

Parents' Guide to Work Experience 2025

Q. Why do work experience?

A. Work experience gives students valuable insight into the world of work, encourages them to develop their enterprise skills and helps inform them of potential careers. It is also a chance for students to develop and show evidence of vital employability skills such as self-confidence, communication and independence and possibly explore career areas they are considering for the future.

Q. When do students take part in the work experience programme?

A. The Wallington Experience Programme runs from:

Year 12 – Monday 14th July to Friday 18th July 2025

Q. Is it compulsory for all students to take part in the work experience programme?

A. Yes, the programme runs in term time and it is an expectation that all students will take part in the programme.

Q. Do students need permission to take part in the programme?

A. Yes, Parents and carers will need to agree to the placement once their placement employer has agreed and completed the Unifrog form.

Q. Does the school find placements for students?

A. To ensure that students get a placement with a company/sector that they are keen to explore we ask students to find their own placements.

Q. How does the school support students during the time they are trying to find a placement?

A. There will be an assembly on the work experience programme. Students can contact Mrs Parkinson if they need any help and guidance. Further information and any placements can be found on the online WHSG careers noticeboard.

Q. How can Parent's & Carers support the process?

A. Please ensure your child has found a placement and logged this onto Unifrog by Monday 24th February 2025. We would appreciate you spending some time exploring any contacts your child can use and by helping them to explore and research local companies which may be able to provide a placement.

Q. How should the student go about trying to find a placement?

A. Personal contact is always a very good way to secure a placement. Students should undertake independent research on organisations in the sector they are interested in working in. Students are encouraged to contact potential companies to ask who their application should be directed to. Once they have a contact or department they should email the person, using their name where possible, attaching a CV or by speaking to them on the phone. Alternatively, students who are unable to find a placement after searching should speak to Mrs Parkinson who may be able to offer contact details of the employers that have previously offered placements to Wallington students.

Q. What if the student cannot find work experience in an area they are keen to explore?

A. Work experience enables students to build on key employability skills. If students can't find work experience in a career area that really interests them, they should look at the skills they need in their ideal job and then find a placement in another career area that may be easier to find work experience in, and that will allow them to build the same key skills.

Q. What type of work experience should students apply for if they want to study Medicine, Veterinary or Dentistry?

A. Medical, Veterinary & Dental students are encouraged to find work experience that helps them evidence helping and supporting others. For example, work in a care home, working with special needs children in a school or voluntary setting, food bank, charity shops. Anywhere they are working with people with extra needs. Obviously, shadowing in a hospital or with a GP is also excellent work experience, but this should not be their only work experience as it does not show they have worked with people.

Q. Can work experience be virtual?

A. No, an in-person work experience placement is expected during the WHSG designated work experience week.

Q. What happens if the student finds a work placement outside the WHSG designated work experience week?

A. That's great! Finding an extra placement is a really worthwhile thing to do and that additional experience will help you to make some more informed decisions about your future career. However, because the placement is not in the designated week, all arrangements need to be made privately between the student, their parents and the employer. This means that the parents will need to be responsible for checking the health and safety standards and insurance arrangements. **The student will still need to look for a placement during the school work experience week in addition to anything else you have done/will be doing.**

While work experience is an invaluable opportunity for students to gain practical insights and skills, it is not recommended during term time. The academic progress and focus of our students remain our top priority, and missing lessons for work experience can disrupt their learning.

However, in exceptional circumstances, we understand that some opportunities may arise that cannot be rescheduled. In such cases, these arrangements would need to be reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team before any plans are finalised. We encourage you to communicate with us as early as possible if this applies to your child.

Q. What should the student do when they find a placement?

A. They should click on the Placements section on Unifrog, add details of the placement and add Mrs L Parkinson as the named Coordinator.

Q. Does the school visit the placements to carry out a health and safety check?

A. The Department for Education and the Health and Safety Executive guidelines advise that we do not visit employers to carry out a risk assessment. Instead, we assess placements following desk top assessment procedures via the Unifrog platform.

Q. How do you assess a company for work experience?

A. Before confirming the placement Employers have to confirm on the Unifrog platform that they have employer liability insurance in place, a written health and safety policy and that they have assessed the risk to workers under the age of 18. We also ask employers to provide details of the type of work the student will be doing whilst with them.

Q. What if the student agrees a placement with an employer who does not have employer liability insurance?

A. Some smaller companies or those employing only relatives may not have employer liability insurance. In this instance the company would not meet the necessary standards that we set for work experience and we would not authorise the placement.

Q. Can the student still do work experience with an employer that does not meet the school's standards for work experience?

A. As part of our duty of care we would advise both you, the student and the employer by email if a placement did not meet the necessary standards and therefore was excluded from our work experience programme. Students would not be given permission to attend a placement that did not meet the necessary standards.

Q. Are there any limitations on the distance of placements?

A. As we are not required to visit employers there are no limitations on distance for UK placements.

Q. Can the student undertake work experience with a company outside of the UK?

A. Due to varying health and safety laws outside of the UK only placements within the UK will be authorised. The exception, would be when the placement is organised by a British company e.g. Blue Stamp Travel

Q. What happens when a placement has been checked by the school and meets all of the requirements?

A. Once the placement is authorised by the school, Unifrog will notify the parents/carers and the employer.

Q. How will the school help prepare students for their work experience placement?

A. Before the start of the placement students are briefed on how to get the most out of their work experience and also how to ensure they keep themselves safe whilst on placement.

Q. Does the school inform the students work experience employer if they have a medical condition?

A. Parents and students are asked to inform the employer of any medical conditions. Due to confidentiality the school does not pass on any medical information that it holds on students.

Q. Is there a work experience debrief?

A. Each employer is sent a debrief form via Unifrog and will be asked to carry out a student debrief at the end of the placement. Students will be able to log any employability skills learnt during the placement on their work experience log and this can be referred to during the debrief with the employer. Students can also add any activities and employability skills they have gained in the activities section of Unifrog.

Q. I don't seem to have received any emails from Unifrog?

A. If anyone involved says they aren't getting the automated emails that the system generates, they should check their junk folders and add noreply@unifrog.org to their safe sender / whitelist.