duty of care and child protection responsibilities. Information provided by students must be kept confidential.

Employers are also required to only use this information for the purposes for which it is given to them. The school will store the student information securely and it will be kept for a minimum of five years after the placement has been completed.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to protecting the privacy of personal and health information. For a copy of DEECD's information privacy policy please go to: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/deptpolicies/informationprivacy.htm>

Commonwealth privacy legislation does NOT apply to the Victorian Government or Victorian Government funded services.

Public liability insurance

When an arrangement is entered into by a principal of a government school, it is the obligation of **DEECD** to hold or take out public liability insurance to provide at least \$10 million cover per event. The persons to be insured are the student and the employer.

When an arrangement is entered into by a principal of a non-government school, it is the obligation of **that school** to hold or take out public liability insurance to provide at least \$10 million cover per event. The persons to be insured are the student and the school.

When an arrangement is entered into by a principal of a non-government school not covered by public liability insurance as set out above, the employer must be informed of this by the principal of that school at least four weeks prior to the commencement of that arrangement. In this event, **the employer** will be obliged to hold or take out public liability insurance to provide at least \$10 million cover per event for any loss or damage which may be caused by any act or omission of the student while engaged under the arrangement. The persons to be insured are the student and the employer.

The principal must specify in the area provided on each Work Experience Arrangement Form the type of coverage for the student. (Refer to Section E for a copy of the Work Experience Arrangement Form.)

WorkCover procedures

Students on work experience are treated in the same way as other employees under WorkCover. WorkCover does not cover people travelling to and from work. All work experience students are covered under the *Accident Compensation Act 1985*.

Employers of work experience students are not exempted from provision of suitable or pre-injury employment to the students or from obligations in relation to occupational health and safety, occupational rehabilitation, risk management programs, return to work plans and the nomination of return to work coordinators.

In the event of injury there are two forms to be completed and forwarded by schools to DEECD's WorkCover authorised insurer:

- a Worker Claim for Compensation form (blue)
- an Employer Claim Report form (green).

The principal should also ensure that the injury is recorded on CASES.

Processes for lodging a WorkCover claim

When a student is injured during a work experience placement, the following procedures should be followed when lodging a WorkCover claim:

- the student is to complete and sign a Worker Claim for Compensation form (blue) with the assistance of employer and/or teacher

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- the employer is to complete and sign the bottom right hand corner of this form
- the employer is to complete the WorkCover Employer Claim Report form (green) in full, sign and date both forms and forward to the principal of the student's school
- the principal is to countersign and date both forms directly under the employer's signature
- **the principal inserts the words "work experience student" in the top left hand area of both forms** and inserts the No. 1656618 in the "Employer WorkCover number" box and the No. 9573347 in the "Workplace WorkCover number" box
- the principal then forwards the originals of both forms together with the WorkCover medical certificate (if the student is claiming loss of wages from part time work), medical accounts and a copy of the Work Experience Arrangement Form to CGU Workers Compensation (Vic.) Ltd. DEECD Team, GPO 2090S, Melbourne Vic. 3001
- the documents should be attached to the WorkCover Document Cover Sheet – which can be obtained from the WorkCover Management Kit on EduLibrary and the HR website: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw/claims/wrkexp.htm>
- these forms must be forwarded to CGU within 10 working days from when the employer receives the Worker Claim for Compensation form
- the principal should set up a claim file at the school retaining duplicates of both claim forms together with copies of certificates of capacity and medical accounts and hand the "worker's copy" of the Worker Claim for Compensation form to the student
- if an employer is not registered under WorkCover, the above documentation should be sent to the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

WorkCover claim forms can be obtained from the post office, CGU (telephone 8630 1213), the school office or from the WorkCover Management Kit.

If the employer is registered under WorkCover, or is a self-insurer, both the forms and any necessary medical certificate must be forwarded to DEECD's WorkCover authorised insurer (CGU).

If the employer is *not* registered under WorkCover, the forms and certificate should be sent to the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

Return to work

Employers are exempted from the requirements within the provisions of section 122 (employer to re-employ worker) for those students under a "work experience arrangement". This exemption does **not** apply where students are employed within a "structured workplace learning arrangement".

Occupational rehabilitation and risk management programs

Employers are exempted from the requirements within the provisions of Part VI for those students under a "work experience arrangement". This exemption does **not** apply where students are employed within a "structured workplace learning arrangement".

WorkCover for work experience students in other states

Where the Principal or head teacher of a school conducted in a reciprocating State or Territory (NSW or SA) makes in writing a "work experience arrangement" or a "structured workplace learning arrangement" with an employer in Victoria then coverage is provided for that student in the same manner as for a student at a Victorian school and claims are managed by CGU Workers Compensation (Vic) Limited.

Where a Victorian student is subject to a "work experience arrangement" or a "structured workplace learning arrangement" in another State or Territory then coverage would depend on where the actual arrangement was entered into and/or what coverage would be extended by the other State or Territory. Cases should be examined on an individual basis.

WorkCover for Work Experience students in Commonwealth departments and instrumentalities

In the event of an accident at work:

- the school should provide the employer with the WorkCover employer's claim report form (at a Commonwealth workplace they will not have their own supply)
- the workplace should complete the form in the same way as do other employers and on the same basis, that is, the employer signs to verify the facts and the principal of the school signs below
- the school should assist the student to complete the WorkCover Worker's claim form and the words "work experience student" should be clearly printed at the top left of both forms and also in the section relating to "type of employment".

It is the school's responsibility to forward the forms to the Victorian WorkCover Authority. This differs from the procedure with other employers because Commonwealth workplaces do not have an agent through which they can forward the claim.

Refer to Section E for information regarding the WorkCover claim form or Section F – Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide.

Interstate placements

Reciprocal arrangements exist for students to undertake work experience in New South Wales and South Australia. These arrangements are primarily for students in those schools situated in regions adjoining the border Victoria shares with those states. Students should be encouraged to find work placements in their own state in preference to interstate placements. Interstate work experience placement may only be arranged as a last resort – *i.e.* where in the judgement of the school principal no suitable local placement exists and/or where there are special educational reasons for making such an arrangement.

New South Wales

Work experience in NSW will only be considered under the following conditions:

- students are enrolled in schools in the regions adjoining the Victoria/ NSW border, or students wish to undertake placement in an industry which does not exist in Victoria, or does not exist in the student's home/school area in Victoria
- responsibility for negotiation of the outcomes of the work experience, assessment procedures, duty of care, supervision and checking that the workplace has identified and addressed any potential hazards and risks to the student rests with the student's school in Victoria
- placements can only be made within the NSW school term – no interstate placements will be approved that fall during NSW school vacations
- students will not be paid for work experience in NSW
- placements are only be approved provided students from NSW are not disadvantaged
- students must complete the Victorian [safe@work](#) OHS general module and the relevant industry module prior to their placement in NSW
- students must complete the WorkCover NSW 5-6 hour training course, *OHS General Induction for Construction Work in NSW* if they are going to undertake any construction work or renovation or repairs involving any of the building trades.

APPLICATIONS

Applications for work experience which do not involve any overnight accommodation must be made on the relevant proforma available on the following website www.waggad.det.nsw.edu.au
Go to Vocational Education/Work Placement/ Interstate Placements.

Schools should first check the website and contact the following officer prior to sending applications:

The Vocational Education Consultant
NSW Dept of Education and Training
Wagga Wagga Office
PO Box 478
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
Telephone (02) 6937 3895

Applications for placements involving accommodation away from home must be made on the relevant proforma available from the Senior Coordinator, Workplace Learning in the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate in Sydney on telephone (02) 9564 5071, Fax (02) 9564 5020.

NOTE: Approvals for placements involving accommodation away from home are only given in exceptional circumstances. It is NOT advisable to confirm any travel and accommodation arrangements before approval from NSW has been given.

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South Australia

Victorian schools are required to use the *South Australian Workplace Learning Agreement Form* as no payment can occur for work placements in South Australia.

Schools wanting to place students with employers in South Australia should refer to the [Workplace Learning Guidelines 2004](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/futuresconnect/), available at www.decs.sa.gov.au/futuresconnect/. The [Workplace Learning Agreement Form](#) can be downloaded from this site

Further information can be obtained from the Department of Education and Children's Services, phone 08 8226 1000, the Catholic Education Office, phone 08 8301 6600, or the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia phone 08 8179 1400.

Other States/Territories

In the case of work experience in other states and territories (apart from NSW and South Australia), a principal of a school can only enter into an arrangement pursuant to Section 5.4.3 of the Act if:

- the principal is satisfied that it is appropriate for the arrangements to be made (the principal should be satisfied that it is in the interest of the student for the work experience to occur and also that the physical and moral welfare of the student will be assured), and
- the student and/or the parent of the student have made suitable insurance arrangements ensuring:
 - cover for the student for any injuries in the course of the arrangement at least comparable to that applicable in Victoria to a student under the *Accident Compensation Act 1985*
 - public liability insurance coverage of at least \$10 million cover per event in respect of any loss or damage which may be caused by any act or omission of the student whilst engaged under the Arrangement

Parents are at liberty to approach any insurance company to obtain details of insurance that will provide cover for the student comparable to that provided by the *Accident Compensation Act 1985*.

International work experience placements are not allowed under any circumstances.

International students

All International Students will be issued a Visa that already allows them to work up to 20 hours per week, and any work experience arrangements will have to conform with these restrictions. For further information, please contact the DEECD International Student Program Unit on (+61) (03) 9651 3837.

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Last updated June 2008