



# **Altrincham Grammar School for Boys**

## **Work Experience Booklet**

**Guide to finding a placement**

# **What is Work Experience?**

The Department of Education (DfE) definition of work experience is: 'A placement on employer's premises in which a student carries out a particular task or duty, or range of tasks and duties, more or less as would an employee, but with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience'

Furthermore then Gatsby benchmarks specifically indicate that learners should have a first hand experience of the workplace by the end of Key Stage 4 and an additional opportunity in KS5 also.

Work experience gives young people the opportunity for involvement in a workplace, helping them to understand how the world of work operates and how it differs to school. It also gives businesses the opportunity to raise their profile in the local area and to be involved in developing the workforce of the future.

Over the last 30 years it has become the norm for all students to have some experience of work, whilst still at school, and this generally takes place over one week around the age of 15.

## **The benefits of work experience**

When done well, work experience brings tangible benefits for young people, employers, schools and society as a whole. It can increase young people's confidence and promote social mobility by challenging stereotypes in relation to their career aspirations. A recent report states that many young people believe that work experience helps to develop their employability skills and that around a quarter of students are offered part-time employment following a work experience placement.

## **How do I choose my work placement?**

Finding a work placement is not always easy. It requires patience, determination and a willingness to compromise and be open minded.

One of the main purposes of work experience for school age students is to give you the experience of 'work', 'going to work' and 'working with adults'. It could be argued that it does not really matter where you work. You may have your sights set on becoming an architect, doctor, engineer scientist, solicitor etc. These are jobs that require years of training so think carefully what working in a professional area might mean. For example, working at a doctor's surgery is most likely to involve work in reception, with some observation if you are lucky. However, if this is what you really want to do, don't be put off, but remember such placements can be hard to find. Maybe look for placement in a related field, in this case perhaps work in a pharmacy or chemist's shop.

So, how do you decide what work placement is for you? You don't necessarily have to choose something that you want to do as a job when you leave school. The aim is for you to experience life in an adult workplace. It might even be an advantage to do something different.

Why not start by writing down a list of as many possibilities that come to mind – use the following questions to help you do this:

- What do I want to do when I leave school?
- What are my interests and hobbies?
- What am I good at?
- What new skills would I like to learn?
- What jobs have I seen people doing that I think look interesting?

and **remember**

- Be positive – work experience, whatever the placement, is an opportunity to learn new things and find things out about yourself
- Many boys who take on jobs that they would never have dreamt of doing have a very rewarding time, and you don't have to do the job for life!

Other questions that may help you decide.

- Is this a realistic work placement for a 14/15 year old?
- What sort of work am I likely to be doing? Will there be enough to do? Will I be bored?
- Would this placement give me experience of tasks related to a profession that I am interested in?
- Is this work placement an opportunity to try something completely different?

## **What makes a great work experience placement?**

The best placements are often those in a sector about which you feel passionately, and/or one in which you have opportunities to do 'hands-on' tasks.

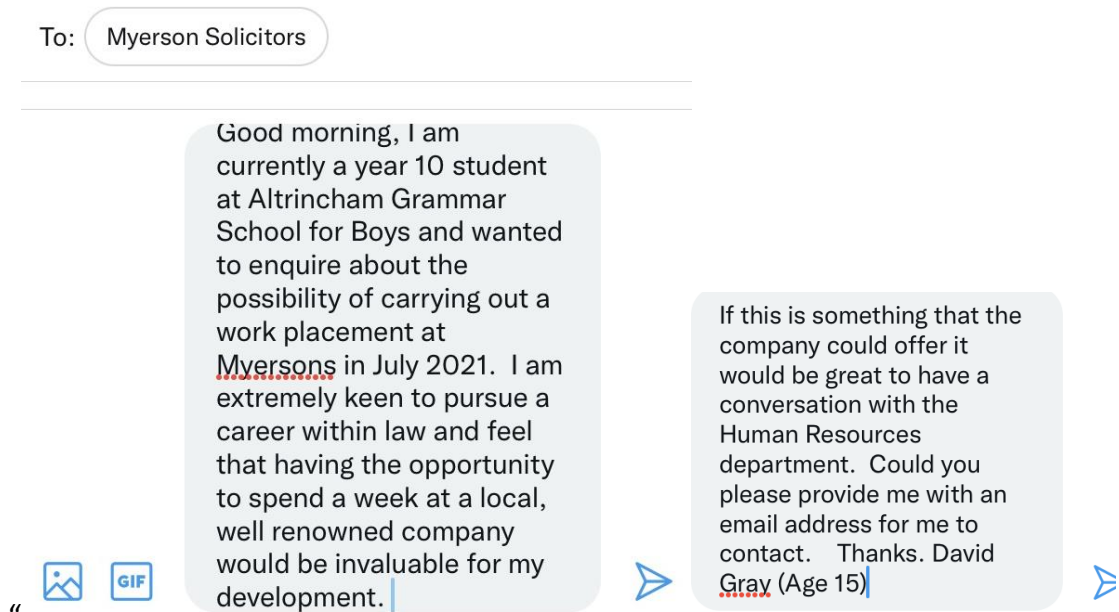
There is still a great deal that you can learn though from a work experience opportunity which may not align directly to your future aspirations. This includes positive outcomes relating to the generic experience of work and the recognition and development of employability skill and a better understanding of your career aspirations.

## How can I find my work placement?

Now that you have some ideas for work placements, you can make a start looking for a business that will offer you the kind of placement you want. If your parents, relatives, friends or neighbours know someone in that line of work that could be a useful way of getting a placement. Otherwise you could search for your own placement.

Having decided what type of business you are looking for, you could approach this in a number of ways:

1. For some placements you could approach a local business with which you are familiar. Look them up on the internet or social media. If it is a small business such as an optician or shop you might make a direct approach and call in person. Larger businesses would expect a more formal approach by letter or email.
2. Often the simplest way to find the placement you want is to use google and find local companies in your chosen sector that way. Many businesses have websites, so once you have found the name and address of a business you could try to find their website and see exactly what they do and if there is a named person to whom you could write or email.
3. Alternatively, use social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter or Facebook to direct message companies and enquire about the possibility of carrying out a work placement. As with writing a letter or email make sure you introduce yourself, state you are a student at AGSB and indicate your age and why doing a placement at that company appeals to you. An example of this is below.



4. You could look at the local papers and see what companies are advertising in there that might be of interest to you. Then look up their details on the internet.

# What will you learn while on work experience?

Work experience can be useful in helping you to develop knowledge and skills that will help you in adult life, including general workplace and employability skills.

## General workplace skills

Almost every work placement will help you develop general workplace skills, for example:

- experience of the workplace and workplace culture and routines
- working alongside adults
- carrying out new tasks
- fitting in with the 'workplace culture'
- developing self confidence

# How do I make contact and get my work placement?

Once you have found some companies that carry out the business that you are interested in for your work placement you need to make contact and see if they can offer you a placement.

There are four ways to contact a company

## 1. In person

If it is a local shop that you are interested in working in then it might be a good idea to go along in person when the shop isn't very busy and enquire about a placement.

If you are calling in person you should:

- a. Think about what to say before you call (*who you are, your school, that you want a work placement in pharmacy/retail etc because....., when you need the placement for and for how long, would they be able to offer you a placement, if yes – what are working days/times etc – get them to fill in the details of the placement form*)
- b. Be presentable (ie clean and smart appearance)
- c. Ask to talk to the manager/owner
- d. Introduce yourself and explain why you are there (see a.)
- e. Thank the employer for their time (and offer if successful) even if they cannot offer a placement.

## 2. By phone

Use of the telephone is perhaps the least preferred way of contacting a company. You must be really confident to do this. The person you are speaking to does not know you, cannot see you, may be busy at the time you call, and it is so easy just to say no. If you do choose to phone the employer, you should:

- a. Think about what to say before you call (*who you are, your school, that you want a work placement in pharmacy/retail etc because....., when you need the placement for and for how long, would they be able to offer you a placement, if yes – what are working days/times etc – ask them for contact information to fill in the details on the placement form*)
- b. Speak clearly and slowly
- c. Ask to speak to the manager/owner or someone in the Human Resources Department
- d. Introduce yourself and explain why you are phoning (see a.)
- e. Thank the employer for their time (and offer if successful) even if they cannot offer a placement.

## 3. By letter

This is the most common way of contacting large companies. If you are sending a letter it can be hand written or typed on the computer. Ideally it should be no longer than one side of A4 paper.

In a large company, contact the **Human Resources department**. In a smaller company you will usually need to write to the **Manager**.

**Remember** – this is the first contact you will have with an employer and you therefore want to create a good impression so check that the following are correct:

- Presentation and layout
- Spelling
- Company name and address
- That you have the right dates for your work experience

#### 4. By email

Email seems to be the most effective way to contact a company these days as it is very convenient for the company to reply to you. You will probably need to look at the company's website to get an email address.

In a large company, contact the **Human Resources department**. In a smaller company you will usually need to write to the **Manager**. If you are sending an email and don't have an individual's name or email address at the company mark your email at the beginning or in the subject line "FAO Human Resources" or "FAO The Manager".

**Remember** – this is the first contact you will have with an employer and you therefore want to create a good impression so check that the following are correct:

- Presentation and layout
- Spelling
- That you have the right dates for your work Experience

**If you are sending a letter or email contact several companies** as you may not receive a reply or they may take weeks to say "no". Don't get disheartened by this, it is nothing personal, they are usually just very busy! However, because of this it is important to approach several companies so that you have a number of options open to you.

# What do I do next?

You must have a confirmed placement **BEFORE** you enter the details. You will need dates and employer contact details and an email address for the employer who will confirm the placement and add documents that are required. Year 10 students must select Mrs Lord as the school coordinator.

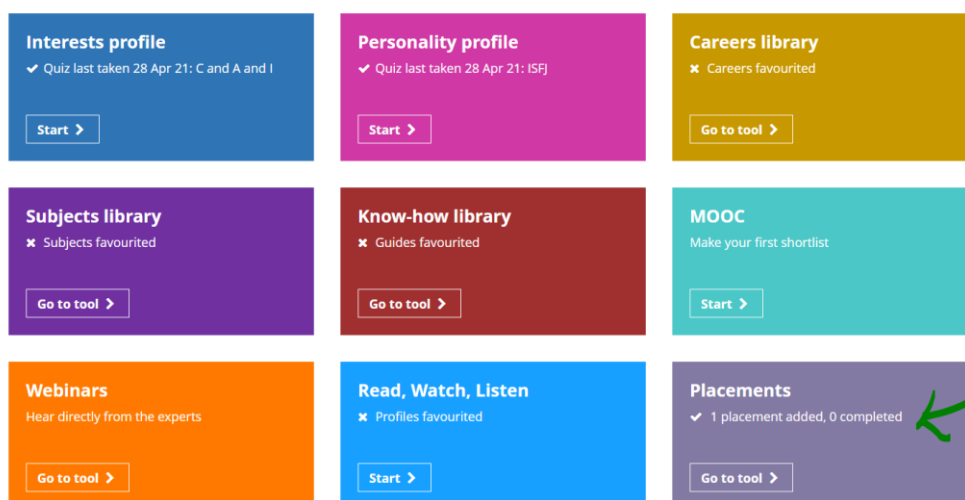
At a basic level Unifrog provides a series of forms which need to be completed by specific people at specific times; when one person finishes their form, the system automatically messages the next person in the chain.

- For students to get the ball rolling, then reflect on the placement afterwards;
- For the employer to plan a brilliant placement (we give them a little library of expert guides);
- For the employer to also follow and confirm that they follow best practices in:
  - Insurance;
  - Health and safety;
  - Risk Assessment;
  - Covid safety guidelines;
  - Data protection (eg the UK GDPR);
- For the parent / guardian to agree to the placement and stay informed of what's happening;
- For the school / college coordinators to have an overview of the whole process, across multiple students;
- For the school / college to build up a database of employers who have previously hosted placements, showing things like student ratings, the sector, and whether the employer is up for hosting virtual or in person placements.

This is an overview video (you will need to be on Unifrog to view it)

- <https://www.unifrog.org/teacher/overview/faq/486>

You must have a confirmed placement **BEFORE** you enter the details. You will need dates and employer contact details and an email address for the employer who will confirm the placement and add documents that are required. From your Unifrog home screen – select placements





## What does each form consist of?

Here are all the questions we ask in each of the forms. Bear in mind that there are some differences in the questions for in person and virtual placements (for example for virtual placements we don't ask how the student is going to travel to get there!), and some questions lead on to further questions (eg if a student says they won't live at home as normal during the placement, they have to explain where they are going to live).

- **Student initial form**

- School placement coordinator name
- Name of business / organisation
- Start and End dates
- Employer placement lead name and email address
- Placement address
- Is this the workplace where you'll be based throughout the placement?
- Will you live at home as normal during the placement?
- How will you travel to and from the placement?
- Do you have any special needs, illnesses or injuries that may affect your placement?
- Parent / guardian (who must also be your emergency contact) name and email address?
- Do you agree to abide by confidentiality, safety, and absence rules?

- **Employer initial form**

- Employer placement lead name, job title, email address, phone number
- Company's sector and number of employees
- What languages do students need to be able to speak?
- Overview of the placement
- Does the placement and its environment carry any specific health risks additional to a low risk workplace?
- Dress code
- Is PPE or other special safety equipment required?
- Working hours
- Eating and refreshment arrangements
- Confirm that your Employers' Liability Insurance policy covers work placements
- Insurance provider, policy number, expiry date
- Confirm that your company has a written, up to date and appropriate Risk Assessment
- Confirm that your company has a written, up to date and appropriate Health & Safety policy
- Confirm that your company will abide by data protection and privacy law

- **Parent / guardian agreement**

- Name, email address and phone number
- Confirmation that outside of normal school environment and hours, student is not school's responsibility
- Agreement for the student to take part in the placement

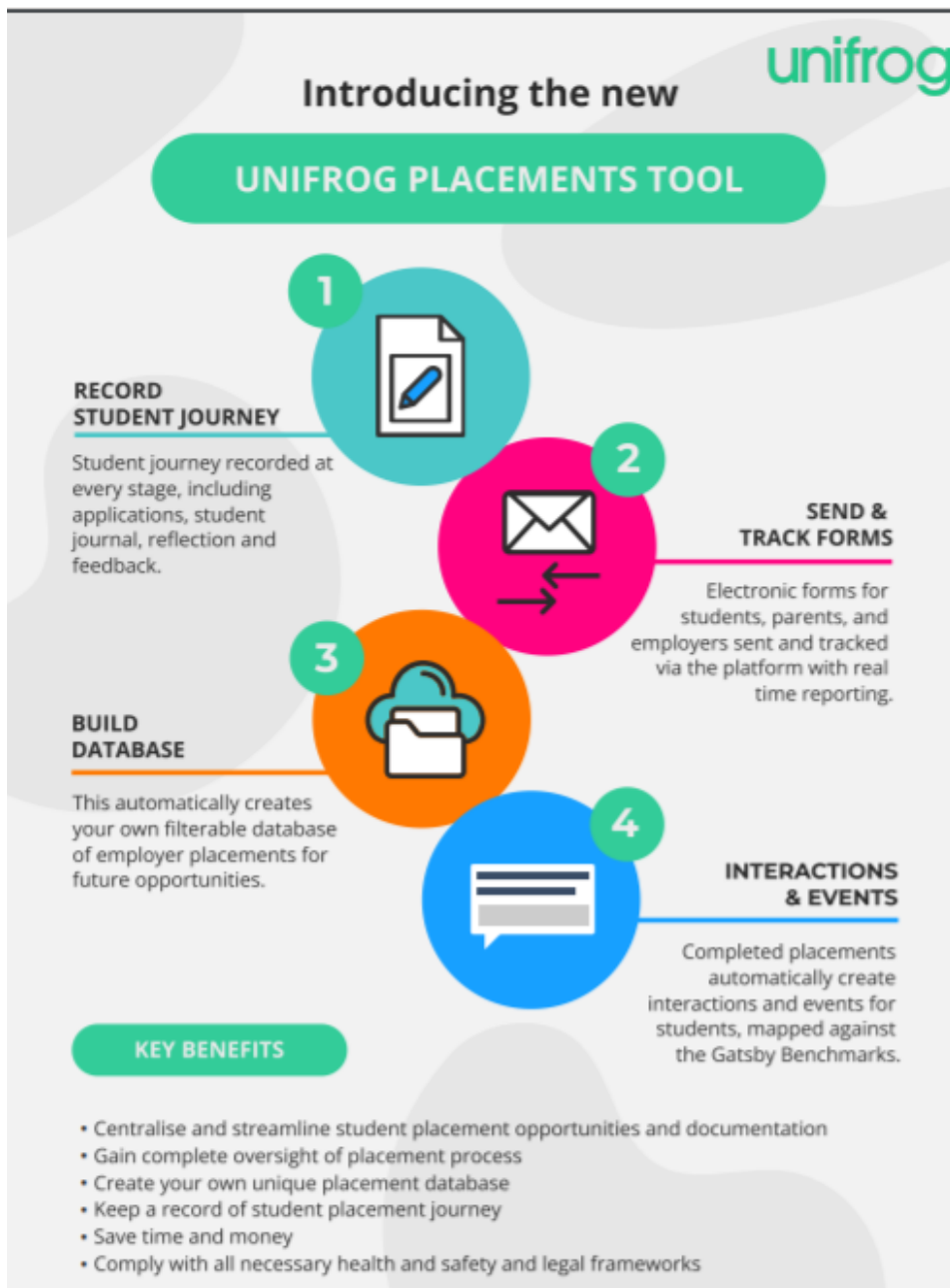
- **School permission**

- Name of school staff
- Permission for the placement to happen

- **School check-in**

- Name of school staff
- Check-in type (phone, in person, email)
- Check-in date
- Check-in notes

- **Employer review form**
  - Employer placement lead name
  - Did the placement happen?
  - Punctuality and reliability rating
  - Overall attitude rating
  - Communication rating
  - Problem solving rating
  - Teamwork rating
  - Independence rating
  - Strongest competency, and example
  - What you think the student should work on
  - Would you be happy to host another placement student?
- **Student reflection**
  - One thing you learnt through doing the placement
  - What you did during the placement of which you're most proud
  - How doing the placement impacted on your plans for the future?
  - How likely is it that you would recommend this placement to a friend?



**Please Note that your work experience placement should take place between the 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025, if for whatever reason your placement is on alternative dates you will be expected to be in school during these dates.**