

Work Experience Guidelines for South Gippsland Specialist School

WHAT IS WORK EXPERIENCE?

Work experience is just that. Being in a work place environment, to develop the understanding and skills required to undertake work related tasks. It was introduced in the mid 1970's, to schools, as a way of enabling students to explore and experience the world of work. The intent of work experience is to give students exposure to work environments to broaden their experience and understanding of the work place and career opportunities.

Work experience is aimed at providing students with:

- **An improved understanding of the world of work**
- **Increased self awareness**, especially of a student's strengths and abilities in relation to the work place
- **Improved self-confidence**
- **Learning the skills and competencies required in the workplace**, and therefore and improved understanding of the link between school and work
- **Increased motivation** to continue study or training
- **Workplace experience** which can be used to improve further study, job or apprenticeship opportunities

PAYMENT:

Work Experience is not employment so unless the student is at work experience for a full day, payment is not expected. The value of this experience is worth more than money.

If a student is completing a full day (9am – 3pm) then the minimum payment an employer is required to pay is \$5.00 per day. This is a requirement for ALL Victorian Government school students, not just for students with disabilities.

COMMITMENT:

Starting out on work experience is a big step towards gaining the skills to live independently. It requires a lot of commitment for the school, students, families and employers. Work experience is a timetabled program within a student's educational curriculum.

In order to maintain our positive image within the community about students from South Gippsland Specialist School attending work experience placements, we would like to set a number of guidelines about commitment to this program.

These guidelines are:

- 1.** Students are required to **attend** their work experience placement for the **length of the school term or the time negotiated at the commencement.**
- 2.** If a student wants to **change** their current work experience placement, this needs to be discussed with the **Work Experience Co-ordinator**, so that an alternative placement can be arranged.

- 3.** The students are to **remain in their current placements until the next placement can be organised.**
- 4.** If a student is **unable to attend a work experience placement**, they are to notify the **employer** and then notify the **Work Experience Co-ordinator.**
- 5.** Students who **do not attend work experience placements on the day**, will be asked to **stay at home** as there are no other programmed classes for those students. Their program on the day is "Work Experience".
- 6.** If there are issues that occur during a student's placement, parents/carers need to discuss these directly with the **Work Experience Co-ordinator**, not directly with the employer.

VISITING STUDENTS ON WORK EXPERIENCE:

It is an enormous job to place students in an appropriate work place setting that meets the individual needs of each student.

In order to maintain our positive association with the local business community, we would like to ask all families of students who are on work placements to not visit students when they are working.

If you would like to find out how your child is progressing, please contact the Work Experience Co-ordinator.

THE PHASES OF WORK EDUCATION:

South Gippsland Specialist School actively supports students to achieve the skills to live independently. Part of our programming offers students the opportunity to access Work Education as preparation for placement in Work experience programs in the community.

Phase 1: Pre-Work Skills:

Students access in school lessons designed to extend and transfer their functional life skills into work orientated skills. The importance of appropriate work ethics is introduced and emphasised.

- Eg.
1. Positive attitude
 2. Appropriate interactions
 3. Following directions
 4. Completion of required tasks
 5. Time management

Phase 2: Partial Work Placements

Partial work Placements are designed to extend and strengthen the work skills of students within a supportive environment. Students entering this phase usually spend one to three hours in a work setting.

The key skills that are developed at this time are:

- Eg.
1. Travel to Work
 2. Time Management
 3. Appropriate Dress
 4. Appropriate Interactions
 5. Completing of tasks asked

Successes and difficulties encountered by students are acknowledged and discussed during this time.

Phase 3: Full Day Placements

This program aims to extend the work skills of those students who have consistently attained success whilst on partial work experience placements. The hours for a full day are negotiated within the student's pre-placement interview.

WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT:

- Be on time
- Have a neat and **clean appearance**
- Be **keen** and **interested** about the work
- Be prepared to do a job well and **do your best**
- **Ask questions** if you are not sure
- Always be **back on time** from your breaks
- **Be discreet** – if you overhear anything private or confidential, keep it to yourself
- Be **prepared to do small tasks** first before expecting anything big
- **Work without distracting** other workers
- Be prepared to **sometimes, just watch and observe**
- Be **positive**
- Follow the **rules**
- Act in a **safe** manner – following all OH&S rules.
- Be **polite**
- **Smile** and look like you are **enjoying yourself**

THE POWER OF WORK EXPERIENCE:

Through participating in work experience programs and displaying all of the above work ethics, some students have gained employment that has set them up for their future. The school would like to ask all parents to reinforce these ideas with their children. If we are to continue to have support from our local community we need to be thankful for their assistance and appreciative of their efforts to assist in getting our students ready for work.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Heather Braden

Principal