

Student	
School	
Host Employer	

PROPOSED WORK EXPERIENCE – MEAT PROCESSING/ABATTOIRS

SPECIAL APPROVALS

Work Experience Guidelines for Students Working at Meat Processing Plants.

These guidelines provide information for host employers, students, parents and schools

Workplace learning opportunities include work experience for school students aged 15 or over, usually in Years 9 and 10 but also including Years 11 and 12 and work placement for HSC industry curriculum framework courses including but not limited to Business Services and Information Technology.

These HSC courses include a requirement that students complete a period of placement in a relevant industry setting to complement the off the job delivery of the training through the nationally registered training organisation (usually the diocese) or the TAFE NSW (orCIT) institute. There are Agreed Activities which school students are permitted to undertake in a meat processing plant.

Not all meat processing plants will necessarily wish to offer or be in a position to offer workplace learning opportunities for school students.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

NO student under 15 years of age should be permitted to undertake work experience at a meat processing plant.

What all parties should consider

This fact sheet is for secondary school students undertaking work experience programs, their host employers and parents/carers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Changed policy on student attendance at meat processing plants

The aim of permitting school students to attend meat processing plants under conditional approval is to support students to gain the maximum workplace learning opportunities in their local communities with a view to enhancing future employment options in the meat industry in rural and regional areas.

The conditions take account of rigorous WHS systems implemented in the meat processing industry which, because of its nature has an acknowledged greater than usual potential for serious illness and injury.

The Conditions for Approval aim to minimise foreseeable risks to school students in an industry with a significant potential for serious illness and injury. The Conditions support the school's paramount concern for ongoing student safety welfare and well-being in all approved educational activities.

The Conditions also support the meat processing industry's ongoing commitment to promoting high quality safe work practices in all meat processing plants continuous improvement in WHS performance and promoting to young people the wide range of employment and training opportunities available in the industry and in their local community.

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What students and parents should consider

Q fever is an infection spread to humans from animals, mainly cattle, sheep and goats. It can cause a severe flu-like illness and long-term health problems. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent infection and is recommended for those who work in, live in or visit high risk environments.

Talk to your doctor to see if vaccination is right for you. Check that your GP offers Q fever screening and vaccination before booking an appointment. Allow two GP visits to complete both pre-vaccination screening (including a blood test and a skin test) and vaccination. These visits should be 7 days apart. Only book the first appointment when you are able to return in 7 days to have the injection site examined by a doctor. If eligible, vaccination can be given at the second appointment. The vaccine is a single injection given in the upper arm.

The vaccine and the skin testing is not government funded. Speak to your doctor about the costs involved. While costs are tax deductible for most at-risk occupations, this is not applicable because workplace learning is unpaid.

Note that screening/vaccination is a compulsory requirement for student workplace learning in meat processing plants.

Role of the school in assessing student suitability

The school's Work Experience/Placement representative should review the completed form *Proposed Work Experience – Meat Processing/Abattoirs*. If this provides satisfactory evidence of relevant interest in working in meat processing plants, it should be forwarded to the prospective host employer.

If the school has concerns about the student's suitability, the work experience should not go ahead.

Procedure

Please fully complete the following forms and forward to your school/diocesan representative for consideration:

- *Student Self-Assessment Form* (pages 3-6 below)
- *Student Placement Record* (including fully completed and signed Host Employer section)

If required, your school/diocesan representative may consult with the Catholic Schools NSW Senior Manager: VET, for consideration: voced@csnsw.catholic.edu.au

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EMPLOYER RISK MANAGEMENT

Providing Appropriate Induction and Supervision

Work experience students must be given a thorough induction briefing and must be adequately supervised while at your workplace. This means allocating responsibility for the student to a staff member. Supervisor(s) should be familiar with the summary of the student's prior experience with animals and must explain which activities and locations are prohibited. *All* staff must understand some tasks are not to be asked of the student.

Inform the student that **safety** is the most important consideration during their stay, that you have a legal duty of care for the student during the week, and in turn they must act to safeguard themselves by observing all requirements you have put in place to protect them.

The following are unsuitable (prohibited) activities:

- Meat industry processes involving the use of knives including mechanical knives, saws and mincers
- Working near suspended carcasses (ie, in slaughtering areas)
- Working from height
- Excessive manual handling, eg, lifting heavy boxed meat
- Working in dirty areas due to the risk of disease and infection, eg, condemn room, foetal calf blood recovery, rendering
- Any processes identified in the company's work instructions as posing a significant risk to the health and safety of young and inexperienced workers

Workplace Hazards in Meat Processing Plants

Hazards must be considered when allocating tasks. If a risk cannot be managed, students must NOT undertake the activity. Students must be given an induction addressing health and safety issues, such as listed below and must be supervised at all times.

- ☐ Relevant aspects of local company policy and local safety rules
- ☐ Local procedures (eg first aid, evacuation, hazard reporting)
- ☐ Provide 'tips' for school students to keep themselves and others safe
- ☐ Identify no go areas
- ☐ Show permitted areas
- ☐ Identify the location of staff amenities
- ☐ Provide the school student with a list of relevant staff member contacts

The hazards described overleaf are commonly encountered in meat processing workplaces. As a host employer, we ask you to consider the information overleaf and if any further risk management activities are appropriate for your workplace, these should be noted on the *Student Placement Record* which you are required to complete and sign.

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Workplace Hazards at Meat Processing Plants		
Area	Possible Activities	Restrictions/Comments
Stock Yards	• Checking and clearing of stock documentation • Feeding of stock • Scanning of cattle • Washing of cattle • Operation of race	These activities are underpinned by: • Implementation of the Code of Animal Welfare Practice • Implementation of safety requirements for working outdoors
Slaughter Floor	Observation of the following activities: • Washing of offal • PB site measurement • Carcass labelling • Carcass stamping (forequarter) • Operation of offal trolley • Packing & Carton handling • Offal carton strapping	• The slaughter floor is to be an observation only observation only area for school students • <i>An exception is where a supervised school student undertakes IT processes as part of their negotiated HSC IT work placement</i>
Front Tripe Room	• Packing of tripe pieces • Honeycomb tripe packing • Mountain chain tripe packing • Operation of scales • Gluing of cartons	• All activities are subject to no use of knives by school students
Chillers	• Weighing and recording of quarters and sides	• Training is required for school students prior to working in the chillers
Boning Room	• Packing Boning Room • Carton handling (empty) • Lining cartons with plastic	• Close supervision of school students by an experienced packer / mentor • Focus should be on bagging and assisting rather than lifting • If lifting is necessary, then students should be trained in correct lifting techniques and only lighter boxes should be lifted • Rotation of duties is required to avoid repetitive tasks
Carton Room	• Carton forming (manual only)	• Close supervision is required by an experienced employee /mentor
Tunnel	• Facilitating boxes along moving conveyors • Metal detecting • Strapping • Sastek compute	• Close supervision is required by an experienced employee / mentor • Training is required for school students prior to strapping and sastek computer activities
Palletising and Loadout	• Portmarking of product • Issuing a Meat Transfer Certificate • Issuing an Inedible Meat Transfer Certificate • Use of the Exdoc computer program • The request to change trade description	• The palletising and loadout area is to be an observation area only for school students • All activities require close supervision by an experienced supervision employee / mentor • Office based administrative work is suitable for school students • Training is required for school students prior to the request to change trade description activity
Administrative Offices	• All regular office activities	• None
Miscellaneous	• Purchasing • Operating the clothing store • Ground maintenance (basic supervised gardening duties eg weeding).	• All listed activities are suitable for school students

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STUDENT SELF ASSESSMENT

Students: This form should be completed and provided to your school's Work Experience/Placement Coordinator, to enable them to make an informed decision about your suitability for work experience/placement at a meat processing plant. If satisfied, they will forward the form to your prospective host employer, who will make the final decision.

It's important to understand that your contact with meat processing will be restricted to activities that do not present unacceptable risk. Your safety is your host employer's most important consideration.

STUDENT DETAILS

Health care issues are relevant to this placement. It is very important to be clear in your responses so that your health and safety can be looked after. Your medical record held by the school should be referred to when completing this section.

Indicate whether you have experienced or still experience any of the following?

If you answer yes to any of these questions please provide further details:

a) allergies eg, allergic response to eggs, animal dander, etc	Yes / No
b) serious illnesses in the past	Yes / No
c) illnesses in the last months	Yes / No
d) medical conditions eg asthma, epilepsy, diabetes	Yes / No

Further details:

Have you already been screened for Q Fever immunity by a doctor:	Yes / No
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Have you already been vaccinated against Q Fever:	Yes / No
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Parents: Would you consent to the student being screened and if necessary vaccinated against Q fever if this is available through the meat processing plant, more information is provided to you, and the student's health permits it. <i>Note: screening/vaccination is a compulsory requirement for student workplace learning in meat processing plants.</i>	Yes / No
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What interest do you have in meat processing?

Are you interested in a career in the meat industry in meat related areas?	Yes / No
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Are you interested in a career in the meat industry in other areas, eg, IT, administration?	Yes / No
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Briefly explain the benefits you are hoping to receive from attending work experience / work placement in a meat processing plant.

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How keen are you to be employed in the local community? How interested are you in employment opportunities beyond your local community? Briefly explain below

What experience have you had in working with animals eg, on a farm?

Briefly outline any previous work experience / work placements you have participated in as a school student and any paid / voluntary work you have had.

STATEMENT BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN

- The information provided here is accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- I have read the above table *Workplace Hazards at Meat Processing Plants*.
- I am aware that working in a meat processing environment may involve exposure to risk.

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

STATEMENT BY SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

Reviewed by School Workplace Learning Coordinator:

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please forward this completed form and accompanying Student Placement Record to your school/diocesan representative who may consult with the Catholic Schools NSW Senior Manager: VET, for consideration: voced@csnsw.catholic.edu.au

APPROVAL FROM DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE (where applicable)

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____