

Workplace Learning Guide for Parents and Carers

July 2023



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About Workplace Learning

Workplace learning programs form part of the NSW secondary school curriculum. They enable students to spend a planned period of time - usually a week - in a workplace of their choice, enhancing their classroom learning, assisting their career choices and building their industry skills. These programs are relevant to all students regardless of their career aspirations or levels of ability.

How does workplace learning benefit your child?

Workplace learning helps students to:

- test and enhance their job and career choices
- complete course work in a relevant industry setting
- learn what employers want in their workforce
- build employability skills like workplace communication, self-reliance and teamwork
- develop essential industry skills for entry level employment
- gain confidence and maturity through participation in an adult work environment
- make informed decisions when planning their transition through school and to further education, training and work
- engage with the wider community.

It also:

- provides pathways for students to transition between school and employment
- provides opportunities for exploration into school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

What kinds of Workplace Learning programs are there?

Work Experience

These programs are usually undertaken by Yr 10 students with some opportunities in Yrs 11 & 12.

Work experience provides a general introduction to the 'world of work'. Students are able to observe a variety of work, usually in a field of their choice, and undertake supervised tasks appropriate to their skill level.

Work experience builds on the career planning and transition activities in your child's school and can assist their course and subject choices in senior high school.

Work Placement

Work placement programs are intended for students enrolled in Higher School Certificate (HSC) industry courses. These vocational (VET) courses may be delivered by the school, a TAFE or by a private training provider contracted by the school.

The host employer supervises your child in the workplace, allowing them to practice and enhance the specific industry skills they have learned in their course work.

Many VET courses have mandatory work placement, meaning the course will not count towards the HSC if the work placement is not undertaken. Additionally, work placement provides the opportunity for students to provide assessment evidence for units of competency.

How does Workplace Learning work?

Schools arrange their work placement programs through Work Placement Service Providers (WPSPs)

How will the student find a work placement position?

There are three most common ways for students to be matched to a workplace.

1. For **work experience**, students may need to locate their own positions with support from the school and their parents or carers. These positions need to be submitted to the school for approval. The school will issue introductory letters and guidelines to the employer.
2. For mandatory **VET work placement**, schools are provided quality placements for students registered with the coordinating Work Placement Service Provider (WPSP). Teachers then carefully match the students to the placements.
3. For non-mandatory **VET work placements**, the school obtains workplace positions and allocates according to the student's interests, needs and career plans and the employer requirements.

What is the general procedure for a placement?

BEFORE Placement

1. Host employer receive workplace learning guidelines.
2. Parents receive workplace learning information and give their consent by signing and returning forms.
3. Parents can contact the school's careers adviser or VET Coordinator with queries or concerns.
4. Workplace positions are arranged/approved for students based on course work or career planning.
5. Arrangements are confirmed to support student safety through the *Student Placement Record (SPR)*.
6. Teachers conduct activities to prepare students for the placement, including by completing [myworkexperience](#) or [go2workplacement](#) as appropriate.
7. Parents and carers help their child with their preparations and arrangements.
8. Students may need to contact the employer BEFORE attending placement to ensure participation details.

DURING Placement

1. Students attend the workplace every day of the program (usually 1 week).
2. Host employers or nominated workplace supervisors supervise the students in the workplace.
3. A teacher makes a supervisory visit or phone call to the employer or supervisor and the student to check on their progress and welfare. Students may be assessed for industry based competencies.
4. Parents or carers provide support and encouragement for the student at home, including appropriate workplace clothing, personal protective equipment and transport arrangements.
5. Parents or carers provide support and encouragement for the student at home.
6. Students will advise their school and host employer if they are ill and unable to attend the placement.
7. Incidents and issues are reported immediately to the school.

AFTER Placement

1. Host employers report on the student's performance in the workplace.
2. Teachers immediately follow up with students to ensure maximum benefit and check on student safety.
3. Parents and students discuss their experience and possible education and training pathways.

When can students undertake workplace learning?

Young people can participate in workplace learning programs from the age of 14. Year 10 workplace learning programs can only operate during term time. Students under 15 years cannot work before 7am or after 6pm.

Workplace learning may be extended into the weekend with special approval from the Principal, but only if weekend work is an essential requirement of the industry. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may approve workplace learning by individual Year 11 and 12 students during school holidays. This does not include the Christmas holidays.

Will your child be paid?

No. Students are classified as 'voluntary workers' and host employers are not required to make any payment to them under the Federal or State award covering their industry, the *NSW Annual Holidays Act* or the *Workers' Compensation Act*. Any payment to the student may invalidate the insurance and indemnity arrangements.

The one exception is where your child uses their part-time employment as part of their mandatory HSC VET work placement requirement. This arrangement must be negotiated with the employer and approved by the school. In this instance the employer's insurance will apply.

How far will students need to travel?

Most placements will be within commuting distance of home. To receive approval for a placement away from home, there must be exceptional educational value and the proposed transport, accommodation and the overnight supervision arrangements must be suitable and have specific written approval of the principal as well as parent or carer. Additional documentation must be completed.

What about travel arrangements?

All travel is at the student's expense. You will be expected to help your child with their travel arrangements and support their travel costs for the duration of the placement. The student's Opal Concession card can be used for travel on public trains, buses, ferries and some private buses.

As a parent or carer, you must be satisfied that the travelling arrangements can be safely managed by your child. If you have concerns, you should discuss them directly and with the school's workplace learning program organiser.

Students are not expected to drive their own vehicles whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the host employer. Approval must be sought from both you and the school if they are required to travel in a vehicle with the host employer or supervisor; documentation must accompany the SPR.

What if my child has a disability or medical condition?

You will need to advise the school, private or community registered training organisation of any disability, learning and support needs, medical condition, (e.g. diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis) or restriction affecting your child that may affect the safety, wellbeing and supervision of your child in the workplace. This important information should be included or attached to your child's *Student Placement Record (SPR)*. Health Care Plans may need to be made available to host employers. If you are not sure, speak with your child's General Practitioner.

If your child needs any adjustments in the workplace to accommodate their additional support needs or disability, you must discuss this with the school's Learning Support Team during the planning process.

Your Child's Safety

Student safety and child protection are first priorities.

Host employers must notify the school immediately of any health and safety incidents, including near misses involving a student while on placement.

All host employers receive the *Workplace Learning Guide for Employers* to help them provide safe and effective learning opportunities for students attending their workplace. The employer is required to ensure that all staff are aware of child protection issues and of their special responsibilities when working with school students. Staff will follow clear procedures in response to any reasonable suspicion or allegation of misconduct by employers or their employees against students.

If for any reason your child feels threatened or coerced in any way, they should talk to their supervisor or nominated contact person at school. This could include initiation activities, inappropriate conversations, remarks or jokes of a sexual nature; the showing of sexually suggestive publications, electronic media or illustrations of any unwarranted and/or inappropriate touching or personal communication with students regarding their sexual feelings. If the problem continues your child **must** tell the nominated contact person at school.

If your child is considering a placement in a child related industry e.g. childcare centre, school etc, they will need to complete a Volunteer Declaration. This form is obtained through the centre or school.

In Emergencies

We have provisions in place to support students in the rare event of an accident or emergency during their time in the workplace.

Your child will carry a small *Safety and Emergency Procedures Student Contact Card* listing important information and nominated contacts both during and outside normal business hours. This lets them know who to contact should they sustain a serious injury or feel at risk and unable to raise the matter with their host employer.

During normal business hours the nominated contact will be provided by their school.

Outside normal business hours the student must contact you, their parent or carer. You are NOT required to investigate or resolve the issue: simply remove your child from risk of harm and notify the school as soon as possible (e.g. the next day). The school will follow up the issue with the workplace and advise you of the outcome.

If your child has ANY concerns, they must call the school immediately.

Insurance and Indemnity

As students are not paid workers, injuries sustained while participating in workplace learning, or while travelling to or from the workplace, are covered by Medicare. Your school's *Student Care Insurance*, e.g. with CCI, continues to cover students undertaking workplace learning programs approved by their school. The policy may cover medical services for which a Medicare benefit is not available, such as dental and physiotherapy, but by law cannot cover the Medicare 'gap' between the medical practitioner's charge and the Medicare rebate.

Indemnity insurance has been arranged if applicable, e.g. healthcare or sporting placements.

How can you best help your child?

The role of parents and carers is vital to the success of any workplace learning program. By taking steps to understand what is involved and by providing the necessary support at home, you can help your child get the most out of their placement and make important decisions about their future.

A checklist for parents and carers

BEFORE the placement is arranged

- ✓ Become familiar with workplace learning by reading the information provided and attending information sessions.
- ✓ Encourage your child to discuss their developing career interests and work preferences.
- ✓ Discuss what they hope to learn from the placement and any questions they might want to ask their host employer or supervisor.
- ✓ Encourage them to complete all pre-placement activities arranged by their school.
- ✓ Advise the school of any suitable placements you know about or could offer.
- ✓ Tell those arranging your child's placement of any disability, learning and support needs or medical history e.g. anaphylaxis, that may require adjustment in the workplace.
- ✓ Ask your child for their Student Placement Record in their information package and complete the relevant part. When completed, this form will include vital information relating to your child's placement arrangements.
- ✓ Check your child has completed the [myworkexperience](#) or [go2workplacement](#) as appropriate WHEN a position is confirmed.
- ✓ Make sure your child reschedules other activities to give priority to their workplace learning.
- ✓ Help them prepare their clothing (e.g. enclosed footwear, business attire) and other requirements for the placement.
- ✓ Help them find out more about Work, Health and Safety (WHS) legislation and make sure they know and understand what it means for them while they are at work.
- ✓ Make sure your child has safe travel arrangement to and from work.
- ✓ Check that they have the information they will need on the first day (starting time, address and contact person) including their completed Safety and Emergency Procedures Student Contact Card.
- ✓ Confirm their meal arrangements. They may need to bring food with them.
- ✓ Explain that their safety and wellbeing is of the highest importance during the placement.

DURING the placement

- ✓ If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, ensure your child carries appropriate medication. If you child is at risk of an anaphylactic reaction, they must carry an adrenalin auto-injector e.g. EpiPen within easy reach each day.
- ✓ Encourage your child to complete any assignments or journals.
- ✓ Have a conversation about their day in the workplace e.g.
 - ➡ tell me about the things you do during the day at work.
 - ➡ have you learned anything unexpected and especially interesting?

- ➔ what are the education and training requirements of the job(s)?
- ➔ what are the working conditions like? Is there a union?
- ➔ have you been told about health and safety procedures in the workplace?
- ➔ do you think this might be the right industry for you?

DIRECTLY after the placement

- ✓ Encourage your child to discuss their employer's report with you.
- ✓ Review and discuss their career and work aspirations and their options for education and training.
- ✓ Encourage them to value the networks they are making and to maintain a record of work place contacts for advice, assistance and opportunities in the future.

Your child's Student Placement Record

All contacts, arrangements and approvals relating to your child's placement will be recorded on their *Student Placement Record*. This enables important information to be shared, signed and approved by all parties.

Please make sure you locate the *Student Placement Record* in your child's information package and provide the information as required by your school. Once the form has been completed and signed by all parties, you will receive a copy for your records.

The *Student Placement Record* also lists your child's individual work arrangements (start and finish times, lunch breaks, clothing requirements etc), the tasks they'll be undertaking, any pre-training they may need, emergency contacts and additional support arrangements for students with special needs.

The *Student Placement Record* will be stored by the school for a minimum of two years, in accordance with school compliance requirements.