

GORDONS SCHOOL POICY

WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY

The core principle that guides everything we do is Putting Students First.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work Experience forms part of Work Related Learning and is part of the learning entitlement for all students. This process engages students in learning about work; through work and for work. At Gordon's School, work related learning makes an important contribution to the education of all students in order to support an effective transition from school to adulthood and to employment.

Work experience should be: "A meaningful experience ...gives the young person the opportunity to explore what it is like to work in that environment, what skills are valued in the workplace, their recruitment processes and what it takes to be successful" (Gatsby 2025)

Meaningful first-hand experience helps young people reflect on their learning. These experiences are planned with clear purpose and learning outcomes, include two-way interaction, real tasks, and employer feedback, and can take place through visits, work shadowing or work experience placements. Virtual or hybrid work experience models also offer real benefit, widening the reach of businesses and directly connecting students to the skills required in the flexible working environments of today.

1.1 Statutory Context and National Requirements

Work Experience at Gordon's School is delivered in accordance with the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (2023), the updated Gatsby Benchmarks (2024/25), and relevant safeguarding and health and safety legislation.

Statutory guidance requires schools to ensure that work experience forms part of a planned, inclusive and high-quality careers programme which is:

- Stable and embedded within the whole-school careers strategy (Gatsby Benchmark 1)
- Accessible to all students, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged (Gatsby Benchmark 3).
- Recorded, monitored and evaluated to demonstrate impact and equality of access

Experiences of Workplaces: Gatsby Benchmark 6:

Under the updated Gatsby Benchmarks, schools are expected to ensure that:

- By age 16, every student has experienced multiple meaningful encounters with workplaces, beyond part-time work
- By age 18, students have experienced at least one further meaningful workplace experience

A meaningful encounter involves active participation rather than passive observation and includes exposure to real working practices, clear learning objectives, appropriate supervision, and structured reflection on skills and learning outcomes. Physical, virtual and hybrid work experience models are all recognised as valid where these criteria are met.

Duration and Structure of Work Experience

While there is currently no statutory minimum number of days set in law, national guidance sets a clear

expectation that schools plan towards the equivalent of two weeks of work experience across secondary education, delivered flexibly through:

- Work-related learning and employer engagement activities in Key Stage 3
- Workplace placements and extended employer experiences in Key Stage 4 and 5

Personal Guidance and Reflection – Gatsby Benchmark 8

Statutory guidance requires that students receive impartial, personalised careers guidance:

- Before work experience, to support informed decision-making and preparation
- After work experience, to support reflection, progression planning and next steps

Work experience at Gordon's School is therefore embedded within the wider careers education programme across all year groups. In addition Years 10 and 12 participate in a work experience placement programme to enhance their individual experience.

1.2 Commitment

Gordon's School is committed to:

- Ensuring the programme is inclusive and meets the needs of every student, including enhanced support for students with SEND, those who are disadvantaged or require reasonable adjustments, and those at risk of becoming NEET, in line with individual needs and careers guidance outcomes.
- Maintaining a central record of employer encounters, student participation and outcomes.
- Arranging Work Experience Information sessions for students and parents
- Supporting students in their search for a suitable placement
- Checking that Employers Liability Insurance, Health and Safety, and DBS requirements are met by employers and that risk assessments are in place
- Guiding pupils in the preparation of letters of application and CVs
- Informing parents of all matters related to Work Experience
- Preparing students in terms of planning for Work Experience including safeguarding considerations
- Alerting employers to matters relating to students' special needs and/or medical information where parental consent has first been obtained.
- Ensuring that employers are aware of Safeguarding regulations.
- Monitoring and evaluating the Work Experience placements and student reflection process.
- Ensuring that systems are in place to investigate accidents and to record complaints.

1.3 Links with other policies

The policy for Work Experience is related to our policies for assessment recording and reporting, citizenship, PSHE, equality and diversity, Special Educational Needs, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Curriculum and Pastoral alongside the CEIAG and provider access policies for Careers.

2. WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR YEARS 10 & 12

All work experience placements are expected to meet the definition of a meaningful employer encounter, involving sustained engagement, opportunities to develop employability skills, exposure to real workplace practices, and reflection on learning outcomes, offering students the opportunity to:

- Gain an insight into a career or chosen occupation and to experience the day-to-day of a

role and professional workplace

- Learn beyond the confines of the organised curriculum
- Understand their own strengths and areas for development
- Build confidence and independence
- Connect their learning with working lives
- Work as part of a team
- Develop skills of self evaluation
- Demonstrate organisational skills
- Understand the importance of matters relating to Health and Safety
- Understand how local and national labour market trends influence future career choices
- Engage with impartial, personalised careers guidance before and after their placement

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR YEARS 10 & 12

3.1 Organisation

In the Autumn Term of Year 10 or year 12, parents are invited to attend Work Experience Information events where the Careers Lead explains the scope of work experience across the curriculum and the process for the placements programme in Year 12. Students will receive this information in school time and will be given support to seek and apply for work experience opportunities including via assemblies and tutor time, PSHE lessons, Careers drop in Clinic, Careers Bulletins, Gordon's Careers Website and the Gordon's Padlet. Students are asked to source their own placements to give them the experience of researching the local labour market.

Students receive coaching on CVs and LinkedIn in Year 12 to support them to reach out successfully to employers. Best safeguarding practice is for students to make contact with externals via their school email accounts. Those who cannot access a suitable placement must speak to the Careers Lead as soon as possible for help.

Work experience at Gordon's is supported by UNIFROG to record placement details, skills development and careers guidance. The placement provider (employer) has ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of a student during the placement, but the school takes reasonable steps to ensure an employer is acting responsibly before endorsing a placement. This may include requests for employers liability insurance details, health and safety and DBS where placements involve regulated activity or unsupervised contact with children.

Parental permission is sought by the school for each placement. This must be returned by parents.

The expectation is that every student completes a minimum of three days of work experience on dates nominated by the school. Students are not discouraged from accepting alternative dates, seeking multiple opportunities, or attending placements that last longer but alternative plans must be discussed with the Careers Lead as additional safeguarding checks may be required. If an employer offers dates that clash with curriculum time, an application for a planned leave absence must be submitted by parents as far in advance as possible and may be granted at the headteacher's discretion in line with Gordon's Student Attendance Policy.

Students and employers are also prompted to engage in reflection exercises and feedback.

3.2 Safeguarding / Health and Safety

- School

The school retains overall responsibility for safeguarding students undertaking work experience in accordance with the *Education Act 2002*, the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024*, and the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*. The school ensures that all placements are appropriate, that relevant health and safety checks and risk assessments have been considered including a preliminary visit by the school if deemed appropriate for high risk placements, and that safeguarding arrangements are in place. The school oversees the placement, acts as the lead point of contact for safeguarding concerns, and ensures that parental consent and student agreement are obtained through the Unifrog process prior to the placement commencing. If an employer cannot supply the required documentation, parents will be informed and alternative provision can be discussed, including virtual work experience. Where placements take place outside the school-organised period, the level of school oversight, safeguarding responsibility and insurance cover will be clarified with parents and employers in advance including referral to the CSPA.

- Employer

Employers are responsible for the day-to-day supervision, safety and welfare of students while they are on placement. Employers must comply with the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* and the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, including completing a suitable risk assessment that takes account of a young person's age, inexperience and maturity. Employers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries, provide adequate supervision, ensure working hours comply with the *Working Time Regulations 1998*, and report any safeguarding or welfare concerns immediately to the school or the CSPA in line with the agreed procedures and this policy.

- Parent / Carer

Parents and carers are responsible for supporting their child's participation in work experience by providing accurate information relevant to health, medical or additional needs and by discussing expectations of conduct and safety with their child. Parents must provide informed consent for the placement through Unifrog, in line with this policy and are expected to work in partnership with the school should any concerns arise during the placement. Parents retain responsibility for their child outside agreed placement hours and for travel arrangements unless otherwise stated. Special needs and medical information is passed by the school to the employer as appropriate and with parental consent.

- Student

Students are responsible for engaging positively with their work experience placement and for following all instructions relating to health, safety and safeguarding. Students must behave appropriately, adhere to the employer's policies and procedures, and report any concerns, accidents or situations that make them feel uncomfortable to the employer and the school without delay. Students are required to complete all pre-placement requirements and agreements through Unifrog, Engage with employer-led feedback where offered, and link learning to their broader careers education programme. They should always represent Gordon's School and themselves in a responsible and respectful manner, dress appropriately, be punctual and thank the employer once work experience is completed.

4. IMPACT OF WHOLE PROGRAMME

4.1 Leadership and Accountability

Statutory guidance places responsibility on senior leaders and governors to ensure that:

- Work experience is strategically planned and resourced
- Provision is inclusive and equitable
- Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure continued compliance with national guidance and best practice

4.2 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Impact is evaluated through analysis of participation rates, equality of access and impact on career readiness via student feedback and evaluation during the self-reflection process, employer feedback and annual review of the policy.

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Careers Lead

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