

# Northampton School *for Boys*

Work Experience  
15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Information Guide for  
Y12 Students



## **Introduction**

At Northampton School *for Boys* we have a planned programme of Careers Education and Guidance at each Key Stage and as you complete Y12 you will undertake a Work Experience Placement during the final week of summer term. This year Y12 work experience runs from **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July**.

In this guide you will find information about why we do work experience, steps to help you find and choose a placement, guidance on how to write a CV, key things to remember whilst on placement and the expectations that school has of you on placement, as well as key deadlines between now and the final week of the academic year.

## **Why do we do a Work Experience Placement?**

A Work Experience Placement is crucial to the successful development of your Employability Skills and will compliment your academic curriculum; it is a fantastic opportunity to spend a week with an employer of your choice and can help you decide what you want to do in the future. You will be treated like an employee for a week (although you won't get paid!) and it will make you stand out in the future when you apply for a real job as it's great experience to list on a CV. Not only that, but a work placement can even lead to the offer of part-time, paid job!

Lots of students think that a work placement is about having a week out of school, or simply testing a job they fancy doing in the future, but it is about so much more than that. It helps you to develop real skills that will allow you to be successful in today's competitive and fast-paced world of work. Some of the benefits of a work placement are listed below:

- Develop communication and time keeping skills
- Increase in confidence and independence
- Gain a real insight into the world of work
- Develop employability skills (therefore you're more likely to be offered a job in the future)
- Gain a true sense of achievement
- Know and understand better what job you want to do in the future (and what qualifications you need from School to be able to do this)
- Meet new people
- Understand the importance of school work
- Could lead to a part-time job (28% of people of students on work experience placements are offered part-time roles following their placement – *Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion 2014*)
- Impressive on university and apprenticeship applications
- Impressive on any work application (and often the first thing a prospective employer will look at – any previous experience)

## **What to choose**

Although July might seem a long way off, the reality is it will arrive much sooner than you think and preparation is key to a finding and securing a successful Work Experience Placement. The Government has made it compulsory for all students under 18 to do one placement during their time in 6<sup>th</sup> form and so think about how many other students in Northamptonshire are applying for a placement – if you don't act now, you'll miss out!

If you are reading this and panicking, thinking I don't know what I want to do, then this guide is here to help. If you are completely unsure then think about things you enjoy and try to find a company/role that might incorporate some of those things; you can also discuss ideas with parents/carers, older siblings who have already done a work placement, your Form Tutor, Miss Rickaby, Mrs Bradley-Brophy or the Careers Advisor.

If you have a clear idea of what you want to do when you are older then, fantastic! Use this guide to help you produce your CV, and find and secure a placement.

### Work Placement Ideas:

Where you choose to do your Work Placement all depends on the career you think you are interested in long term. It might also be that university or next-step courses have specific work experience requirements and expectations for you to be a successful applicant to the course.

**Medical Applicants:** medicine, dentistry, veterinary science will all need relevant and specific work experience. Please refer to your university course entry requirements for more info or speak to Mrs Bradley-Brophy or Mrs Stevenson.

If you're not sure about what sort of work experience might complement the subject(s) you currently study or are planning to study after 6<sup>th</sup> form, then the list below might give you some industry/company type ideas:

- **Art:** museums, galleries, art magazine, auction house, charity, community centre/initiative, fashion organisation, photography company
- **Drama:** school, local theatre, theatre companies, theatre schools, fashion organisation
- **DT:** manufacturing company, construction firm, energy companies, engineering consultancy firm, graphic design company, architecture
- **Finance:** bank, accountancy firm, consultancy firm, finance department of a large company
- **English:** newspaper, magazine, publishing company, library, schools
- **Geography:** council, environmental agencies, transport company, estate agent
- **History:** schools, library, museum, conservation and heritage management company
- **IT:** tech company, big companies that have an in-house IT team, e.g., Network Rail, software, graphic design companies
- **Languages:** schools, travel company, foreign language institutions/teaching schools, translation company
- **Law:** lawyer/solicitors firm, legal advice companies, charity, the police, legal department of a large company
- **Maths:** accountancy firm, software developer, banks, engineering company, construction firm, finance department of a large business
- **Music:** school, theatre, music schools, recording studios
- **Politics:** local council, charity, newspaper/magazine, marketing and PR company
- **Science:** schools, scientific research/development company, vet, pharmacy, GP surgery, hospital
- **Sport:** fitness centres, schools, sports marketing/event management companies, professional sports teams, sports charities, sports clubs, community centres/initiatives, physiotherapy clinics (private or NHS)

There is a helpful video to watch on Unifrog, click the link below to watch it:

<https://www.unifrog.org/student/know-how/favourites/for-students-a-guide-to-placements-work-experience>

### How to find and apply for a Work Experience Placement

Key steps to follow:

1. Decide on an industry or type of company you want to work for
2. Conduct internet research to find local such companies
3. Make contact via phone and/or email

The first place to start is deciding on an industry or type of company you want to work for, e.g. an accountancy firm. Second is to do internet research to find local such businesses that you can shortlist as target firms. Next is to make contact! The best way to do this is to make a phone call; now this can seem like a scary task, so if you are nervous about doing this write down a script of what you want to say and questions you want to ask. Start by politely introducing yourself – give your name, tell them you are an NSB student and that the purpose of your phone call is to enquire about a work experience placement. It may well be that some companies are not able to take students on

work experience placements, if this is the case and they tell you so over the phone, remain calm, politely thank them for taking your call, say goodbye and hang up.

Another way to get in touch with a target company is with an email; if your first contact with a company is going to be via email then make sure the communication is formal and polite (just like a letter). You could choose to send it from your school email account, or from a personal email account; be very careful with personal email accounts, you must make sure the email address is appropriate. Start your email with 'Dear Sir/Madam', again lay out that the purpose of your email is to enquire about a work placement, and sign your email off with 'Yours Sincerely', followed by your full name and your contact details (email and phone). If you send off several emails at once, it is important that you follow up until you hear a response either way.

In years gone by, people have applied for work placements by posting a lot of letters – in the modern world of work this is a wasted effort. Most companies will not reply to letters so it is much better to get in touch via phone or email.

Once you have made the initial contact with a company and they have agreed to have a further conversation with you there a few things that need to happen, and a couple of others that it would be advisable to do.

**Need** - you need to get their **confirmation** in writing (via an email) and you need the name of the main person you should keep in contact with between now and starting your placement. You must also let the company know that they will receive an email from Unifrog with a link to complete the information required of them for your placement, and that all of the work experience documentation is completed through Unifrog which the school monitors and can help you chase outstanding items.

- Student Initial Form
- Employer Initial Form
- Parent/Guardian Agreement
- School Permission

Once you fill in the Student Initial Form and input the contact details of the host company, Unifrog will take care of getting the paperwork to them. You will have to have all of the above completed on Unifrog before you can start your placement. The Careers Team can help you to chase up outstanding forms, but unless you fully complete the Student Initial Form with the correct information, we cannot help.

**Advisable** – it might be nice to follow up your confirmation with a letter of acknowledgement and thanks – tell them you are really looking forward to starting your placement and what you are hoping to gain from it. You should also think about sending a CV in for their review and trying to arrange a face-to-face meeting before you start your placement to make initial introductions; be aware that some companies will want to conduct some sort of interview before they agree to offer you a placement. If this is the case, you **must** let your Form Tutor and Miss Rickaby know **before** you go.

Throughout the process of finding and applying for your Work Experience Placement, it is vital that you remain polite and formal; you are representing Northampton School *for Boys* at all times during this process and you must maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitude that we expect of you in school, out of school. Any student that does not do this will face significant consequences upon their return to school.

## Virtual Work Experience Programmes

Due to the changing landscape of the world of work due to the impact of Covid-19, many big, multi-national companies offer virtual work experience programmes. You can research these as part of your preparation and should you be intending to apply for a virtual programme, you will need to let Miss Rickaby know.

If you want to undertake a virtual placement, the dates must coincide with the formal Y12 work experience dates; any dates that do not coincide can be approved but they will be completed in addition to the formal dates advertised.

Virtual placements still require the placements tool to be completed in Unifrog, you simply select the 'virtual' option and complete the information as required.

## Established Links

Northampton School *for Boys* has established links with many local companies across a variety of sectors, details of which we are happy to share with you on a first come, first served basis. If the school provides you with contact details for a link company, it is still your responsibility to make the contact and organise the placement.

Please also be aware that for these placements, the school will monitor the placement closely as we and previous students have worked hard to establish and maintain these important relationships. Should the school at any time feel you put that relationship in jeopardy, we will intervene and may ask you source an alternative placement.

## CVs

Many of you might not have written a CV before and might be daunted at the prospect, but companies will be impressed if you can follow up an enquiry with an informative CV to give them a bit more information about you as an individual. Key things to include on a CV are:

- Name
- Contact Details
- A small paragraph about yourself, including hobbies and interests
- What subjects you are studying, and what your post-18 plans are (university, apprenticeship, work), alongside why you want to do work experience with the company you are approaching
- Information about extra-curricular activities (including DfE)
- Any additional qualifications/awards you have, e.g. first aid, school subject awards, sports awards
- Skills you have
- Information about references (these are people the company can get in touch with to verify your suitability for the placement – you could use parents/carers, your Form Tutor or Miss Rickaby)

There is an example of a CV at the back of this guide that you can use as a template.

## Key things to remember on a work placement

Being out of school on a work experience placement can be exciting and/or scary and so there are a few key things to remember whilst you are out of school:

- **Behaviour:** your behaviour whilst on your work placement must be impeccable! You must behave exactly as if you were in school - be polite at all times, be a good listener, and remember the school's core standards: *Considerate, Courteous, Co-operative, Friendly, Hardworking, Honest, Trusting, Generous of spirit.*
- **Dress:** you should dress smartly at all times. Ideally, you should be wearing a suit in a professional environment and your shirt must be tucked in at all times. Equally as much, skirts and dresses should be an appropriate length. You will need to be even smarter on a work placement than you are in school.

- **Mobile phones:** whilst on placement you might need your phone to be able to arrange transport or other personal admin but other than that, you have no need for your phone during the working day. Your phone should remain in your bag and switched off at all times – you need to concentrate and work hard during your placement and this does not involve messaging your friends or checking snap chat!
- **Social media:** You must be extremely careful about any comments you make online during your work placement, especially if you are going to make public comments about the company. It is very easy to forget how accessible social media accounts are for everyone to see, and it is also very easy for people to read something and get the wrong impression. It would be highly advisable not to post anything about the company on your social media, and also to think about whether other posts/comments you make during the time you are on placement are in keeping with a professional working environment.
- **Time keeping:** it is imperative that you are on time for everything during your work placement. You need to be on time, if not slightly ahead of schedule in the morning – if you are starting at 9am, be there at 8.58, not 9.02. You also need to make sure you are back at your pre-arranged meeting point at the end of your lunch break. Working professionals are very busy people and poor time keeping will create a negative impression; you will need to be independent in your time keeping and keep an eye your watch or a clock, as there will not be any warning bells reminding you to start making a move.
- **Safety:** the company that offers you a work placement has a duty to make sure you are safe during your time with them, and they should go through Health and Safety procedures with you during induction. We as a school also have a duty of care to make sure you are safe on placement and so you must let us know if you do not feel safe or if anything makes you feel uncomfortable during your work experience.
- **Working with young children:** if you are going to do your placement in a primary school or a nursery there are a few things to be aware of. You should not pick them up, should never be left alone with them and you should not sit them on your lap. If you arrange to do your placement in a school/nursery you will have a specific meeting with Miss Rickaby before you go as you will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS check which is a legal requirement for adults working in schools.
- **Working in healthcare/social care/with vulnerable adults:** if you arrange to do your placement in a healthcare or social care setting, or working with vulnerable adults, you will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS check which is a legal requirement for adults working in these settings.
- **Transport:** it is crucial that you plan your transport to get to and from your placement before you go. If you are planning to get a bus, then it might be an idea to do a trial run of the route to see how long it is going to take you. Even if your parents/carers are planning to take you to your placement each day, doing a test drive of the route would be beneficial. Remember that school will not pay for any transport costs.
- **Sickness:** If you are unwell during your work placement, you must phone the company and school as soon as possible. Do not wait until 9am when you should already be there, you must remain professional and let the placement provider know as early as you are able to.

### What if I don't like it?

This is without doubt the most frequently asked question during the lead up to any work experience placement – the nerves start to kick in and you will start to worry about things. Remember you can **phone school** at any time during your placement and tell us what you are not enjoying about it; Miss Rickaby will also be coming round to visit people whilst they are on placement so it might be that you receive a visit to help boost your confidence. The most important thing to remember is that if you don't like it on day one then you need to give it more time, please go back for day two and try again – **don't just give up**.

## **Documentation/Deadlines**

Before you leave school to start your work experience placement there are a few pieces of documentation that you will need to get completed (on Unifrog):

- Student Initial Form
- Employer Initial Form
- Parent/Guardian Agreement
- School Permission

There is a video on Unifrog which talks you through how to use the 'Placements' tool to complete all the above, just click the link below to watch it:

<https://www.unifrog.org/student/know-how/favourites/how-to-use-the-placements-tool>

Enhanced DBS (where relevant) – you can complete the application yourself online, or if you are struggling, please see Mrs Tilley in her office on the ground floor of Cripps

When you come back from your placement, we will request feedback from the host employer.

Deadlines TBC.

### **Key Staff at school**

Miss Rickaby – all general queries about work experience/help and support

Mrs Bradley-Brophy – course specific requirements for work experience/ideas of placements

Mrs Stevenson – medical and Oxbridge applications ONLY

Careers Adviser – careers guidance/work experience ideas

Mrs Tilley – all work experience admin/documentation queries/relevant DBS checks/book appointments with careers adviser

All questions and queries about work experience should go to [workexperience@nsb.northants.sch.uk](mailto:workexperience@nsb.northants.sch.uk)

## **Work Experience Placement – Checklist**

- ☐ Decide on an industry/company type
- ☐ Internet Research
- ☐ Shortlist of companies to get in touch with
- ☐ Make initial contact – via phone  
or
- ☐ Make initial contact – via email
- ☐ Follow up communication to confirm placement
- ☐ Confirmation of placement in writing sent to school via email
- ☐ Log all information on Unifrog using the 'Placements' tool
- ☐ Student Initial Form (Unifrog)
- ☐ Employer Initial Form (Unifrog)
- ☐ Parent/Guardian Agreement (Unifrog)
- ☐ School Permission (Unifrog)
- ☐ Organise travel plans
- ☐ Travel route practice run before placement starts



**NAME**

Address

Contact Information (email and phone)

**Paragraph about yourself**

- include information about hobbies, interests and what you are looking for in your work placement, maybe information about what you want to do when you're older (if you know)

**School**

- paragraph to talk about what subjects you are studying; talk about what your favourite is and why, mention what your plans are for the end of Y13 (include any 'educational' travel), and why you want to do work experience with this specific company

**Extra-Curricular**

- information about extra-curricular clubs you do – could be in school or out of school e.g. scouts, DfE, sport coaching

**Additional Qualifications**

- any additional qualifications/awards you have, e.g. first aid, school subject awards, sports awards, music grades

**Skills**

- talk about skills you have, e.g. communication skills, organisational skills, hard-working attitude; try to link the skills to life at school/clubs you're involved in and explain how being at NSB/part of a club has helped you to develop a specific skill

**References**

- you need to list two people as references in case the company wants to get in touch to verify your suitability for the placement. You could use parents/carers, Form Tutor or Miss Rickaby, maybe a club leader (for a club outside of school). You should seek agreement/permission for the 2 people you are listing as your references before you put their details down. You need to include their name, their position/relationship to you, and their email address and/or phone number