

# THE WORKPLACE LEARNING GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



- › Your guide to workplace learning programs provided for students from NSW public schools and those undertaking HSC courses in TAFE NSW Institutes.



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Can you remember your first time in the workplace?

What insights and advice can you give to your child?

How can you support your child to make their workplace learning a valuable experience?



### Free Interpreter Service:

Need support and assistance? Please ring the **Telephone Interpreter Service** on **131 450** and ask them to contact your child's school, TAFE or private or community registered training organisation.

## 1. 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 in NSW public schools.

### How does workplace learning benefit your child?

Workplace learning helps students to:

- test their job and career choices
- engage with the wider community
- complete course work in a relevant industry setting
- learn what employers want in their workforce
- build general work skills like workplace communication, self reliance and team work
- develop specific industry skills, including vocational education and training (VET) course competencies
- gain confidence and maturity through participation in an adult work environment
- make informed decisions when planning their transition through school and on to further education, training and work.

### What kinds of workplace learning programs are there?

NSW secondary schools offer two main types of workplace learning program – **work experience** and **work placement**. Most students will have the chance to participate in at least one of these programs during their time at high school.

## Work experience

These programs are usually first undertaken by students in Years 9 or 10 with some opportunities in Years 11 and 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-recognised courses. These vocational courses may be delivered by the school, a TAFE or by a private or community registered training organisation contracted by the school.

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

During their work placement, students aim to achieve specific industry competencies which can be assessed by their teachers in consultation with the host employer and/or a qualified workplace assessor. Students achieving competency receive an industry-specific VET qualification that is recognised throughout Australia.

## Work placement is a **compulsory HSC requirement** for the following Industry Curriculum Framework (ICF) courses:

- Automotive
- Business Services
- Construction
- Electrotechnology
- Entertainment Industry
- Financial Services
- Hospitality
- Human Services
- Information and Digital Technology
- Metal and Engineering
- Primary Industries
- Retail Services
- Tourism and Events

“ Work placement was a totally different environment to school. I got hands-on experience and a better understanding of the industry. It helped me to see where I wanted to go and how to get there.”

## 2. How workplace learning works

Schools generally arrange their own workplace learning programs. Where TAFE or a private or community registered training organisation delivers the course, they arrange the related placements in consultation with the school. Your child's school or the course deliverer will provide parents and carers with the relevant information and advice.

### How will your child find a workplace position?

Here are the three most common ways for students to be matched to a workplace:

- The school, TAFE or private or community registered training organisation obtains the workplace positions and allocates them according to the student's interests, needs and career plans and the employer's requirements.
- Mandatory HSC VET **work placements** are provided to the school by Work Placement Service Providers who coordinate these quality placements. Teachers then individually match the students to the placements.
- In the case of **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 their school or TAFE for approval. The school will provide introductory letters and guidelines to the employer. Some host employers are very popular and students will need to book their work experience dates well in advance.

**//** I like this approach to learning. You actually get out in the field and practise what you learn instead of just doing the text book stuff."

## What is the general procedure for a placement?

### Before the placement

- Host employers receive workplace learning guidelines.
- Parents receive workplace learning information and give their consent by signing and returning forms.
- Parents can contact the school's careers adviser or vocational education teacher with queries or concerns.
- Workplace positions are arranged and approved for the students based on their course work and/or career planning.
- Arrangements are confirmed to support student safety.
- Teachers conduct activities to prepare students for the experience.
- Parents or carers help their child with their preparations and arrangements.

### During the placement

- Students attend the workplace every day of the program (usually one week).
- Host employers or nominated workplace supervisors supervise the students in the workplace.
- A teacher makes a supervisory visit or phone call to the employer or supervisor and the student to check on their progress, safety and welfare. Students may be assessed for industry-based competencies.
- Parents or carers provide support and encouragement at home.
- Students will advise their school and host employer if they are ill and unable to attend the placement.
- Incidents and issues are reported to the school.

### After the placement

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



As a parent or carer, you **MUST** complete all documentation. This includes providing an emergency contact number (your own or that of a nominated person) on the **Student Placement Record** along with your child's Medicare number or doctor's details.

## When can students undertake workplace learning?

Students can participate in workplace learning programs from the age of 14.

Year 9 and 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 school 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 December/January school 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 Department's 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, TAFE or private or community registered training organisation and 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. If you are considering a placement away from home or an interstate placement, you should first contact your child's school, or the relevant TAFE, or private or community registered training organisation along with the school, regarding the suitability of the placement. To receive approval for a placement away from home, there must be exceptional educational value and the proposed transport, accommodation, and overnight supervision arrangements must be suitable and have the special written approval of the school Principal or relevant TAFE NSW Institute Manager as well as the 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 assist your child with their travel arrangements and support their travel costs for the duration of the placement. Concession fares are available for travel on public trains, buses, ferries and some private buses. To be eligible for a concession, older students may need to show their concession card available through the school.

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 with your child and with the program organiser.

For timetables and other information relevant to public transport, call the **Transport InfoLine** on **131 500** or check the website **www.131500.com**.

## If your child has a disability or medical condition

You will need to advise the school, TAFE NSW Institute or 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. 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 and Support Team during the planning process.**

For more information on child protection, emergency procedures, prohibited activities, insurance and other matters related to workplace learning, please go to:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/worklearn/worklearnpolicy.html>



## Your child's safety

**Student safety and child protection are the first priority for the NSW Department of Education and Communities.**

Host employers must notify the school or TAFE immediately of any health and safety incidents, including near misses involving a student while on placement, to enable the NSW Department of Education and Communities to fulfil its Work Health and Safety (WHS) obligations.

All host employers receive *The Workplace Learning Guide for Employers* to help them provide safe and effective learning opportunities for students attending their workplace. Some activities are completely prohibited, while others have conditions attached. 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. Departmental staff will follow clear procedures in response to any reasonable suspicion or allegation of misconduct by employers or their employees against students. Students must report any immediate safety concerns, risks or incidents to their employer. They must also report any safety issues or incidents to their school or TAFE as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours.

### In emergencies

**There are 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 Student Contact Card listing their Medicare number and nominated contacts both during and outside normal business hours. This lets them know who to contact should they sustain an 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, TAFE, or private or community registered training organisation along with the 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, TAFE or private or community registered training organisation as soon as possible (e.g. the next day). The school or TAFE

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 or TAFE immediately.

### Insurance and indemnity

The Department has insurance arrangements for students injured while participating in approved workplace learning, including students injured while travelling directly to or from their placement.

For more information, please go to:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/worklearn/worklearnpolicy.html>



### 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 the school, TAFE or private or community registered training organisation. Once the form has been completed and signed by all parties, you will receive a copy to keep.

The Student Placement Record 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, their Medicare number, emergency contacts and any additional support arrangements for students with learning and support needs.

## 3. How you can 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's 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

- ✓ Become familiar with workplace learning by reading the information provided and attending information sessions.
- ✓ Encourage your child to discuss with you their developing career interests and work preferences.
- ✓ Suggest they go to [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au) to find out more about preferred industries and related careers. This website is also useful for you as a parent to visit. You may like to look at the information together.
- ✓ Urge them to complete the Workplace Learning Research pages in their *Employment Related Skills Logbook Online*.
- ✓ 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, or where involved, by the TAFE or private or community registered training organisation.
- ✓ Advise the school of any suitable placements you know about or could offer.
- ✓ Tell those arranging your child's placement (their school, TAFE or private or community registered training organisation) of any disability, learning and support needs or medical history e.g. anaphylaxis, that may require adjustments 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.
- ✓ Complete the accommodation away from home documentation if applicable.

## WHEN a position is confirmed

- ✓ Make workplace learning a priority. This may mean rescheduling other activities.
- ✓ Help your child 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 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 arrangements 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 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 your 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?
  - if there is anything of concern, have you raised it with the employer?
  - do you think this might be the right industry for you?

## IMMEDIATELY AFTER the placement

- ✓ Encourage your child to discuss their host employer's report with you.
- ✓ Make sure they record their experience in their *Employment Related Skills Logbook Online*.
- ✓ 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 workplace contacts for advice, assistance and opportunities in the future.

## Important contacts

Thank you for taking time to read the information in this guide. We hope that you feel confident and well-prepared to support your child as they take up these valuable workplace learning opportunities.

Your first point of contact:



For further assistance, advice and information:



[www.det.nsw.edu.au/  
vetinschools/worklearn/  
worklearnpolicy.html](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/worklearn/worklearnpolicy.html)

see the Parents section for  
Additional Information.



[www.inworkingorder.com.au](http://www.inworkingorder.com.au)

for information on injury  
prevention and workplace  
safety for young workers.



[www.schooltowork.com.au](http://www.schooltowork.com.au)

see the Parents and  
Community section.



[http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/  
newlegislation2012/youngworkers/  
Pages/default.aspx](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/newlegislation2012/youngworkers/Pages/default.aspx)

for the WorkCover NSW safety  
website for young workers.

**Workplace Learning Adviser, Senior Pathways, NSW Department of Education and Communities State Office - tel. (02) 9244 5425**



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Communities**

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