

DJA/SRC

05 February 2024



Sawston
Village College

Principal: Mr J P Russell

Dear Parent/Carer

Work Experience (WEX) programme

Introduction

The Work Experience (WEX) programme for Year 10 pupils will run for 10 days from 17 June to 28 June, 2024. It is an integral part of the school's Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance, which we offer to our pupils at Sawston Village College. It is an expectation that all Year 10 pupils will participate in Work Experience.

The aim of this booklet is to set out the framework for WEX, so that you have as much information as possible prior to and during the placement. A more detailed programme will be delivered to pupils during the spring and summer terms, through assemblies and mentoring time activities.

It is essential that both parents and pupils understand that WEX offers an insight into the world of work. It is not intended to give an insight into a chosen or particular career. Many professions, such as the emergency services and health, are unable to offer pupils under the age of 16 work experience for a number of reasons, involving health and safety and confidentiality of information.

Important Dates

Information Evening for Parents

23 November 2023

This is also available to view via the school website. It can be found in the Parents section, then Careers information, advice and guidance.

Deadline for receipt of Student Own Placement Forms

1 March 2024

Closure of the Work Experience Placement Database

15 March 2024

Work Experience Placement

17 to 28 June 2024

Review, Debrief and Thank You Letters

24 June to 28 June, 2024

Work experience is an opportunity to experience the world of work. It enables young people to understand the importance of key skills such as communication, working in a team, independence and reliability. It highlights the formalities of work, such as dress code, appropriate interactions and time keeping, and how these differ from the school environment. Increasingly, employers are reporting that employability skills are a key requirement in their recruitment process.

Work experience is not an opportunity to have a practice run at a chosen career or job. It is, therefore, imperative that the expectations on both pupils and parents are realistic: even if pupils arrange their own placement. For example, at a dental practice, it is highly unlikely that there will be any opportunities to undertake anything other than administrative duties and observations of key professionals at work. Employers try very hard to give our young people a realistic view of their working environment, but they are constrained by rules and regulations pertaining to under 16s in the workplace.



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Placements

There are two kinds of placement for WEX, both requiring a partnership between school, home, employers and The Employability Partnership (T.E.P.). There is a parent section on the T.E.P. website (www.employabilitytps.co.uk). This covers frequently asked questions for parents e.g. *How can I help my child with their work experience? Can students attend a placement outside Cambridgeshire?*

T.E.P. works very hard to secure as many placements with local employers as possible. However, with literally thousands of pupils across the County out on placement every year, it is increasingly difficult for T.E.P. to offer schools as many opportunities as they need. It is, therefore, necessary for some pupils to arrange their own placements, but there are strict protocols that must be adhered to or the placement may not be able to proceed.

(1) School/T.E.P. Placements

At the end of the Autumn term, we will open the school/T.E.P. Database. This is an online system where you can see the job placements that have been offered to Sawston Village College via T.E.P. These placements are from employers in Cambridgeshire who have agreed to take our pupils. They will offer either one- or two-week placements, depending on their availability.

Pupils will be required to list three placements they would be interested in applying for. However, there is no guarantee that pupils will be matched to one of these placements as many roles/employers are very popular and this leads to intense competition. For example, last year, we had a high number of pupils wanting to work for IT and Science companies and inevitably we were unable to offer exactly what the pupils were looking for. They were initially very disappointed, although all were placed in equally interesting roles in other establishments.

Pupils are matched to placements by Miss Jackson, Year 7 Lead and WEX Co-ordinator. Once a pupil is matched to a placement, they will be given:

1. A letter offering them a provisional work experience placement, subject to interview and the return of the signed/completed agreement form and parent consent form;
2. A job description;
3. A three-way agreement form (employer, pupil and parent).

As soon as the pupil receives this pack, it is essential that contact is made with the employer. An introductory formal email or telephone call is required, which will alert the employer to the fact that the pupil is interested in/has been matched to the placement. Employer requirements vary from wanting nothing more than an informal chat on the telephone, to needing a full CV, letter of application and interview. **It is important that there is no delay in making this initial contact to ensure the process moves as smoothly as possible.**

Unfortunately, we have had past situations where employers have withdrawn offers of a placement because a pupil has failed to make contact. Whilst we explain to our young people the urgency of making contact, it would be very helpful if parents/carers could reinforce this message at home and assist their child with this task. I would hate to think some of our young people could be at risk of being left without a placement.

When pupils attend their interview with the employer, it is essential that they take the agreement form with them, signed already by themselves and their parent/carer(s). The school details on the documentation confirms to the employer that all the information disclosed on the form is true and accurate. This is needed for health and safety, insurance and supervision requirements. Pupils need to ask the employer to sign the agreement and then return it to Miss Jackson, Year 7 Lead

and Work Experience Co-ordinator at Sawston Village College. This is the most important part of the entire process as this form is the contract between all parties and puts in place essential undertakings and insurances.

No placement can proceed until the fully signed form is received by Miss Jackson at the College.

(2) Student Own Placement (SOP)

Pupils who wish to arrange their own placements follow a slightly different pathway. It is the pupil's responsibility to locate and contact a potential employer in the first instance. In almost all circumstances, T.E.P. recommends that a young person does not work under the direct supervision of parents, guardians or carers. It is, however, usually acceptable for a young person to apply for a placement within the same company.

If a pupil is interested in securing his or her own placement, they should check with Miss Jackson or check the school database first, before contacting an employer in the local area. This is due to the fact that a majority of approved employers offer placements to us via T.E.P. and they have politely indicated that they often cannot cope with the large volume of direct requests that they receive from pupils and parents. We also need to ensure you are not approaching companies who have already offered placements to us via T.E.P.

If an employer is willing to take the pupil on an SOP, the pupil must collect a form from Miss Jackson or download via the school website. Parents and employers then complete the appropriate sections of the form and return it to Miss Jackson as soon as possible, and before the published deadlines. T.E.P. will then visit the employer's premises to ensure compliance with health and safety and employment legislation.

When T.E.P. is satisfied that everything is in order, the following documents will be given to the pupil:

1. a letter containing the job title, the employer's contact address and telephone number;
2. the job description and risk assessment as agreed by T.E.P.

As the employer will already have met the pupil in the majority of cases, it may not be necessary for the pupil to attend another formal interview, but this is a decision for the employer. The most important part of the entire process is the signed SOP form, as this is the contract between all parties and puts in place essential undertakings and insurance.

No placement can proceed until the fully signed SOP form is received by Miss Jackson at the College. This has to include all three signatures – Pupil, Employer and Parent/Carer.

Charges for SOPs

There is no charge for T.E.P. to process SOPs in Cambridgeshire, but there are no longer reciprocal arrangements in place across neighbouring counties. This means that if you are seeking a placement outside of Cambridgeshire you will be charged an administration fee (we pass on the fee that we are charged by the organisation who make the necessary checks in the county where the placement is located). This will be indicated clearly on the SOP form that parents are asked to complete and sign. Last year, fees varied from £25 to £75 per placement and parents were invoiced for these fees in the summer term.

Deadlines for SOPs

The deadline for receipt of SOP forms is 1 March 2024. As mentioned earlier, thousands of pupils take up WEX placements every year and deadlines are set to ensure that there is sufficient time for T.E.P. to process requests from all schools before their placements begin. Without T.E.P. approval, no placement can be authorised. Therefore, you must ensure that the paperwork is completed and returned as early as possible and by no later than 1 March 2024. SOP forms received after the deadline will not be processed and this could result in a pupil being without a placement.

Placement Visits and Log Book

Before the placement begins, each pupil will be given a Work Experience Log Book. These are provided to every pupil and it is their responsibility to look after it. There are a number of sections that must be completed before and after the placement, but the main body of work will be undertaken during the placement.

The log book should be taken to work every day. There are sections within the log book that will need to be completed by the employer and also by the visiting member of staff from the College. All pupils will either be visited by a member of staff, or will be contacted by telephone if they are on an out-of-county placement, during the course of the two weeks. This contact could also be carried out via Microsoft Teams.

It is important that pupils complete their log book daily whilst their experiences are fresh in their mind. There will be opportunities when they return to school to reflect on their experiences of the world of work; the more information they have recorded, the more they will benefit from it. This information can be carried forward and influence their Post 16 application and personal statement in Year 11.

Attendance

Pupils are expected to attend the place of work during the hours stated on the job description. When pupils are choosing placements, they must ensure that they are able to commute to and from work: if there is a genuine reason why a pupil cannot work to the stipulated hours, please contact Miss Jackson in the first instance.

Should a pupil be unable to attend work as a result of illness, parents should contact the employer and Sawston Village College immediately. However, as WEX only lasts for a relatively short period of time, it is hoped that all pupils will make every effort to achieve 100% attendance at their placement.

Mobile Phones

We wish to bring to your attention that pupils should have their mobile phone switched off during working hours, unless otherwise advised. If a parent needs to contact their child urgently you will find the contact number of the employer on the copy of the job description, or you can contact Miss Jackson directly.

Problems during the Placement

In the unlikely event that there is any kind of issue or concern during the placement, please contact school reception or Miss Jackson immediately. Please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible. You can also make contact by email.

Post Placement

At the end of the placement, all pupils will be asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire. Every questionnaire is read thoroughly by our T.E.P. partners and any concerns or worries are followed through with employers, school and the pupil. Suggestions put forward by pupils for improvement are often adopted as part of a continuous assessment and evaluation process within T.E.P.

Pupils will also be asked to write a formal thank you SVC card to the employer within mentor time. We ask that the card is handed in so that we can ensure that all employers receive them. We appreciate that most of our young people will have thanked their employer in an informal way. However, this element is a requirement for all pupils.

We do hope you have found this booklet informative. Should you have any questions, please do contact Miss Jackson, Year 7 Lead, Work Experience Co-ordinator and Head of Earhart House, djackson@sawstonvc.org.