

Workplace Learning Guide for Schools

2025



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This document is for use in both Diocesan and RI/MPJP Catholic schools in NSW and ACT.



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Work Placement: Teacher Checklist

Work Placement involves students who are undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses as part of a Stage 6 study program. Work placement is not mandatory for Stage 5 VET courses.

Diocesan and RI/MPJP Catholic schools in NSW and ACT must check and follow all procedures in this CSNSW Workplace Learning Guide for Schools. The following list provides a quick reference.

BEFORE

- ☐ Ensure school has the relevant insurance and indemnity cover for students undertaking work placement.
- ☐ Provide stakeholders the current Certificate of Currency with the *Student Placement Record (SPR)*.
- ☐ Establish school needs (timetables/calendars/exams/reports/sport/canteen).
- ☐ Establish appropriate time for work placement (employers, students, principal/staff members).
- ☐ Communicate needs with your local Work Placement Service Provider (WPSP).
- ☐ Have students:
 - register with school's Work Placement Service Provider (WPSP)
 - complete activities on [go2workplacement](#) (student to provide certificate)
 - watch the CSNSW video: [Student Wellbeing and Respectful Workplace Relationships](#).
- ☐ Provide the employer with a copy of the *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guide for Employers*, course outcomes and/or applicable units of competency.
- ☐ Design a program with agreed learning outcomes based on course content and level of completion, ensuring the special needs of students with a disability have been identified and appropriate support provided; seek special approval if required: animals, mines, abattoirs, vehicle travel, accommodation.
- ☐ Provide students an orientation, *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guide for Students* and industry-specific journal.
- ☐ Provide parent/carer notification/permission/briefing and *CSNSW WPL Guide for Parents & Carers*.
- ☐ Ensure the SPR has been fully completed and signed by all parties, secured at the school and copies of all four pages distributed to student, parent/carer and the host employer (this may be taken to the host employer by the student on the first day of placement).
- ☐ Determine if VET assessment is to occur in the workplace, and if so, the principles and procedures to apply.
- ☐ Ensure students going to construction sites have completed construction induction training (school to retain copy of student's state or territory white card, achieved through face-to-face training and assessment).
- ☐ Inform entire staff about program and organisation of work placements with enough time for alternate arrangements to be made regarding individual learning and assessment.
- ☐ Arrange supervision responsibilities: phone calls and visits; complete orientation of workplace supervisors.

DURING

- ☐ Make and document phone contact with employer on the first day and arrange time to visit.
- ☐ Make every possible effort to visit the workplace (risk management procedures may be applied).
- ☐ Complete a work visit report while visiting student.
- ☐ If there is an accident/incident, see *Accident/Incidents Involving Students* below.

AFTER

- ☐ Gather employer feedback.
- ☐ Debrief, collect, collate student reports/journals, providing assessment outcomes as appropriate.
- ☐ Provide thanks and feedback to employer.

Work Experience: Teacher Checklist

Work Experience provides an orientation to the world of work in general but without a planned program of industry-accredited skill development. It may include learning related to career planning or enterprise education.

Diocesan and RI/MPJP Catholic schools in NSW and ACT must check and follow all procedures in this CSNSW *Workplace Learning Guides for Schools*. The following list provides a quick reference.

BEFORE

- ☐ Ensure school has the relevant insurance and indemnity cover for students undertaking work experience. Provide stakeholders the current Certificate of Currency with the *Student Placement Record (SPR)*.
- ☐ Establish student needs (workplace readiness, career interest/discernment, transition).
- ☐ Establish appropriate time for work experience (employers, students, principal/staff members).
- ☐ Have students complete activities on [myworkexperience](#) (student to provide certificate).
- ☐ Have students watch the CSNSW video: *Student Wellbeing and Respectful Workplace Relationships*.
- ☐ Provide students with orientation, distribute CSNSW *Workplace Learning Guide for Students* and logbook.
- ☐ Provide parent/carer notification/permission/briefing and CSNSW *Workplace Learning Guide for Parents & Carers*.
- ☐ Provide the employer with a PDF or printed copy of the CSNSW *Workplace Learning Guide for Employers*.
- ☐ Design a program with agreed learning outcomes, ensuring the special needs of diverse students have been identified and appropriate support provided; seek special approval if required: animals, mines, abattoirs, vehicle travel, accommodation.
- ☐ Ensure the SPR has been fully completed and signed by all parties, secured at the school and copies of all four pages distributed to parent/carer and the host employer (this may be taken to the host employer by the student on the first day of placement).
- ☐ Ensure students going to construction sites have completed construction induction training (school to retain copy of student's state or territory white card, achieved through face-to-face training and assessment).
- ☐ Inform entire staff about program and organisation of work experience with enough time for alternative arrangements to be made regarding individual learning and assessment.
- ☐ Arrange supervision responsibilities: phone calls and visits; complete orientation of workplace supervisors.

DURING

- ☐ Make and document phone contact with employer on the first day and arrange a time to visit.
- ☐ Make every possible effort to visit the workplace (risk management procedures may be applied).
- ☐ Complete a work visit report while visiting student.
- ☐ If there is an incident/accident, see *Accident/Incidents Involving Students* below.

AFTER

- ☐ Gather employer feedback.
- ☐ Collect and collate student reports/journals, debrief with student.
- ☐ Provide thanks and feedback to employer.

Guidelines for Conducting Workplace Learning Programs

This document should be used by Diocesan and RI/MPJP Catholic schools in NSW and ACT and read in conjunction with other *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guides* available on the [Catholic Schools NSW VET WPL webpage](#).

The procedures outlined in this and associated documents and forms, are designed to support the success of workplace learning (WPL) programs and reduce legal, insurance and communication problems that may arise. The guidelines outline the minimum procedures that must be followed and are not intended to limit the development of flexible and innovative programs.

What is WPL?

Workplace learning (WPL) refers to programs approved and organised by the school that involve hands-on learning for students in an authentic workplace. WPL is recognised as constituting part of the total school curriculum/educational program and has relevance for all students over the age of 14.

Broadly, the purpose of WPL programs is to enhance the educational, social and vocational development of all students by assisting students to:

- gain generic and/or industry-specific competencies
- achieve curriculum outcomes
- enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to manage the transition from school to further education, training and work.

Work Experience

- provides an orientation to the world of work in general but without a planned program of industry accredited skill development; it may include learning related to career planning or enterprise education
- is included in Work Education (Stage 5), Work Studies (Stage 6), Career Education and Transition Education programs.

Work Placement

- is a mandatory component of some VET courses for the purpose of enhancement and/or structured workplace training
- involves students who are undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses as part of a Stage 5 or 6 study program.
- involves negotiation between schools and employers about the course learning outcomes to be achieved on the job
- enables students to access industry standard facilities and equipment and provides the opportunity for development and assessment of student competency in an authentic industry setting.

Australian School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Students undertaking Australian School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (ASBAs or SBATs) are signatories to a legal contract or indenture, registered with NSW State Training Services or Skills Canberra. While the duty of care principles in these guidelines are relevant, the same insurance arrangements do not apply.

Schools should also refer to the SBAT Guidelines available on the [CSNSW VET webpage](#). Any concerns regarding SBATs/ASBAs should be directed to the relevant Diocesan SBAT Coordinator or, for RI/MPJP Schools, to Catholic Schools NSW Senior Manager, Vocational Education, voced@csnsw.catholic.edu.au

Benefits of WPL Programs

Learning that takes place within workplace context, or is programmed to include personnel, material or simulated activities derived from relevant partner workplaces, provides access to a range of benefits for the students, the school and the participating employers and industries.

Through planned and appropriate WPL programs and activities, **students** will:

- develop appropriate attitudes towards work
- demonstrate understanding of enterprise principles and work-related issues such as the impact of social and technological change and the importance of equal opportunity in the workplace
- clarify and evaluate their abilities and interests in relation to career choice
- demonstrate an understanding of career pathways within an occupational field, including opportunities for employment and further education and training
- develop social and communication skills in a workplace environment
- apply business and industry concepts to curriculum and classroom activities
- enhance their self-esteem, confidence and motivation to learn.

WPL initiatives provide schools with opportunities to:

- enhance and supplement school-based training by drawing on the skills, knowledge and resources available in industry
- meet the needs of a broad range of students
- improve links with industry and the local school community, promoting their complementary roles
- extend the contexts for the professional development of staff.

Local enterprises and industry partners have the opportunity to:

- be involved in the education and vocational training of young adults
- raise the profile of the industry within the local community
- assist with the selection of potential recruits into their organisations
- expand and enhance training programs by providing professional development opportunities for teachers
- contribute to the development of a committed and skilled workforce.

Principles for Implementation

There needs to be a whole-school commitment to the concept of WPL and its organisation. The educational value of the program for students should always be the prime consideration. Areas for consideration in implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of WPL programs include:

- integration into the total school curriculum
- establishing a clear understanding of the expected outcomes for all participants
- appropriate communication and collaboration between schools, Work Placement Service Providers (WPSP) and industry
- a thorough preparation and training of all participants
- the development of teachers' skills in meeting industry training requirements
- a commitment of resources and a willingness to negotiate flexible school organisation to support learning and minimise any disadvantages to students, teachers and industry
- encouragement of students to take responsibility for their own learning
- regular collection of stakeholder feedback and evaluation of workplace learning programs.

Principal's Approval

The principal must approve any WPL program. Principals may delegate the development of the program to others, including the approval of placements, but the principal takes ultimate responsibility.

In approving WPL programs, the principal must be satisfied that the program satisfies the requirements of these guidelines and that employers meet Work Health and Safety (WHS), child protection and other legislative requirements.

Communication and Provision of Information to all Parties

Successful WPL programs involve close communication and collaboration between all parties including employers, teachers, students, parents/carers, training providers and Work Placement Service Providers (WPSP). Positive relationships should be developed through regular communication, cooperation and respect for the skills and expertise of the various stakeholders.

The following WPL documents available for all Catholic Schools from [CSNSW WPL webpage](#) should be issued to relevant stakeholders:

- *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guides for:*
 - Schools
 - Employers
 - Students
 - Parents/Carers
- *Video:*
 - *Student Wellbeing and Respectful Workplace Relationships*
- *Forms, Safety Cards and Reports:*
 - **Student Placement Record (SPR)** – four pages, completed and signed by all stakeholders (a copy can be provided to the employer by the student on the first day of placement).
 - **Student Safety Emergency Card**
 - **Special Approval application forms:**
 - Animals
 - Mine sites
 - Abattoir or Meat Processing site
 - Accommodation away from home
 - **WPL Visit Report**
 - **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for part-time paid work** (see Appendix B).

Scheduling of WPL

The scheduling of WPL programs should take into consideration a number of factors such as individual student needs, school curriculum and activities, the need for student preparation and follow up, host employer availability and work cycles, etc. Considerations include ensuring:

- students are at least **14 years of age** when they undertake the placement
- **sufficient time** is available for preparation or evaluation and follow-up work with students by avoiding where possible, the first and the final week of each term
- **unreasonable pressure** is not placed on local employers at busy times of the year by consulting with the local WPSP Managers
- Year 12 students have completed WPL **before** their last HSC examination/withdrawal from school
- students work within the typical **working hours** for the industry and in accordance with the conditions provided in the awards or industrial agreements that apply to that job. Students under 15 may not undertake WPL before 7:00am or after 6:00pm nor during school holidays
- placements are preferably scheduled during **regular weekday working hours** in school terms. In extenuating circumstances, weekend and school holiday placements are permissible, provided the school can nominate an appropriate school contact person. Schools have a duty of care to their students throughout the placement, regardless of whether it is conducted during school time, at weekends or during school vacations. If schools are concerned with the level of care that can be provided, permission to undertake the work placement should not be granted.
- students should be supported to minimise the impact of any **loss of class time** in other courses by using strategies such as notifying teachers to arrange make-up of work missed; obtaining agreement from teachers not to teach new material during the absence; and/or introducing a student buddy system
- a student who is **not yet workplace ready** is provided more time to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to confidently undertake work placement.

When planning **mandatory work placement for VET courses**, appropriate sequencing needs to be considered in order to provide students with a coordinated, cohesive and comprehensive learning package.

Planning should build upon the students' previous learning and experiences and provide opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills. Scheduling of mandatory work placement for VET courses needs consideration of:

- providing **sufficient WPL time** for each individual student to achieve the desired outcomes and to satisfy mandatory NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirements for work placement hours
- allowing sufficient time for submission of work placement information to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and compliance with unsatisfactory **course completion** procedures if needed
- **complementing course skills and knowledge** by ensuring prior delivery of units of competency that are important for adequate student preparation (e.g. completion of WHS units) and considering which other units require demonstration of skills in the workplace
- **providing sufficient resources for teachers to visit students** undertaking WPL to enable both teacher professional development through interacting with industry employers and for assessment of student competence where this is a mandatory requirement of the training package and unit of competency.

Recognition of Paid Part-Time Work

In some circumstances, a student's part-time paid work may be used to meet part or all mandatory work placement requirements for VET courses (see NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) guidelines). In this case, the student is a paid worker and the insurance arrangements of the employer apply.

Students wishing to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for part-time paid work must complete a *Recognition of part-time paid work for HSC VET Work Placement* form (see Appendix B of this document), attaching verifiable evidence. Assessment of the student's application must be conducted by a teacher accredited to teach the course.

Insurance, Excluded High-Risk Activities

As in all educational activities, the welfare of students participating in WPL programs is paramount. Schools need to pay particular attention to the suitability of the various types of employment, to ensure students will not be involved in hazardous activities or placed in a work environment that exposes them to physical danger or moral pressure.

Young workers need extra support to ensure they are safe. They often lack the experience, knowledge, confidence and skills to identify and deal with potential hazards. Inexperience and limited awareness can heighten the risk of injury for young workers. Participation in certain tasks may be inappropriate for students as young workers during a WPL program, while other tasks may require special attention to mitigate risks.

Schools and host employers must also evaluate the student's competency, maturity, and physical abilities in relation to all activities to be undertaken.

Insurance Requirements

From 31st March 2025, each RI/MPJP school and diocese will maintain public liability insurance to cover injury to students, loss or damage occasioned by students, and indemnity cover for host employers (subject to individual school's policy terms and conditions). These policies are updated and issued annually. A current Certificate of Currency must be provided to the WPSP and/or the employer.

Schools need to check their insurance policy carefully for excluded activities. Your school's insurance policy will generally not respond to claims involving:

- asbestos, tobacco or tobacco or vaping smoke
- advertising liability
- aircraft products
- care, custody or control
- deductible amount
- employer liability
- fines, penalties, aggravated, punitive, multiple exemplary and liquidated damages
- intentional injury or damage
- loss of use of tangible property
- pollution

- professional liability
- radioactive contamination
- repair, replacement or recall of products
- occurrences as a result of the insured person being under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any narcotic or drug unless taken in accordance with the direction and prescription of a legally qualified medical practitioner
- any consequence of war, invasion, act of foreign enemy, hostilities (whether war be declared or not), civil war, rebellion, revolution, insurrection or military or usurped power or confiscation, nationalisation, requisition, destruction of or damage to property by or under the order of any government or public or local authority.

Host employers must also have current public liability insurance.

1. Excluded WPL Activities

Students cannot undertake the following activities:

- 1.1. any work of a sexual or explicit nature
- 1.2. travel by helicopter and/or private charter aircraft other than those providing a regular paid public transport service, except as part of an approved and supervised Australian Defence Force activity
- 1.3. travel outside twelve (12) nautical mile limit at sea
- 1.4. ownership, maintenance, use or operation of watercraft exceeding 10 metres in length
- 1.5. scuba and/or deep-sea diving
- 1.6. excavation work at a depth in excess of one (1) metre or near utilities
- 1.7. excavation work at a depth of less than one (1) metre without direct supervision of a competent person
- 1.8. any work at an elevated level higher than two (2) metres
- 1.9. work on a roof, roof trusses, or roof cavity
- 1.10. work where asbestos is present
- 1.11. any activities involving or adjacent to the repair, removal or demolition of any construction work containing asbestos or in the clean-up process following the activity
- 1.12. activities involving the manufacture, supply and installation of engineered stone benchtops, panels and slabs
- 1.13. construction work in tunnels, confined spaces or involving the use of explosives. Students are permitted to work above-ground at mine sites provided express permission has been given by the school/diocesan representative who has ensured appropriate risk mitigation has been undertaken
- 1.14. work on permanent or temporary structures used to enable construction work in marine environments (caissons or coffer dams)
- 1.15. work in and around pressurised gas distribution mains or piping and energised electrical installations or services
- 1.16. be in close proximity to traffic or mobile plant operating on a worksite. Students are to attend onsite induction and traffic management meetings. Host employers are to closely supervise students, especially when plant is operating, and question students to ensure understanding of no-go areas and related safety procedures
- 1.17. high-risk construction work, as defined in [Schedule 3, NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation \(2017\)](#), or ACT equivalent, [Appendix C, Licensing and registration - WorkSafe ACT \(2018\)](#), ie work involving:
 - risk of a person falling more than 2 metres
 - construction work involving the use of explosives
 - work near traffic or mobile plant
 - work around major gas and electrical installations
- 1.18. demolition work other than simple stripping of walls
- 1.19. attendance at a site while chimney stacks or buildings are being demolished
- 1.20. driving: (except as identified in 2.5 below) students are NOT permitted to:
 - drive their own vehicles while undertaking activities on behalf of the host employer
 - be asked/directed to drive employer's or any client vehicles while they are on WPL
 - drive any old or unregistered vehicles commonly known as 'bush bashers'

- 1.21. riding horses
- 1.22. attendance at abattoir killing areas (due to Q Fever exposure). Work is permitted at an abattoir or meat processing plant, other than killing areas with appropriate school/diocesan approval
- 1.23. activities involving guns or firearms except as part of an approved and supervised Australian Defence Force activity.

This is not an exhaustive list. Schools should also check their insurance policies carefully for a full list of exclusions.

2. Potentially high-risk workplace activities

Care also needs to be taken to avoid placing students in a workplace where physical, emotional or cognitive limitations constitute a health or safety risk. If, following a risk assessment, it is determined that the placement provides a valuable learning opportunity, the school and employer might consider risk minimisation strategies such as:

- substituting activities or equipment for the student to do or use
- isolating the hazard
- introducing extra controls in the workplace and/or using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Inexperience and limited awareness also increase the chances of a young worker being injured. Host employers must closely supervise students to keep them safe.

Students can only undertake the following high-risk activities in the identified circumstances:

- 2.1. **use of machinery or equipment which may be dangerous for new or young workers to operate** is prohibited unless the activity is first risk-assessed as suitable and safe for student operation by the host employer and each of the following occurs:
 - 2.1.1. the student is given appropriate information, instruction and training and a checklist for the safe operation and handling of the equipment
 - 2.1.2. the equipment is in safe working order, complete with required safety devices or guards
 - 2.1.3. a suitably qualified or experienced person in the workplace who has good communication skills and the ability to give clear instructions provides ongoing close supervision.
- 2.2. **welding/hotwork** is prohibited - unless such welding or cutting was done in compliance with Australian [NSW Code of Practice: Welding Processes 2022](#) or [ACT Work Health and Safety \(Welding Processes Code of Practice\) Approval 2022](#)
- 2.3. **service of alcohol** is prohibited - unless the student is aged over eighteen (18) and the activity is essential to the placement, has been agreed by all stakeholders and the student has successfully completed the Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) training course
- 2.4. **construction work** is prohibited - unless the student has:
 - 2.4.1 completed WHS training and has obtained a general construction induction (white card) noting:
 - the construction training package mandates delivery and assessment via face-to-face or real-time audio and visual media. Both forms of delivery and assessment are valid. Schools are in the best position to understand the learning style of their students when determining the mode of delivery of the white card, ensuring student safety is paramount
 - where a student has obtained a white card issued by another state, the school must undertake additional actions to meet its duty of care obligations
 - a white card is only valid if the student has undertaken work in the construction industry, such as WPL, in the 2 years since the white card was issued
 - 2.4.2 demonstrated the ability to manage their own safety and the safety of others on a construction site; the school principal should not approve the activity where there is any concern
 - 2.4.3 been provided an induction by the workplace supervisor, including training in procedures and how to manage site-specific risks. Handling and operating of all tools and equipment must be explained, along with associated risk management.
- 2.5. **driving of any vehicle** is prohibited - except as part of the NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) *HSC Primary Industries Curriculum Framework* course, and **then only where the student is over 16 and under instruction and supervision by the employer**. In addition:
 - 2.5.1. any activity requiring a licence, permit, or certificate of competence is prohibited unless:
 - the student already has the relevant current licence, permit or certificate; and

- the activity is directly related to the learning outcomes of the placement; and
 - the activity is included in the SPR prior to approval.
- 2.5.2. students must successfully complete the appropriately accredited training course for the operation and maintenance of the machinery and equipment. This includes tractors, implements, equipment attached to a tractor power take-off and side-by-side utility vehicles
- 2.5.3. students with a long record of safe use of quad bikes or motorbikes on farms might not need to complete accredited training. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis. Regardless,
- host employers complete a risk assessment to ensure the activity is safe for students. These are submitted to the school or EVET manager before WPL approval; and
 - students must be closely supervised when using any vehicles, machinery or equipment; and
 - when riding quad bikes and motorbikes, students must be at least 16 and wear:
 - an approved helmet with strap fastened; and
 - eye protection such as goggles; and
 - hand protection such as gloves; and
 - a long-sleeved shirt and full-length pants; and
 - sturdy footwear such as boots.
- 2.5.4. students with little or no experience **must not** operate vehicles, machinery or equipment unless the host employer has demonstrated **substantial experience in providing quality training** to manage the student under close supervision. See [SafeWork Farm machinery: Fact sheet](#).

3. Special Approvals

Special approval from the school or diocese may be required if students wish to undertake certain high-risk activities, as listed below. **Schools should also check their insurance policies carefully** for a full list of exclusions and follow a risk management process when approving the following activities.

Students wishing to undertake such activities must complete the relevant WPL Special Approval Self-Assessment Application form, available from the [CSNSW WPL webpage](#) for use by diocesan and RI/MPJP schools and follow the school's approval procedures.

Special approval is required for the following high-risk activities:

- 3.1. **working with animals** can be dangerous, no matter how experienced the student. Any WPL involving animals, especially horses or livestock, needs extreme caution and special approval from the diocese (or RI/MPJP) school. Therefore, schools must comply with the following additional precautions for students working with animals, including horses or livestock during WPL.
- 3.1.1. students are to complete a *self-assessment* to demonstrate their experiences and capacity to work with animals, other than exempted sites (Taronga, including Western Plains Zoo) and/or participation in NESA Stage 6 Primary Industries course
- 3.1.2. activities involving horse handling: host employers must follow the [SafeWork NSW code of practice](#) *Managing risks when new or inexperienced riders or handlers interact with horses in the workplace*. Schools should keep records in accordance with the factors described in the code of practice:
- Appendix B – assessing a horse
 - Appendix C – assessing a new or inexperienced rider or handler who will interact with horses in the workplace.
- 3.1.3. activities involving livestock: see [SafeWork Working with Livestock Fact Sheet](#) and [Working with livestock on farms](#). Additionally, students must learn how to reduce the risk of Q fever infection and receive [NSW Health – Q fever fact sheet](#) before attending. Additionally, students **must not** be exposed to Q fever bacteria through:
- observing or assisting with animal birthing
 - handling birth products
 - cleaning up birth products and animal excreta
 - handling an animal's carcass.
- 3.2. **working above-ground at a mine site** providing students do **not** to undertake any underground activities nor use explosives in connection with mining/ quarrying/tunnelling

- 3.3. **working at an abattoir or meat processing plant** providing students do not attend killing areas because of the risk of Q-fever, as outlined above
- 3.4. **accommodation away from home**, including placements outside the territory of the Commonwealth of Australia. Overseas placements are not advised. Placements in the USA or Canada and countries subject to their jurisdiction are generally not permitted. Any considerations of overseas placements should take into account the federal government website www.smarttraveller.gov.au and also consider the insurance regulations of the proposed country. Any proposed non-local placement must be referred to the school's insurer prior to approval.

Requirements for all WPL programs

The following requirements must be observed:

- students must be at least 14 years of age and participating in a school-approved activity/placement, demonstrated through the signed SPR. Students under 15 years of age must not undertake WPL before 7:00am or after 6:00pm
- WPL during weekends and school holiday periods must be approved and supervised by the school and only in **extenuating circumstances**. Year 12 students cease to be insured by their school once they complete their last HSC examination and/or have withdrawn from enrolment as a student of the school
- interstate placements are permitted, if approved and supervised by the school
- where possible, students are not to undertake unsupervised tasks with just one employee
- if travel with the host employer is a requirement of a specific placement, the vehicle is properly registered, insured and maintained; good practice for child protection is for the student to travel in the back seat of the vehicle where possible (see SPR)
- serious and wilful misconduct by a student during WPL may void (cancel) insurance cover
- the employer must, in all cases, provide appropriate and reasonable instruction and/or supervision with respect to each Work Experience/Placement student
- the employer and school must comply with all Department of Industrial Relations and SafeWork NSW or WorkSafe ACT requirements (including reporting requirements) for Work Experience/Placement Programs and observe any prohibited activities and SafeWork NSW or WorkSafe ACT regulations (including any age restrictions and requirements for safety equipment / personal protective equipment e.g. helmets and harnesses).

Working with Children/Vulnerable People:

Students undertaking WPL in a child-related or care industry (e.g. childcare centre, school, aged-care, etc) complete a *Volunteer Declaration* form, obtained through the centre, school or facility.

- Students must not be requested to undertake unsupervised tasks with children under the age of 18 years (Note: students involved in childcare placements are to be supervised at all times).
- Persons **over** 18 working in paid or unpaid occupations classed as *child-related employment*, must complete a *Working with Children (NSW) / Vulnerable People Check (ACT)*. This includes WPL in schools, early childhood education and care settings, child welfare services, youth clubs, etc.

School Responsibilities and Duty of Care

The school's duty of care to students participating in approved WPL programs involves taking all reasonable care to minimise foreseeable risks and possible harm to the student. The age, health, maturity, experience, physical and intellectual ability of the student are all factors that the school needs to take into account. What is reasonable care in one case may not be in another.

As a minimum, schools need to ensure that:

- the suitability of the host employer is reviewed in regard to provision of an environment free from harassment, discrimination, child protection and health and safety risks
- the host employer is provided with an orientation regarding the school's expectations and the employer's responsibility to supervise the student and provide appropriate learning experiences
- WHS requirements and child protection requirements are met
- host employer and student are matched to optimise learning outcomes, taking into account individual student needs

- any additional personal information necessary to student well-being is provided to the host employer, with the consent of the student and parent/carer, and in keeping with privacy protocols
- any special needs of students with a disability are appropriately supported in the workplace
- the SPR is fully completed and signed prior to commencement of the placement.
- the student is well prepared and has undertaken orientation activities to optimise their safe and effective participation in the placement
- clear communication continues between the school, the student, the employer and other parties
- formal supervision of the student by the school during the placement is maintained and reports of workplace visits or phone calls are documented
- post-placement sessions with students such as a debrief, are conducted to review the experience and optimise their learning.

School Contact Person

The school must provide an appropriate contact person for the hours during which the student is on WPL. In some placements, this may include evenings and weekends, and school vacations. The staff member should be available to intervene, in person if necessary, should problems arise during the course of the program.

Relevant phone numbers and other details must be provided on the SPR. Use of an emergency procedures card may also be considered. Schools will need to provide a mobile phone for the purpose of workplace learning supervision that is not the personal phone of a teacher/staff member.

The supervising teacher will generally be the teacher of the course but may be another appropriate member of staff who is familiar with the course and/or workplace learning requirements such as the careers adviser or a member of the school executive.

School Emergency Contact

The school must provide an appropriate emergency contact person who will be contacted in the event of an emergency, accident or incident which involves a student. This person must be contactable whilst the student/s are undertaking workplace learning. This may include early starts, evenings and weekends, and school vacations if permitted/accepted by the school.

Placement Visits

All reasonable care must be taken to ensure the employer is able to provide a safe environment appropriate to the learning needs of the student. **Where practicable**, a pre-placement visit to all new workplaces should occur. Schools should confirm that all new workplaces have appropriate policies and procedures. A new workplace includes workplaces that are not known to the school or that have not previously hosted a student for workplace learning.

During all placements, the school must:

- contact the host workplace and student at least once to check on the student's progress, safety and welfare; this should take place on the first or second day of the placement
- document all contact, whether it is in person or by phone. Face-to-face visits should be undertaken by schools where practicable with priority given to high-risk activities and workplaces. The manner and frequency of contact is dependent on the assessed risks of the workplace
- complete a *WPL Visit Report* (available from the CSNSW VET Webpage) and file it with the SPR.

In meeting these obligations, schools not only provide a duty of care to the student but also build stronger relationships with the external community stakeholders who are participating in the education of our students. Teachers also benefit professionally from interaction with employers and keeping up to date with industry developments.

Placements Sourced by Students

Students may identify a potential workplace learning opportunity themselves, but the school should take necessary steps to check that the host employer has appropriate safety and supervision and meets legislative requirements. This responsibility may be delegated to the school's WPSP (see below).

Work Placement Service Providers

WPSP are locally managed organisations, established and funded to arrange and coordinate work placements for students undertaking VET courses where work placement is a mandatory NESA requirement.

The WPSP Managers work with schools and employers to ensure that quality work placements are arranged for students. This coordinated approach provides valuable assistance to schools and reduces the pressure on employers resulting from the increasing number of students seeking placements.

Formal communications and agreements to enhance collaboration between the WPSP and schools must be established to ensure each partner's role in the provision of WPL is effective and complementary to the whole process.

Catholic Schools NSW works with the NSW Department of Education regarding arrangements for WPSP staff to assist schools with WPL programs. WPSP responsibilities include:

- an obligation to take reasonable steps to minimise the risks to students participating in WPL
- selecting host employers who will assess any risks to the health and safety of students in the proposed activities; remove or minimise those risks and who will deliver quality WPL experiences
- selecting employers who understand and can make appropriate adjustments and accommodations for diverse students, including students with disabilities
- promoting the benefits to the employer of offering WPL placements
- providing mandatory support documents, and explanations about them, to employers, students, and parents/carers, including expectations and requirements in connection with child protection
- ensuring the employer is aware of the purpose, process, and outcomes of the placement so they are better able to deliver a positive learning experience for the student. Personal contact is the preferable approach to meeting this responsibility.
- ensuring the employer is aware of obligations regarding non-payment of students on placement and that, in the event of an industrial dispute, the placement is suspended or postponed
- clarifying and documenting communication between the stakeholders, but most importantly between the employer, the workplace supervisor, and the school through the SPR.

Host Employer Selection, Responsibilities and Orientation

Students must be placed with host employers who can provide the required training and supervision in a safe environment. The school **must not** proceed to use a host employer, whatever pressure there might be to find placements for students, if the school cannot by reasonable inquiry be satisfied that the host employer:

- has appropriate facilities and equipment for the targeted learning
- has staff who are able to provide appropriate training and supervision for the student
- is aware of and implements legislative and regulatory requirements such as WHS, Child Protection, Privacy, Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination legislation
- has public liability insurance.

Host Employer Responsibilities

The school must ensure the host employer has completed the SPR with appropriate details. By completing this document, the host employer will acknowledge receipt of the guidelines: *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guide for Employers*, awareness of the special responsibilities associated with working with children, including their responsibility to provide:

- a safe and positive environment compliant with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- appropriate learning and skill development activities for young workers under the supervision of a capable and trustworthy employee/s briefed for the task
- a site-specific workplace induction including relevant safety matters and control measures for areas of risk
- an activity-specific induction to minimise risk to students who are inexperienced and potentially vulnerable
- adequate facilities for the student's welfare at work.

Employer Orientation

It is essential to establish a line of communication early in the WPL program between the school and the workplace supervisor nominated by the host employer. This will ensure that information about the student is communicated to the person supervising the student. This is particularly important in large organisations.

Adequate preparation of prospective employers is a major determinant of the success of a work placement for the individual student. Employers/supervisors should be informed about the:

- importance of ensuring the safety and welfare of students
- insurance and indemnity provisions
- names and contact details for the school and student's contacts
- relevant personal details and/or needs of particular students, including students with diverse needs
- need for students to return to school if WPL placements are affected by industrial action.

And specifically for mandatory VET work placements, employers/supervisors should be informed about:

- the skill level and experience of student and an indication of equipment which students are familiar with and the competencies to be accessed and practised during the work placement
- any competencies upon which the workplace supervisor will be asked to provide feedback.

Preparation of Students

One of the most significant factors contributing to the success of a WPL program is the degree of adequate preparation provided to students. Students must be prepared for their experience in the workplace.

Resources to assist teachers to prepare students are available including [myworkexperience](#), [Go2workplacement](#), SafeWork NSW/ACT and the OnGuard training system, which provide students with appropriate training on the use of specific equipment.

Student work readiness preparation and orientation programs should consider aspects such as:

- contacting the personnel manager or supervisor before the placement
- planning safe travel arrangements and paying for their travel to and from placements
- understanding and using documents such as the SPR and WPL Guides that support their WPL
- general employee responsibilities such as punctuality, appearance, dress, and behaviour norms
- following the reasonable directions of their supervisor in the workplace
- WHS and child protection responsibilities and regulations
- working longer hours
- working with others and accepting responsibility for one's own actions
- coping with inappropriate or illegal situations, e.g. harassment, discrimination, initiation activities, access to drugs and alcohol, unethical practices
- needing to communicate problems or concerns about the placement with the school immediately they arise, whether before or during the actual placement
- needing to return to school if WPL placements are affected by industrial action
- contacting both the employer and the school in the event of absence
- reporting procedures for accidents or child abuse incidents
- completing the WPL log and/or other assigned tasks.

Work health and safety legislation requires an employer to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to workers including students gaining work experience. Where a student supplies their own PPE/safety equipment, it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure it is appropriate and fit for purpose. It is the responsibility of the workplace to ensure that the student is wearing the appropriate safety equipment correctly at the workplace.

Students should be advised to contact the school immediately if they become concerned about any aspect of their placement or if they wish to withdraw from the placement for some exceptional reason. Students who fail to turn up without notifying the employer jeopardise the standing of the program in the community.

Specific Industry Requirements

Construction students participating in WPL at a construction site must complete general construction induction training (white card) before placement. This includes a range of career areas such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical occupations where work is carried out in an area designated as a construction zone. See 2.4 above.

Hospitality students require evidence that they have completed the *Food Handler Basics Training*.

Hospitals/Health facilities may have immunisation or documentation requirements that must be completed before placement. Schools need to check these carefully with the employer and ensure that students are informed, have sufficient time and are on track to meet the requirements, including waiting times between vaccination doses.

Child-related employment (e.g. childcare centre, school etc) requires completion of the *Volunteer Declaration* form, which the employer will provide. Additionally, for students over 18 years (paid or unpaid), a *Working with Children/Vulnerable People Check* is mandatory.

Students with Diverse/Additional Needs

Thorough preparation for diverse students, including those with disabilities, is critical when planning WPL programs. This preparation should be in line with the student's Individual Learning and/or Transition Plans and be in accordance with their identified needs.

Schools need to ensure:

- all plans are current and updated such as risk management plans, safety plans, medical plans, mental health care plans and behaviour plans
- all stakeholders have been involved in the consultation of placement, including vision and hearing specialists if required.

Diverse students may require more intensive preparation for WPL, such as:

- developing agreed priorities, goals and actions with parents/carers and support teachers
- developing a detailed learning program for the placement
- organising simulated or in-school work experience to establish generic and industry-specific competency levels, including behaviour and communication
- providing opportunities to develop the competencies in a supportive environment either at school or in a carefully chosen, known environment
- avoiding placements to which the student may react negatively, especially if they are unable to clearly communicate their feelings.

Schools should refer to the NESA website for information on [VET Courses and Students with Disability](#). Where a student has additional needs that are relevant to the WPL program, schools must ensure that employers are informed, in compliance with privacy protocols, and that appropriate support is provided.

Child Protection Protocols

For the purposes of Child Protection legislation, those who supervise and work with students during work placement or work experience are undertaking child-related work. Schools must always ensure that employers and supervisors are aware of, and comply with, the child protection requirements outlined in the *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guide for Employers*.

Schools must ensure students are prepared prior to the placement and briefed regarding:

- their right to feel safe and secure within the workplace
- their right to refuse to undertake tasks that involve one-on-one contact with employees or clients, particularly if this is to be done in confined spaces
- contact details for a responsible school representative. If a student feels they are being harassed or in any way abused in the workplace, they should report the matter to this person as soon as possible.

When a contact person (i.e., work placement or work experience coordinator) receives a complaint or concern about the actions of a person in the work environment, the following steps should be taken:

- information from the student must be recorded in as much detail as possible – who, when, where, what; it is very important that the coordinator does not ask how and why questions that can later be construed as *leading*. Students of this age can generally write their own report and sign it
- the contact person must immediately inform the student's Principal, who will follow school procedures. The coordinator/teacher must not contact the employer at this stage
- a risk assessment will be conducted and consideration given as to whether police or Department of Communities and Justice should be notified. If the matter constitutes reportable conduct, it is possible that both the student and any other students attending the workplace are withdrawn until the matter is investigated
- if the matter constitutes reportable conduct, notification to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian is required. Any subsequent investigation may include speaking with the employer, students, and parents/carers as well as liaison with the principal and school contact person.

Mandatory and Recommended Support Documents

A range of mandatory and support documents have been developed to assist in the implementation of WPL programs. The SPR and *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guides for Schools, Employers, Students, and Parents & Carers*, are mandatory. These and other support documents are available on the [CSNSW VET webpage](#).

Student Placement Record (SPR) (mandatory)

The purpose of the SPR is to:

- formalise arrangements/conditions between the school, host employer, student, parent/carer
- include advice on managing and minimising risks, defining the placement so that all parties involved understand their responsibilities
- be subpoenaed if damage or injury arises from the placement, resulting in an insurance claim and/or referral to SafeWorkNSW/ACT.

The SPR **must** be completed and signed by all parties **prior to WPL commencing** to ensure all arrangement details are understood and agreed upon and the principal has approved the placement. Any additional special approval forms identified on the SPR (as required for the placement) contribute to the necessary documentation.

Any variation to or cancellation of the placement must be in writing. The original should be filed at the school in accordance with the school's record retention policies. A copy of the completed SPR must be provided to the employer, the student, and the parent/carer.

WPL Journals (recommended)

WPL prepares students for adult work and lifelong learning. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning by keeping a record of their learning as evidence of achievement and a means of developing skills of reflection and self-evaluation. The workplace learning journal is also a way of capturing the learning experience for evaluation of outcomes by the teacher at the school. A sample is included in Appendix A of this document.

Accidents/Incidents Involving Students

Where an incident causes loss or damage for the employer or if a student is injured during a placement, including during travel to and from the place of work, the employer must report the incident to the school within 12 hours. Notifiable incidents must be reported to SafeWork NSW by the employer. If the incident relates to a child protection or child abuse matter, see Child Protection Protocols above.

The school will need to:

- complete an *Incident Report* via the school's usual process; if online, relevant WHS Team will be advised to follow up with the school/teacher/coordinator as required
- where the incident may result in an insurance claim, follow the school insurer's procedures.

A *Notification of Injury* report, irrespective of any claim (insurance or otherwise) must be completed. It needs to include statements from the student, and employer or employee where possible, and must be completed

as soon as the school is advised or becomes aware of any accident or incident. Due to SafeWork NSW requirements about reporting accidents, the anticipated length of time the student will be unable to attend school should be also included in the report.

All claims for expenses involving injury to students should be processed in the following way:

- students are volunteers not employees, claims are not to be classified as Workers' Compensation
- parents/carers take the usual action to claim on Medicare and/or private health funds, noting it is not possible to cover the Medicare gap if not bulk-billed
- parents/carers may be able to claim expenses under the school's Student Accident insurance
- schools should follow their standard procedures for WHS
- the principal or other staff should not admit liability.

Record Keeping

Schools must include the following records of all placements in each student's school file. These must be kept in accordance with the school's record retention policies and be to be retrieved if required:

- *Student Placement Record (SPR)* and any applicable Special Approval forms
- *Workplace Visit Reports*
- as applicable, use regular school procedures to make:
 - accident reports
 - claims for damages
 - records of child protection issues
- where appropriate for construction-related WPL, records of SafeWork NSW/ACT WHS General Induction for Construction training completed by the student.

For assistance or further clarification
please contact CSNSW Senior Manager
Vocational Education and Training
voced@csnsw.catholic.edu.au

Appendix A

Sample Student WPL Journal Entry									
Daily Record Student's Name: _____ Location: _____ Date: _____									
DAY 1 2 3 4 5			Time Started:		Time Finished:		Hours Worked:		
STUDENT SELF ASSESSMENT (circle): DRESS Poor 1 2 3 4 5 PUNCTUALITY 1 2 3 4 5 INITIATIVE 1 2 3 4 5									
Activities / Skills Performed			Tools / Equipment				D – Developing S – Satisfactory HD – Highly Developed D S HD		
New Terminology			Meaning						
Employability Skill Development: <i>Identify a skill on which you concentrated today. Provide evidence / What did you do/ achieve?</i>									
Identify environmentally sustainable work practices and procedures:									
REFLECT ON:									
Today's achievements / Things I enjoyed:									
Difficulties/ issues arising today:									
Tomorrow's Goal:									
Supervisor's comments: <i>Please check what the student has included, add any additional comment and sign below.</i>									
Supervisor's signature _____ Name _____ Date _____									

Appendix B

Students may be able to use their part-time paid employment for HSC VET work placement by completing this form

Recognition (RPL) of part-time paid work for HSC VET work placement
Evidence of Workplace Activities Schedule

Please use additional copies of this proforma where more activities are completed.

Name of Student _____ Enterprise _____

Employer/Supervisor _____ Work Email _____

Evidence to be provided (e.g.: pay statements, letter) _____

SCHEDULE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT, VERIFIED BY THE EMPLOYER OR SUPERVISOR AND RETURNED TO THE VET Trainer and/or VET Coordinator at school

Student position/s in enterprise	Date/s undertaken
Description of duties	
Tasks performed	
Skills practised	
Industry attitudes developed	
Supervisor Comments	Supervisor Signature

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

I certify that the student has met the current requirements for recognition of the student's concurrent employment for work placement purposes as detailed in the [NESA ACE Website](#).

Signed (Student's VET Trainer) _____ **Date** _____

Print name _____ **Position** _____