

Ref: VC/CXJ
June 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Work Experience
Monday 15th July – Friday 19th July 2024

As part of our careers education programme, all students complete a week of work experience at the end of Year 10. This helps them to develop a clearer understanding of the workplace, try out a potential career choice and to build on their employability skills, such as using their initiative, teamwork and communication. We also find it boosts their motivation in school, after experiencing what the world of work is like beyond their education.

Due to other schools in the area moving their work experience week to clash with ours, we have decided to launch work experience before the summer holidays this year, to give our students a head-start in approaching potential companies as early as possible. Your child had an assembly on work experience this Tuesday, and we hope they may have discussed this with you at home. Students are expected to source their own placements, with support, to develop their skills, independence and confidence, vital when they are searching and applying for their first jobs, apprenticeships, college or university places. This also gives them ownership over the decision of where to go for their placement.

We hope many students will find a placement reflecting their career interests, however, where this is not possible, it is useful to remember the main purpose is to experience the world of work, and this can happen in almost any working environment. Some careers, such as the armed forces, engineering or the police have specific application windows and processes, so if your child is interested in these industries, they need to speak to me before the end of September at the latest, and I will advise them further on how to apply. There are further Frequently Asked Questions at the end of this letter.

Please could you discuss this with your child and, where possible, support them to think of ideas for potential placements, and to approach businesses during the summer holidays to ask if they would be willing to accommodate a placement within the week stated above. Please note work experience is classified as volunteering, therefore students should not receive payment, and, as it is to broaden their horizons, their placements should not be the same as a part-time job they are already doing (or would be doing at the time of work experience).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With many thanks in advance for your help,

Miss V Cannam
Careers Lead
vcannam@thomaskeble.gloucs.sch.uk

Student FAQs

How should I apply for a work experience placement?

If you have thought of a company you would like to be placed with, a preliminary call is a good idea to ask if they accept work experience students, or you could go there and ask in person. If they do, you should follow up with a letter or email using the template below. If you are not comfortable with calling, you could send the email as your initial contact. If you do not hear back within 2 weeks, you could either politely contact them to ask if they have received your request, or contact other places to see if you can find a placement elsewhere.

Where can I go for work experience?

Any company that will accept you! Most students opt for a local placement in Gloucestershire, and previous placements have included Stroud District Council, primary schools/nurseries, vets, gyms, solicitors, charities (e.g. National Trust, Meningitis Trust), estate agents, golf clubs, cafés, Pangolin Foundry, Stroud Arts Space, engineers, with tradespeople such as electricians/, landscapers or mechanics, Superdry, Westonbirt Arboretum, WWT Slimbridge, Calcot Manor & Spa, hairdressers, beauticians, museums, Longfield Hospice, Gloucestershire Police, Gloucester Rugby, Forest Green Rovers, Ecotricity, The Door, Snow Business, Cotswold Airport, libraries, travel agents, St James's Place and Eastcombe Post Office. You may go further afield (we have had students go to Bristol and London for example), but be aware that we may not be able to visit you for support during your placement. International placements are possible if you are able to organise travel and accommodation, but please contact Miss Cannam to discuss before arranging.

What if I don't know what I want to do as a career?

Work experience is a really valuable opportunity to see what the world of work is like and to develop transferable employability skills like communication and organisation. You should try to choose something you are interested in. If you like talking to people, perhaps choose a customer-facing placement like a café or shop (and these might also be able to offer you a part-time job during Year 11 or beyond if they're impressed with you!). If you like sports or animals, try to find a placement reflecting that interest. Consider if you'd like to work outdoors or if you'd prefer an office environment, and if you like working with the public or in a quieter setting. You could ask family members if they think their jobs might interest you, and perhaps go to their place of work, even if it's in a different department. By choosing something based on your interests and personality, you might find something you enjoy that you could then consider after school, but equally you may discover it's something you'd never want to do, which is just as important to find out!

What if I can't do work experience in my preferred industry, e.g. NHS?

We would recommend that you think about the skills you'd require in your chosen job and other roles where similar skills would be required. For example, working with the elderly to develop empathy and communication is often regarded as excellent work experience for someone wanting to work in nursing, or working in a playgroup could be good if you are interested in midwifery. We have had students interested in drama working with care homes to provide the entertainment programme for the residents, and in gyms if they're interested in physiotherapy. There are lots of ways around this issue, and you are then likely to be able to apply for more relevant work experience in Year 12 or during college, when you're over 16.

What if there's an accident while I'm on placement?

Students are insured by the school, however employers must have valid Employer's Liability Insurance for us to approve for your placement to go ahead. If you wish to see a copy of our insurance schedule, then please contact the Finance Office.

Is there anything else important that I should be aware of?

If you are interested in an engineering placement (e.g. Renishaw) or a placement with Gloucestershire Constabulary or the Armed Forces, please speak to Miss Cannam as they have specific application processes and deadlines. You will need to do this as early as possible next term, by the end of September at the latest.

Please note that some local primary schools, such as Bussage, have informed us that they are unable to take work experience students in the last week of the summer term.

What is the process for confirming my placement?

Once you have found a placement, you will fill in an application form during your tutorial time in school (if you haven't found one by September, we can just leave the company details blank until you do). You will then hand this in to reception once completed and exchange it for a work experience agreement booklet, which needs to be signed by you (the student), a parent/carer and the employer. Ideally your booklet should be returned to reception before Christmas, but there are some exceptions, such as Renishaw who don't confirm placements until February. If we don't receive your form in time, our external health and safety company ERFA will not be able to check the placement and you may not be able to go. In this case, you would remain in school during work experience week.

Do I get support whilst on my placement?

If you're on a local placement, a member of TK staff will visit you during your work experience week to check you're OK, and that neither you nor the employer has any concerns.

During your placement you will be provided with a reflective log to complete and will have follow-up activities back in school at the beginning of Year 11, including a mock interview with a local employer who will assess the application form you completed as part of this interview process.

Email Template

Subject: Work Experience Enquiry

Dear *(title and name if you know it, or company name)*,

I am a Year 10 student at Thomas Keble School in the first year of my GCSE courses. I have a great interest in *(subject/career)* and am considering it as my chosen career path.

I would very much appreciate it if you would consider whether your company would be able to offer me a work experience placement during the week of 15th – 19th July 2024.

This week of work experience is intended to provide an insight into the field and what it is really like. From the week I hope to gain an experience to tell me if *(the job/career/subject area)* is the path I really want to follow, and to find out more about the world of work. I would be expected to work up to 40 hours across the week, with hours set to suit your business, with a 30-minute break for every 4.5 hours worked per day. The school will provide full guidance on the levels of support I will require including safeguarding and welfare issues, and will ensure health and safety checks are carried out. In terms of insurance, all the school requires is a copy of your employer liability certificate.

(You should then add a paragraph explaining any previous work experience / responsibilities e.g. school leadership positions, or achievements inside or outside of school as appropriate).

If you have any queries please contact me via e-mail: *(put your email address here)* or telephone:

(provide both your home telephone number and mobile number if you can).

Thank you for your consideration.

(Your first and last names)