



THE MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL

WORK EXPERIENCE

Parent Information

25 – 28 March 2024

For any queries, please contact Mrs Shakya in the Careers Office.

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At The Mountbatten School we are very privileged to be able to offer students a week of work experience. In 2021 only 36% of school offered students this amazing opportunity; we are proud to continue to have this provision for your child.

Why complete work experience?

According to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, two-thirds of employers are looking for young people with work experience. Employers stated that work experience was, in most cases, as important to them as GCSE grades.

Completing work experience enables students to learn new skills, gain confidence and prove their reliability, as well as gaining independence by travelling to work. These new-found skills, alongside the other activities and hobbies they do outside of school, add value and credibility to their personal statement used to apply to college, apprenticeships or employment.

The work experience programme also allows students to test out possible career ideas, whilst meeting new people and making new contacts. Every year a number of students secure part-time work or apprenticeships upon completing their placement.

How should students decide where to go?

Students may already have a job in mind that they would like to pursue in the future; or they may have heard other people talk about their job and would like to try it out. The work experience could be related to any hobbies and interests they have, or be related to their favourite subjects in school.

If your child has no idea what they would like to do, they can request a careers interview with our Careers Advisers, research different jobs using a careers website (for example Career Pilot), look through local job adverts, or ask family and friends what they think they might be suited to. It doesn't have to be the perfect work experience placement as students will still gain a variety of transferable skills.

How to find a work experience placement?

Whilst we are more than happy to support students in finding the placement, we would like the students to do the majority of the organising, giving them a first opportunity to experience what it is like looking for a job.

Students can google companies of interest or ask family and friends whether they are able to offer a placement, or perhaps they pass any shops and places of work on their way to school and like the look of the company.

Whilst the school has a database of companies that have helped in the past, please bear in mind that 300 students will potentially use this list!

How to contact a potential employer?

Whilst it may be uncomfortable at first for some students to make a phone call to an employer, we strongly suggest that students contact employers by telephoning them. Previous experience has shown that emails often get overlooked and are not answered in a reasonable timeframe and thus students can be left waiting for weeks before receiving an answer. A phone call tends to be more effective in getting a prompt reply.

A placement has been secured – what are the next steps?

Students are advised to either meet the employer or speak to them on the phone to discuss the finer details of the placement. They should find out more about:

- What to wear
- Working hours / lunch arrangements
- Who their contact / supervisor is
- What their tasks will be
- Travel practicalities
- Health and safety arrangements

Students will receive a work experience form which needs to be completed by the employer and signed by parents / carers and students.

Health and safety

Mrs Shakya, Head of Careers, will be checking all the forms to ensure they have been completed with the required details, including employer liability insurance. Employers will then be contacted to ensure the placement is suitable and safe for students.

Frequently asked questions

Do students have to stay with the same employer throughout the placement?

No, but please no more than two employers per week.

Do students have to stay in the local area?

No, they can go anywhere, provided the employer has employer liability insurance.

Are there any places students cannot go to?

Dangerous places of work such as mines, quarries, abattoirs, and most commercial building sites will not be given the go-ahead.

New safeguarding guidelines which came into effect last year also state the students cannot complete a placement if they are working alone with just one adult, for example, shops which only have one employee present at the time.

Can students complete their placement with family members?

Students can work with parents and siblings without the need for employer liability insurance. If they wish to work with the wider family, employer liability insurance is required. As per the new statutory safeguarding policy, we are also unable to authorise students working alone with an aunt / uncle / grandparent etc.

My child cannot decide between two different placements.

We encourage students to complete as many work experience placements as they can. If they cannot decide between two different placements, they could complete one in the official work experience week, and another during the spring or summer holidays.

Will the students receive feedback?

Yes, after each work experience programme we send feedback forms to employers which are returned with the students. This will not only help them to improve their skills further but also serves as a reference for future employment.

When do the work experience forms need to be returned by?

We have suggested to students that they should look for a placement as soon as possible. A number of other Southampton schools and colleges take part in work experience in the spring and students leaving it to the last minute may find themselves being unable to secure a placement in their preferred company.

Feedback forms need to be returned to the Careers Department by the end of January to enable us to carry out the necessary health and safety checks.