



Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles



WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Each year, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme students and Transition Year students from Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed go on work placements and enjoy the opportunity to not only learn about the world of work and explore possible career options but also to actively develop skills for future enterprise and employability.

These work placements are, for many students, the highlight of their school year where they may have the opportunity to gain a real insight into the challenges and opportunities of work.

Schools and students rely on the willingness of employers to provide work placement opportunities and employers play a pivotal role in the success of these work experience programmes.

Rationale

This policy sets out the procedures that apply to work experience placement during the school year. It outlines the expectations and duties of each stakeholder. This policy is underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Respect, Equality and Community.

Benefits to the Employer

Work placements provide many opportunities and benefits to both employers and students. Those most commonly cited by employers are:

- **influencing the quality of future employees:** employers can help improve the quality and preparedness of young people coming onto the labour market
- **development of recruitment channels:** building links with local schools can help to attract school leavers into jobs and can reduce recruitment costs
- **brand awareness:** work placements are often formative for students and discussed frequently with peers. A work placement significantly impacts on their awareness of the brand and values of the organisation, which will be shared with others
- **influencing career choices:** many employers report that work placements are the ideal way of raising the profile of career opportunities within their organisation and, in some cases, of dispelling unwarranted stereotyped views
- **raising the community profile:** many employers attach importance to raising their profile in the community. Work placements provide a valuable means of creating a positive image amongst students, teachers, parents, and employees
- **creation of staff development opportunities:** the process of policy development, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of work experience programmes gives scope for employees to develop their management and coaching skills, and widen their experience

- **increased motivation of employees:** companies participating in education-business link activities have found that such activities increase the motivation of their employees
- **understanding changes in the education system:** closer liaison with schools helps employers to improve their understanding of modern learning processes and current educational qualifications and enhances their relationship with teachers
- **monetary:** students provide an additional resource

Employability Skills and Competencies

Some examples of each are provided below along with some examples of tasks which would assist in developing and assessing these competencies:

Personal Skills:

Independence - allow the student to perform tasks with minimum help or approval, or without direct supervision.

Learning - provide some work-related training and opportunities to learn. Watch for an interest in personal learning and development. Encourage questioning and assertiveness.

Dependability - offer tasks that require a degree of responsibility.

Wellbeing - an enjoyable employment and achievement of goals is hugely important in living a happy life (SDG 3)

People Skills:

Active Listening - Watch to see if full attention is being given to what other people are saying, if they take the time to understand the points being made, asks questions as needed, and does not interrupt inappropriately.

Team Membership - If possible, assign some of the students' time to join in on group work, and encourage participation where appropriate.

Respect - encourage interaction with people from diverse backgrounds and different levels of authority within the organisation so that student empathy and solidarity for those in less privileged positions is fostered.

Task Skills:

Time Management - offer opportunities to manage their time efficiently. e.g., punctual clocking in/out, achieve tasks on time, allocate appropriate time to record information and finish what is started.

Computer Skills - encourage the use of a computer to write and print documents and use email programs. Provide basic training on any in-house computer systems. Encourage them to prepare a report on their placement, or conduct some internet-based research, etc.

Customer Focus - If appropriate, allow the student to engage with customers and learn how to develop an understanding and concern for customers' needs.

Procedures for Work Experience in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed

Preparation for Work Experience

The teacher in charge of work experience will ensure that students are made aware of the school guidelines for work experience known as “Tips to help you on work experience”. (See Appendix 5).

Timings and Format

LCVP Work Experience Placement occurs for one 4-day week placement following the May Bank Holiday each year.

TY Work Experience Placement occurs for two or three 1-week periods each year. The first week occurs late November/early December and the second week occurs either the week before or after the Easter holidays. These dates are variable each year dependent upon the DE Standardised School Calendar and the CMCO Calendar. Once the specific dates are decided in advance, they are recorded in the CMCO TY Calendar and TY students, and parents are notified.

LCA Work Experience Placement occurs for one day (Wednesday) per week during each Session of the LCA Programme.

Applications

Students find their own work placement. If students are finding it difficult to source Work Experience, they must inform the coordinator and the school will endeavour to assist. The Work Experience teacher/Coordinator issues a letter endorsing the request for Work Experience (Appendix 1).

Students u18:

- Parents of students who are under 18 must source the work placement and sign the Conditions of Work Experience form (Appendix 2) which confirms that they have checked and are satisfied with the Health and Safety and Child Protection Procedures in the workplace chosen.
- The Conditions of Work Experience form (Appendix 2) must be submitted at least one week prior to the placement.

Students over 18:

- Students who are over 18 must source the work placement and sign the Conditions of Work Experience form (Appendix 2) which confirms that they have checked and are satisfied with the Health and Safety procedures in the workplace chosen.

- The Conditions of Work Experience form (Appendix 2) must be submitted at least one week prior to the placement.

Placement Details

Parents/students are required to complete a form (Appendix 2) confirming the name and address of the employer, availability, nature and dates of work experience. This is called a Conditions of Work Experience form. This must be submitted to the work experience coordinator/programme coordinator. Programme Coordinator/Work Experience Teacher will issue a thank you letter/email to Employer for giving work experience opportunity to the student and will also furnish Insurance details and request employer fill an evaluation form (Appendix 4) during the work experience.

Certain specific work placements have specific requirements, for example, certification in Manual Handling, First Aid or 'Safe Pass'. It is parental/student responsibility to fulfil such requirements.

Garda Vetting - Garda vetting will be necessary for students seeking placement in situations where they may be working with children or vulnerable adults. Students who are under 16 do not require garda vetting. Students who are between 16 and 18 and who require Garda Vetting must complete the parental consent for vetting forms. All forms are supplied by the coordinator. Any students requiring Garda vetting for their placement must ensure it is done in sufficient time for the vetting process to be completed prior to the start date of their placement. It is the student/parent responsibility to submit any paperwork in time and to know if an employer requires vetting.

Insurance – Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied students and Transition Year students are insured by the school insurers. TETB arranges insurance for work experience. Employers will be given a document containing the relevant school's insurance details, which should be filed for reference. Employers must check for exclusions for certain types of work.

It is the responsibility of the work experience coordinator to issue a courtesy letter, thanking the employer and furnishing insurance details and school contact information. The coordinator must also collect the placement details form from the student and issue a work experience sign in sheet to the student.

Attendance – the student is required to bring to work, on each placement day, the Work Experience Attendance record. Attendance at work is verified via this record. The employer/mentor is also asked to comment on the student's application to work. This record is presented in school by the student at rollcall on the following school day. Failure to produce this record of attendance results in the student being marked absent on the school system.

Absence from work – the student on work placement is required to notify the school and the employer/mentor of a pending absence from work experience. Medical appointments and illnesses need to be explained by way of medical certification. The employer/mentor is asked to contact the work experience coordinator on the email given or by leaving a message at the school office, in the case of a student's absence from work experience.

Payment - the employer is not required to make any payment to the student during work experience.

Monitoring - as part of the monitoring process, the student's teacher will, on occasion, request to visit/speak to the student at the employer's premises during the work experience.

- LCVP: Work Experience Teacher makes a phone call to the Employer during the Work Placement
- TY: Programme Co-Ordinator/TY Co-Ordinator/Member of TY Teaching Team nominated by the Co-Ordinator visits the student and Employer during the Work Placement, subject to distance limitations. If there is a distance limitation, a phone call is made to employer
- LCA: Programme Co-Ordinator visits the student and Employer at least once during the Work Placement Session (as per LCA Session)

Recording - all students are expected to reflect on their experience. The requirements of each programme are different as set out below

- LCVP: Students are expected to complete a Work Experience Diary (which becomes part of their portfolio) for each Day of Work Experience
- TY: Students are expected to complete a Work Experience Diary for each Day of Work Experience and record it on their e-portfolio
- LCA: Students are expected to complete a Work Experience Diary for each Day of Work Experience (following the Work Experience Module Guidelines)

Feedback - Employers are requested to fill out an Evaluation Form (Appendix 4) on the student performance during the placement. Employers are given SAE to facilitate this process.

Following placement

- All students are expected to send a Thank You letter to the Employer for providing the Work Experience opportunity.
- Teachers involved will keep a work experience record outlining any issues that arise and how they were resolved.

LCVP STUDENTS

- Programme Co-Ordinator and/or Work Experience Teacher reviews Employer Evaluation Sheets (Appendix 4) for each student and provides feedback to students.
- Students are expected to review their Work Experience Diary in conjunction with the Work Experience Teacher for inclusion in their LCVP Portfolio.

TY STUDENTS

- Students are expected to Review their Work Experience (following the Work Experience Module Guidelines).
- Programme Co-Ordinator and Guidance Teacher reviews Employer Evaluation Sheets (Appendix 4) and Student Work Experience Diaries and each student is accordingly awarded Credits for Work Experience as per the TY Credit System.

LCA STUDENTS

- Students are expected to Review their Work Experience (following the Work Experience Module Guidelines)
- Programme Co-Ordinator and/or Work Experience Teacher reviews Employer Evaluation Sheets (Appendix 4) for each student and provides feedback to students.

Health & Safety

While Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed College continues to have responsibility for students on work experience, the employer has the same responsibilities for their health, safety and welfare whilst the student is on an employer's premises.

As most students undertaking work experience may be under the age of 18 years and in some cases, may be under 16 years, employers facilitating work experience should review the relevant sections of the 'Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996' to ensure compliance.

In general, the Act prohibits the employment of children under the age of 16. However, employers can take on 14- and 15-year-olds as part of an approved work experience or education programme where the work is not harmful to their safety, health, or development. There are also some limitations around working hours, rest breaks, night-time work etc. which apply to those 17 years and under.

In taking steps to ensure the safety of students while on work experiences an employer should: **Assess the Risks** - in advance of any work experience student starting, identify any risks associated with the placement and minimise these where possible. Take into account that these young people are likely to be inexperienced, unaware of health and safety risks and physically or mentally immature.

They should not be required to operate any hazardous machinery or work in hazardous environments as their short placements would not allow sufficient training.

Appropriate supervision - young people will be facing unfamiliar risks from the job they will be doing and from their surroundings and are therefore likely to need more supervision than adults. Good supervision will also help you to get a clear idea of their progress in the job and to monitor the effectiveness of their training.

Induction - ensure any initial briefing/training that the student receives on commencing their work experience covers the important elements of your health and safety policy including

- identifying any risks associated with their work experience or their presence on your premises
- ensuring that the students receive appropriate instructions about the tasks they are to perform and company safety regulations including the wearing of protective clothing or equipment
- advice on systems for dealing with accidents and emergencies. If the student is absent for any part of the placement or any incident or accident occurs, you should immediately notify the school. Contact details are provided on commencement of the placement.

Student responsibilities on Work Experience

- Be on time and adhere to employers start and finish times
- Inform the employer and school of any unavoidable absences
- Respect and comply with all rules, procedures, and reasonable requests from the employer
- Adhere to all health and safety guidelines and procedures
- Maintain the good name of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed
- Respect the employer
- Respect the place of work e.g., clean up after yourself
- Report anything that makes you feel uncomfortable to the employer, your parents, or the school at the earliest possible time
- If something arises that causes distress seek support from your parents or the school
- Pilfering, stealing or interfering with employers' equipment or stock will result in immediate dismissal from work experience and will be dealt with appropriately using the schools code of behaviour.

APPENDIX 1

RE: STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Date

As xxxxx Co-Ordinator in our school, I am writing to endorse the request for Work Experience from one of our xxxxx students.

The work experience placement is an integral component of the xxxx Programme and if your business, company, or workplace could offer one of our students a placement you would be providing a valuable opportunity for our student to participate and experience the world of work.

Please note our work experience policy is available at www.cmco.ie.

The placement will take place xxxxxxxxxxxx.

During the year/work experience placement a member of our staff will visit/make contact to ensure the placement is satisfactory for both employer and student.

Should you have any further query now or at any time during the work experience placement, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school at the above contact numbers.

Yours sincerely,

_____ xxxx.

Co-Ordinator.

Email address

APPENDIX 2: Conditions of Work Experience Form

This form is to be completed by parents/guardians of students who are under 18 and by students themselves who are over 18.

Name of student _____

Date of Birth of Student _____ Current Age _____

Work Placement details: _____

Name of Company: _____

Address of Company: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email address: _____

We/I have sourced the above work experience placement.

We/I am aware of the schools Work Experience and Child Protection policies on www.cmco.ie

We/I am satisfied that the employer meets the health and safety requirements as set out in the work experience policy.

I/my child is aware of the need to contact the school and report anything that makes me/him/her feel uncomfortable to the employer, my parents, and the school at the earliest possible time

Parent Signature (if student is under 18)

Student Signature (if student is over 18)

APPENDIX 3

XXXXXXXXXX

Dear Employer,

Thank you most sincerely for accepting a xxxxxx student from Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed for their one-week Work Experience Placement.

The Work Experience Placement is an integral component of the xxxxxxxx Year and gives students a valuable opportunity to experience the world of work.

The Work Experience Placement will take place this year from xxxxxxxxxxxxxx inclusive during the working hours set down by the employer.

I enclose a copy of our school Insurance which covers our students during Work Experience Placement. Please note our policy on work experience is at www.cmco.ie.

We ask that you please complete the Employers Report on Work Experience which will form part of our assessment of the Placement and return it in the S.A.E. provided. We will also expect the students to complete a xxxxxx.

During the week, a member of our staff will also call to pay a brief visit or make a phone-call to discuss the progress of the student.

Should you wish to discuss anything further in relation to the placement, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school number above.

Again, our sincere thanks for your cooperation in providing this valuable work experience.

Yours sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Encl: Employers Evaluation on Work Experience

S.A.E.

Insurance Certificate

APPENDIX 4**xxxxxxxxxx - EMPLOYERS EVALUATION**

EMPLOYER: _____

STUDENT: _____

JOB DESCRIPTION: _____

PLEASE ASSESS THE STUDENT'S ABILITIES AS SET OUT BELOW:

QUALITIES	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	UNSATISFACTORY
Attendance					
Punctuality					
Personal Appearance					
Attitude towards Job					
Ability to follow Instructions and complete jobs					
Initiative					
Practical Ability					
Ability to use Technology					
Relationship with Supervisors					
Relationship with Fellow Workers					

Please add any further comment you wish to make about this student:

Would you be willing to act as a referee for this student

Yes/No

Would you be willing to take another student on Work Experience in the future

Yes/No

COMPANY STAMP

SIGNED: _____

POSITION: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX 5: Tips to help you on work experience

You never get a second chance to make a first impression

So, do

1. Know where you are going in advance of the first day and who you are to meet and be there on time the first day and every day. Specifically, you need to know
 - a. The name and address of your workplace.
 - b. The nature & purpose of the company / organisation?
 - c. Your work experience contact person's name, position and telephone number.
 - d. Your school's contact name and number.
2. Smile
3. Introduce yourself to people you meet "Hello.....My name is xx and I'm here on work experience from Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed". Don't be afraid to put out your hand upon meeting and while introducing yourself give a firm handshake like you mean business and your happy to be here followed by a smile. (This will reinforce your Gratitude).
4. Make sure you have your C.V. and cover letter to hand. Always leave your name, address, home and school phone numbers with your employer / placement supervisor.
5. Be punctual / organised.
6. Ensure you know how your work experience will be structured? (e.g., dates, times, about Transition Year). The hours, departure time from home, appropriate dress (Health & Safety, hair net, gloves, food, mindful of washing hands).
7. Lunch and travel arrangements – do I need to bring money or bring a packed lunch?
8. Reflect on what you hope to learn from the experience?
9. Try your best.
10. Offer to help.
11. Ask for help when/if you need it.
12. Dress appropriately - ask in advance what you should wear. If in doubt wear a black top and trousers.

13. Say thank you at the end. Write a card/letter and give it to the employers on the last day. We have school thank you cards and would love it if you used these. If finance permits a small box of chocolates is also a good idea.
14. Politely ask employer / supervisor if you could use their contact details as a reference going forward for applying to jobs in the future, and if they can fill out the evaluation form on your experience and how you would be open to feedback in how you could improve for the future.

On a cautionary note:

1. No gum
2. No phones/no earphones
3. Keep Jewellery to a minimum
4. Keep makeup to a minimum
5. Be mindful of personal hygiene
6. Be Respectful
7. Be polite and smile
8. Be punctual at all times i.e., Morning break and Lunch, Work to employer's times.
9. No pilfering, stealing or helping yourself to goodies.
10. If you have "nothing to do" get a sweeping brush and brush the floor, polish the cutlery, dust the shelf. Show initiative.
11. Make eye contact.
12. Watch your body language – e.g., hands in pockets, arms folded etc.
13. Health & Safety issues. Do not put yourself at risk or fellow colleagues. Ask for help if needs be. Ahere to any requirements e.g., clothing, not using certain machinery etc.
14. **Be discreet** - remember that what you see/hear is confidential - do not talk about it outside the workplace.
15. If something happens that you are uncomfortable with contact the work experience coordinator as soon as you can.
16. Sick Protocol- Phone call to employer and school. Always make contact.
17. Reference. This may be your only employee reference when going for your dream job.

Remember "Past performance is always an indicator of future performance"