

Work Experience  
Student Handbook 2022

POST 16



**ST HILDA'S**  
COLLEGE

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WISDOM  
HOPE  
COMMUNITY  
DIGNITY  
EQUALITY

## Information for students

As part of the year 12 curriculum, all year 12 Students are expected to complete a week's work experience.

All Year 12 Students will have the opportunity to spend at least one week on work experience in a placement of their choice during July 2021.

At St Hilda's College, work experience represents the vocational link between students' courses, any higher education plans and career interests. In the Sixth Form, decision making is an important responsibility of all students, and work experience will be an integral part of their decision-making process.

Work experience is essential for you as a student, it will enable you to develop skills and attitudes required for the world of work as well as developing an awareness of your own strengths and weaknesses in a work-related situation.

For most of you, work experience in Year 12 will be the first stage of your search into higher education opportunities and preparation for the decisions which you will have to make in September and October of Year 13.

A meaningful work placement can provide valuable experience of the work environment and help you decide on future careers or study options and demonstrate your potential to future employers or universities.

The main objective is for you to gain skills, knowledge and experience of the working day, as well as developing your understanding of employer expectations; such as getting to work on time, making a useful contribution to your team, being enthusiastic about work you have been asked to carry out and being polite and helpful.



Many 16-19 year olds will benefit more from work experience than students at Key Stage 4 because they are better placed to begin preparation for progression into employment or higher education.

Work experience comes in many varieties and even if your stint as a volunteer in a charity shop doesn't sound as glamorous as a high-flying internship with a big company, it is still important to make whatever level of work experience you have really count. Work experience gives you important skills that can be adapted to different courses and work places.

There are many activities and experiences that you can engage in to make you a more 'rounded' applicant e.g. extra-curricular activities, clubs, sports, volunteering, gap year plans - all very important strings to your bow. However, relevant work experience is increasingly viewed as an essential part of any good application for higher education and the world of work. For candidates equally good on paper applying for courses / jobs, it could well be the work experience which tips the balance in favour of one candidate over the other. This is the case more than ever nowadays given the greater competition for places in Higher Education, Apprenticeships and the job market. Indeed, more and more universities are offering work experience years as part of Higher Education courses and many graduates owe their jobs to such placements.

## Finding a placement

The College recognises the growing maturity and independence of our students and we consider that it is appropriate that they arrange their own placements.

This means that **students** will have the responsibility for seeking advice, discussing ideas, selecting companies, writing letters of application and arranging interviews. It will be especially important for students to negotiate a programme of work which suits their requirements.

The College will provide a full support programme, together with careers, tutorial and subject teachers' advice and guidance.

## What work can I do?

Any work experience will have transferable skills you can utilise in the future. Below is a suggested list of a few areas that you can work in;

- Administration - to include; office work, banking, building societies, solicitors and local authorities.
- Construction – to include; bricklaying, carpentry and joinery.
- Engineering – to include; mechanical and service engineering.
- ICT – to include; programming, game design, web design and CAD.
- Catering – to include; hotel work, restaurants, takeaways, local authorities and care homes.
- Caring work – to include; schools, nurseries, playgroups, hospitals, nursing and retirement homes.



There are also a few areas that you cannot work in because of the potential dangers.

- Work with certain chemicals.
- Work with potentially dangerous machinery.
- Work at heights; e.g. painter or roof work.
- Work with corrosive or flammable liquids.

If you are unsure as to the suitability of a placement you are advised to discuss the offer with Miss Shaw.

## How to find a work placement

You need to decide what you want to do and where you want to go. It is advisable to select several companies to approach as not all will prove successful.

- Try and find out who the best person is to write to within the company before writing your letter – look on their website or telephone.
- Use the sample letter available on the 'shared area' of the college network.

- If you are accepted you must let Miss Shaw or Miss McDonald know the details of your placement immediately. Remember: If you are lucky enough to gain more than one placement then out of courtesy please contact the company you are turning down and politely decline their offer.

A relative or family friend may be able to help you secure a placement but it is advisable that you are placed in a different department so that you can achieve the full benefit from meeting new people and acting independently.

### Approximately two weeks before you are due to start your placement you will need to contact your employer to confirm the following:

- Remind them who you are, what school you are from and that you will be attending the placement.
- Ask what is your working day? - Start and finish times.  
*Remember try to always arrive 5 minutes early*
- Ask if there is a dress code.
- Ask about lunchtime arrangements – how long is the lunch break and do they have a canteen.
- Ask who you need to report to on your first day.



### While on your placement...

- Be on time, polite and smart. If you think you are going to be late it is good manners to let the employer know.
- Be prepared to carry out tasks that you are requested to do with enthusiasm. Try not to be rude. Be proactive - ask for more work if you run out.
- Make the most of your placement by enhancing your personal skills and development and learn about the company by asking questions.
- Listen to instructions and follow company policies and procedures.

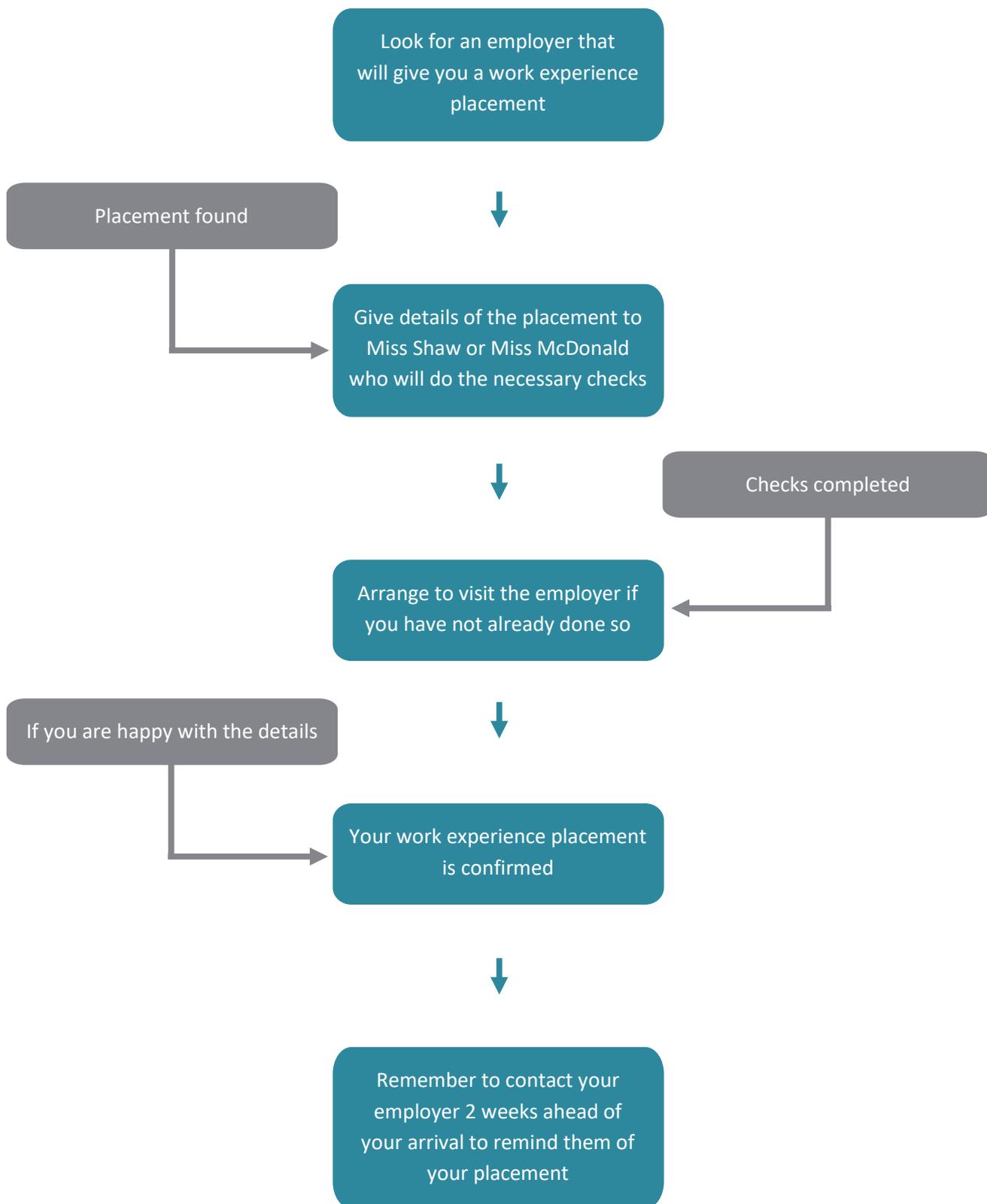
### Please make sure that...

- You don't carry out any duties you consider to be dangerous – working at heights, with chemicals.
- You contact the employer and the school if you are off sick.
- Most importantly - enjoy your placement and make the most of it!

### At the end of your placement

- Remember to say thank you.
- Complete your Self Evaluation Form.
- Ask your employer to complete and company stamp the Employers Reference on the last page of your booklet. (This is important as it will be used as a second reference for your UCAS application).

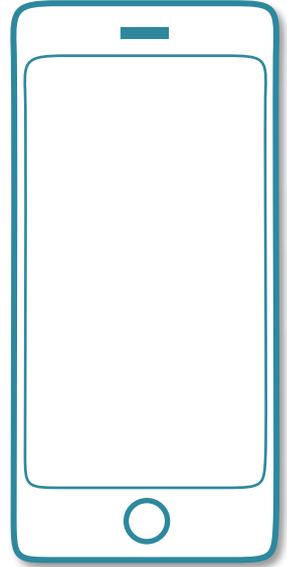
## Preparing for work experience – a quick run through



## Tips for contacting employers

### What to do before making the phone call...

- Have a pen and a piece of paper in front of you.
- Work out and write down exactly what you want to say, including questions you may want to ask.
- Make a note of the person you want to speak to and their telephone number.
- Make sure you have enough **credit** if you use a pay-as-you-go mobile telephone.
- Make a note of days you cannot meet or attend an interview.
- Make sure you call from a quiet place.
- Be pleasant and courteous.
- Do not be rude or aggressive.



### But... What Do I Say?

When you ring, your first words might be: *“Good morning/afternoon, I wonder if you could help me? I am enquiring about the possibility of doing a work experience placement at your company” ...*

### What if I don't get a reply to my letter?

If you don't receive a reply within three weeks give the employer a phone call. You cannot keep waiting forever – be proactive!

If the employer says NO you know where you stand.

*“Good morning/afternoon, I wonder if you could help me? I wrote to you a few weeks ago about the possibility of a work experience placement. I have not received an answer. I wondered if you had received my letter.”*



## How to arrange a work placement

### By telephone

- Contact employer(s) by phone and ask to speak to the manager, owner or person in charge. Remember to be polite and courteous, speak clearly and prepare what you are going to say.
- Explain who you are, which school you are from and the dates when you would like the work experience.
- Find out what sort of work would be undertaken.
- If the employer agrees to a placement, please ensure that you get a name as a first point of contact including, full address and contact phone number.



### By letter or e-mail

- Prepare a letter using the sample template provided by your Work Experience Administrator.
- Explain who you are, which school you are from and the dates when you would like the work experience.
- If you receive an offer of a placement, make sure you contact them to confirm your acceptance and thank them.



### In person

- Call on the employer at an appropriate time – try to avoid first thing in the morning and lunch time
- Make sure you are smartly dressed, courteous and confident – be image conscious
- Have the dates you want work experience to hand.
- If you receive an offer of work experience, you will need to find out what you might be doing and if it's suitable. Make sure you've got a contact name, phone number and address.



Should you be unable to secure a placement or need advice or guidance on specific areas of work, please contact Miss Shaw or Miss McDonald who will assist.

# Sample letter to employer

1 Any Street  
Any Town  
Any City  
Any County  
Postcode  
Home Telephone: 01234 567 890

Date

Contact Name  
Company Address  
Address 1  
Address 2  
Address 3  
Postcode

Dear Contact Name

I am currently a student in Year 12 at St Hilda's CE College, studying in **(insert subjects)**. As part of our school curriculum, I need to arrange a week of work experience anytime during Monday 5th July to Friday 9th July 2021.

I am very interested in a career in **(insert career)** and would appreciate the opportunity to undertake a short period of Work Shadowing to enable me to gain a realistic insight into this profession and working environment.

I am available for placement from **(date)** to **(date)**. I would be pleased to attend an interview, outside school hours, at your convenience.

My CV is enclosed and I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely

**[Sign]**

**[Print your name]**

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# Sample CV

## Personal Details

Name: Jane Smith  
Address: 1 Any Street, Any Town, Any City, Any County, Postcode  
Telephone: 01234 456 789  
Email: jsmith@blueyonder.com

Date of Birth: 30th May 2000

## Personal statement in support of my application

I am currently a Sixth Form student at St Hilda's College Church of England Academy. I am honest, hardworking, reliable and well-organised. I have a positive attitude, lots of patience and a good sense of humour. I really enjoy working with other people and have a very caring nature. My favourite subjects at school are Biology and Physical Education. I am currently doing some voluntary work at the PJC Summer Play Scheme for children with disabilities, I really enjoy helping the children to get involved with the play activities and find this work very rewarding.

My career ambition is to become a Physiotherapist and I am seeking an opportunity to gain some relevant experience and an insight into this career before making an application to Higher Education next year.

## Education and Qualifications

### St Hilda's CE College

#### A' Level/BTEC Target Grades (to be taken June 2019)

Biology	A
Physical Education	B
Psychology	B
Art	A

#### GSCE Grade

Maths	A
English Language	A
English Literature	B
Biology	A
Chemistry	A
Physics	A
French	A
PE	A
Graphics	B
ICT	A



## Other Skills and Qualifications

Duke of Edinburgh Silver

Life Guarding Certificate

Community Sports Leader Award Full Clean Driving Licence

## Employment and Work Experience

**Jacksons Superstore** - November 2016 to Present

Part time sales and customer service assistant. Duties include cash handling and dealing with customer enquiries and complaints.

**PJC Summer Play Scheme** - July 2014 to August 2014

Volunteer, helping to organise play activities for children with disabilities

## Hobbies and Interests

I like to watch and participate in all types of sport, especially football. I play for a local Sunday league side and I am in the school basketball team. I also enjoy family holidays to different countries; I find it very interesting to learn about different cultures and lifestyles. I regularly go to the cinema and enjoy reading fiction and socialising with my friends.

## References

Ms A Howard  
Head of College  
St Hilda's CE College  
Croxteth Drive  
Sefton Park  
Liverpool  
L17 3AL  
Telephone: 0151 733 2709

Contact name  
Job title  
Organisation/Company  
1<sup>st</sup> line of address  
2<sup>nd</sup> line of address  
3<sup>rd</sup> line of address  
Postcode  
Telephone: 0123 456 7890

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# Sample thank you letter

Name  
School Address

Contact Name  
Company Address  
Address 1  
Address 2  
Address 3  
Postcode

Date

Dear **Contact Name**

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to do my work experience placement at **[name of workplace]**.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time especially **[write what you felt was the best part of the experience – some positive comments. You may want to include comments on... what you learned about the occupation and/or what you gained from the experience]**.

I feel that it will help me with my future career plans as it helped me to understand what working life is like.

I found the staff very helpful and friendly but would particularly like to thank **[insert name of person you worked most closely with]** for all of the help and support **[she/he]** gave me.

I would like to thank you once again for giving me this valuable experience.

Yours sincerely,

**[Sign]**  
**[Print your name]**

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## Work experience providers

Many students have concerns about finding work experience which is relevant to their university course or future career. However, we know that finding these opportunities can be hard, and that you might change your mind later down the line. That doesn't mean that the work experience you've done is irrelevant. Finding any type of work experience which builds upon your key skills is so much better than nothing at all. It's about the skills you develop whilst on your work experience that counts more than the companies or organisations where you did your work experience. **Having said that, if you hope to enter some careers, for example teaching or nursing, you will be expected to have completed relevant work experience before applying for your degree course!** Make sure you research your career interest carefully.

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

Increase your chances of securing work experience by...

- **Doing the research** – identify the field of work you wish to enter. Make a list of the jobs you are interested in, then get online and write down the names, telephone numbers and addresses of local businesses that offer these kinds of jobs. You can use a business directory like [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com) or [www.thomsonlocal.com](http://www.thomsonlocal.com) to help you search for local companies/organisations involved in the kind of work that interests you. **Go to the organisation's website.** Read about the work they do, their culture and latest developments. Big companies sometimes have a special section on their website that will tell you how to apply for work experience. With smaller companies you will need to find their details and call them or send an email to see if they have anything on offer.
- **Getting on the phone** – telephone the organisation and ask if they could offer you work experience. Send a CV with a cover letter or covering email!
- **Be specific** – always address your letter or email to a specific person if you can rather than a 'Dear Sir/Madam'. **Top Tip: Find out the name and address/email address of the company manager to write to.** Don't send your email to a generic address like [info@mycompany.com](mailto:info@mycompany.com) unless you are told to, as it might go straight into the spam bin. Be brave and pick up the phone if you can't find the information online.
- **Ask around** – what do your parents, friends' and other relatives do? Can they help or put you in touch with someone? Make sure you give them the exact dates that you need the placement for. You don't have to go somewhere that has done work experience placements before, but it helps if they have, as they will understand what to offer you.



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**Ms A Howard** - Head of College