



## **WORK EXPERIENCE/ INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT POLICY**

### **1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE:**

Riverside College is committed to developing the employability skills and opportunity of gaining employment of all its students. Work experience is a key component in the process of developing the skills, qualifications and experience necessary in the workplace. The purpose of the policy is to outline the procedures to follow to ensure high quality work experience. Depending on the programme learners will either complete an Industrial Placement (IP), Extended Work Experience (EWE) (for Health & Social Care, Early Years and Animal Care) and/or work experience.

Riverside College believes that work experience opportunities should be:

- available to all students (modifications may take place where the wellbeing or suitability of learner is called into question)
- relevant to a wide range of subjects
- vocationally relevant to the students' study programme or intended destination
- assessed as safe from both a health and safety (including COVID Government guidelines) and safeguarding perspective
- monitored, with support provided by appropriate curriculum-based staff and placement staff
- integrated into the course scheme of work (for extended work experience) and to the individual study programme (through ASPIRE)
- subject to appropriate student preparation and induction
- contributing to an enterprise culture in the curriculum

The College should also ensure that:

- work experience opportunities are beneficial and rewarding to employers. (The College is committed to meeting the needs of the local area and seeks to improve its understanding of the requirements of employers through learning and collaborative processes).
- students on a work placement perform and conduct themselves in an acceptable manner and reserves the right to refuse or withdraw a work experience opportunity where a student is not behaving to acceptable standards
- students undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where that is a requirement of the place of work (this applies to health care and early years)
- students are supported using inclusive practice (when deemed appropriate) which may involve support to develop skills needed, such as assistance travelling to and from placement.

### **2. SCOPE**

Associated information and guidance:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Customer Relations Management (CRM) Guidelines
- Education Funding Agency (ESFA) Statutory Guidance: Funding Arrangements for 16 – 19 Education

### 3. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Roles and Responsibilities – see Appendix A

- 3.1 All students, where appropriate, are entitled to a work experience opportunity that takes place in a safe and healthy environment where due consideration is given to all aspects of their work.
- 3.2 Depending on awarding body/industry requirements and curriculum timetabling, work experience may be organised to take place on a regular on-going basis or in a block or as a one-off activity (for extended work experience learners only). These events may take place within the College or offsite depending on the activity.
- 3.3 The Heads of Schools/Programme Area Leaders (PALs) decide the most appropriate model (block-week or one day per week placement etc). This is a mandatory part of the study programme for some BTEC vocational courses Level 2-3 (Health & Social Care, Early Years, Animal Care and T Level programmes **only**).
- 3.4 Each study programme will identify the number of hours allocated to work experience (min of 30 hours is expected for each student). Definitions of 'work experience' activities can be found in Appendix B.
- 3.6 Learners with Youth Referral Orders, serious health concerns, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) limitations and other such concerns may complete a modified programme.
- 3.7 Risk assessment - The employer must inform all students on work experience about any significant risks to their health and safety. Control measures must be put in place to mitigate any risks or concerns. The risk assessment is completed before the student starts placement and parents of under 18's must give parental consent.
- 3.8 The College has two health and safety ratings - low/medium and high risk. Most areas are considered low/medium risk. In all low to medium areas, students are given the health and safety form to complete with the employer, parent and themselves. All required paperwork must be completed before any placement begins at any new centre. Existing and vetted placement opportunities will have completed one initial health and safety check and may not require additional

paperwork each time. High risk areas include all Engineering and Construction subjects and these will require a full assessment completed by a Health and Safety officer, per organisation. All completed health and safety checks are logged on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

- 3.9 If there are any on-going concerns around safety or safeguarding whilst on placement or travelling to a placement the following steps must be taken:
- raise the concerns with the placement provider immediately; and the College Safeguarding Team.
  - establish what the provider will do to rectify the situation, and by when;
  - consider whether to withdraw the student from the placement.
  - Ensure that the student receives appropriate support from the Safeguarding team when there has been a health and wellbeing or safeguarding concern raised. All concerns must be taken seriously including reports of sexual assault, abuse and/or harassment. Relevant referrals must be made including reporting to the police in cases where a crime may have been committed.
  - if there are significant health and safety risks, contact the relevant enforcing authority (Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the environmental health department of the local council) for further advice.
- 3.10 SOLAR Lite (College App system) is used to evaluate students on Extended Work Experience and Industry Placements. Feedback will help prepare them for the placement as well as monitor and review their experience. Employers should provide feedback about the student, which can be used for future reference and to inform their future learning.
- 3.11 Each student must complete a medical form before embarking on any work experience. This must be countersigned by parents or carers if the learner is under 18.
- 3.12 Students and trainees, including young people, on work experience are regarded in health and safety law as employees. Students on work experience placements must be provided with the same health, safety and welfare protection given to other employees. Restrictions may apply to the types of work which young people, including students on extended work experience, are allowed to do.
- 3.13 Reasonable Adjustments - Students who have disclosed a disability covered by equality legislation have the right to request reasonable adjustments in the work place as in College. The Work Experience/Industry Placement officer and curriculum tutors should liaise to ensure correct adjustments are agreed and established before a placement is undertaken. The adjustments needed in the work place are likely to be different from those requested in College.
- 3.14 The College is able to liaise with employers where the adjustments needed are likely to be unfamiliar or appear challenging. The College team can support with the setting up of work placements for any students with disabilities covered

by equality legislation including long-term medical conditions, mental health issues and specific learning difficulties.

### **3. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Monitoring and review will be carried out by the relevant team involved and the Industry Placement team and will be different for each curriculum, EWE and IP. This will then be overseen by SMT and reported to Governors.

## **Appendix A – Work Experience**

The Industry Placement officer will:

- Prioritise all essential placements.
- Support in the setup of desirable placements (work load permitting).
- Deliver/support tutorials (work load permitting) as requested.
- Work to relevant policies and procedures.
- Develop processes and documentation
- Conduct health and safety checks/ensure that they have been completed in co-ordination with the Health & Safety officer
- Assist in the training of Curriculum staff.
- Support Head of Schools in maintaining and forging effective links with employers.
- Work with Apprenticeships team/Employer Services and staff to identify additional employers to provide placements.
- Manage the College's work experience database for effective monitoring of work placement provision and provide regular update reports as required.
- Ensure consistent implementation of work placements' health and safety and safeguarding policies.
- Develop awareness among employers of the special needs of the College students to have placements which maximise learning and the development of employability skills.
- Obtain feedback from students and employers and curriculum staff to be feed into the quality systems as appropriate.
- Identify assist curriculum teams to locate placement opportunities, which are suitable for students' aptitudes, skills and abilities.
- Ensure that all placements have been vetted for health, safety and safeguarding compliance, whether the work experience co-ordinator has found the work placement or the student has found their own placement opportunity.
- Undertake vetting Risk Assessments where appropriate.
- Ensure that all necessary documentation is completed.
- Provide support for any student experiencing difficulties on their placement, in conjunction with their tutor.
- Facilitate the evaluation of placements, both from the student and employer perspective at the end of each academic year.
- Advise the Health and Safety officer of any accidents reported by the student or the employer during the work placement.

### **Heads of Schools (For extended work experience ONLY) and their teams will:**

- Identify and confirm work placement providers details with the work experience co-ordinator.
- Identify with students the type of placement sought to ensure that the placement will offer appropriate and relevant experience.
- Co-ordinate and administer any necessary DBS checking and parental/student consent paperwork.
- Ensure that students are made aware of any potential risks in the specific work environment and explain the risk assessment process.

- Ensure that students are aware of who to contact if there are any safeguarding concerns whilst on placement
- Undertake pregnancy risk assessments, where necessary.
- Ensure that students do not attend any work placement before health and safety checks/ risk assessments have been carried out.
- Ensure that any reasonable adjustments, required as a result of a risk assessment/Additional Learning Support (ALS) requirement, processes are put in place.
- Liaise with employers and students in relation to the particular situation where an employer and/or a student has an issue about the placement activity, the initial information about the 'problem' situation is likely to come from the work experience co-ordinator as the first point of contact for employers.
- Where the student has found their own placement, ensure the placement details are vetted and relevant to the programme.
- Link with ALS to ensure that appropriate support is put in place where necessary.
- Undertake placement visits where appropriate. To outline the objectives of the placement before it commences (especially if it is a new employer of the College), to observe the students practical ability in a real working situation, to monitor students during placements or to visit on the request of a work experience co-ordinator.
- Record information gathered as part of the review of progress on work placement of individual student in their Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

#### **Students will:**

- Work with curriculum staff/work experience co-ordinator to help find work placements in a timely fashion, in line with the requirements of the tutor.
- Behave appropriately whilst on placement and sign up to the College Code of Conduct. Remember that they are representatives of the College when on work placement.
- Notify the placement and the course tutor/ attendance officer in the event of absence for any reason on the first day of absence and on subsequent days.
- Notify the work experience co-ordinator and tutor of any accident sustained whilst on placement.
- Notify the appropriate person if a safeguarding concern arises.
- Not move placements without prior agreement from the work experience co-ordinator.
- Record how the placement has assisted with learning.
- Be dismissed from a placement due to poor behaviour or non-attendance issues (other than certified sickness). (The work experience co-ordinator reserves the right, depending on the circumstances, to ask the student to find their own replacement placement. This may result in a delay if the premises has not been vetted previously.)
- Be subject to the College disciplinary system while on work placement.

## **Appendix B – Employability Options**

### Definitions of Work Experience Options

#### **Career Advice and Guidance:**

All learners are given the opportunity to learn about careers in the local areas and further afield. Some of these will be specialist to certain curriculum areas.

#### **Employer talks:**

Provision of information by individuals active in the labour market about the occupation, sector and company in which they work. This includes relevant guest speakers and master classes.

#### **External work placements:**

Formal work placements co-ordinated by the Industry Placement officer or College curriculum staff (eg in Health, Social and Child Care). Historically, where the placement is a mandatory part of the course, staff liaise directly with employers to establish what placement pattern they can offer, for how long and for how many students. They also liaise with curriculum staff to ensure that students are matched to suitable placement opportunities. Curriculum staff are responsible for ensuring College policy on student visits is applied.

#### **Internal placements:**

A formal placement, offered by one of the departments within College, such as Human Resources or Marketing. The Department will have determined what placement pattern they can offer and would interview students who have applied through the central placement vacancies site on the student intranet.

#### **Mentoring:**

Pairing of students with adults in the community to support their learning about work/other issues related to career development – this will include the ‘Day in the Life’ activity that the Career College students will be undertaking as part of their work experience. Students will accompany senior staff in relevant organisations to learn about a typical day in their chosen industry.

#### **Mini-enterprises:**

Form of enterprise learning where students set up an actual or simulated business.

#### **Project work:**

A model of teaching and learning that focuses on a theme/task. It allows for a wide scope of self-determined action for both the individual and small group of students within a general framework of a structured activity. It could involve delivering a project on behalf of a local employer.

#### **‘Real work’ environment:**

As an example of this could be a local hair and beauty salon that offers students from the curriculum area a chance to work in a commercial environment and develop their skills. This operation is managed by the curriculum and work experience coordinators, including any necessary risk assessments.

**Taster Days:**

A period of time (less than half a day typically) whereby students are exposed to working life with an employer. The day may include team-building, role-play, undertaking certain functional tasks. These days are attended by students in small groups, accompanied by curriculum staff or caseworkers.

**Trips and Visits:**

Organised trips that have relevance to the curriculum area and demonstrate 'real working life or equipment' will count towards work experience.

**Volunteering:**

The giving of time and energy for the benefit of others. It often provides an opportunity for individuals to develop their skills with different types of work.

**Work simulations:**

An operational representation of work tasks outside of a real work situation. For instance, teams of students taking part in business games to resolve business-related problems and using role-play, teamwork, decision-making and problem-solving skills.

**Work visits:**

Organised visits to employers to enhance the students' knowledge of different employer opportunities.



## **Appendix C - Health & Safety**

All industrial placements and extended work placements must have a Health and Safety risk assessment completed before students can attend. Low to medium health and safety forms are available on the SOLAR resource bank.

### **Low-Medium Risk – all areas (except Construction and Engineering)**

Placements that are low to medium risk will require students taking an health and safety form to the employer to complete which needs to be returned to their tutors before the placement starts. Tutors to collect all forms and pass on to the work experience coordinators. All areas will start as low to medium risk (excluding Engineering and Construction) which remain high risk. Please consider when setting deadlines that low to med forms will need to be assessed by a work experience coordinator, inputted, and if the placement is deemed high risk, then a Health & Safety officer will have to visit the employer's premises and do a risk assessment prior to the student starting. Tutors will be informed by the work experience coordinators if a placement is deemed high risk.

### **High Risk – Construction and Engineering areas**

High Risk placements: The Health and Safety officer will need to visit the premises and complete a full risk assessment. Tutors will also need to give students an under 18 parental consent form (available from Moodle) which needs to be returned to the work experience coordinators. Please complete a **high risk placement list pro forma (available from the SOLAR resource bank)** and send to the Advice, Careers and Employment Advisor at least 4 weeks prior to placement as visits will need to be booked in advance and completed before the student starts their placement.

## **Appendix D: List of all associated paperwork for industrial placements**

All relevant documentation is now held on THE Student Intranet.

## **Appendix E - College Employability Statement**

At the College we believe that employability is a central focus within all our education programmes and we put the achievement and success of our students at the heart of everything we do.

Our focus on employability begins long before we even enrol our first student. Every one of our new and existing programmes is designed by a team of academic specialists from the College and our partner universities working closely alongside experts from within the profession or industry concerned. That way, students can be sure that the course is academically strong, and meets the needs of the people who may be future employers.

To apply all of this effectively for our students, our team of academic and industry specialists' work together with employers to ensure that employability remains at the top of everyone's agenda. We develop a wide range of employer led projects and opportunities as well as supporting work-based learning or placements for all our students. During the academic year the course team are constantly working in the background to keep employability at the centre of student learning.

To ensure the day-to-day focus on employability remains strong we involve employers in delivery and assessment in many ways. On some courses, there are key sessions throughout the academic year delivered by industry experts as an integral part of the course team, enabling current updates on the very latest developments. We organise regular employer events and also bring in guest speakers who have local, national or even international reputations, and a passion for sharing their expertise to maximise employability opportunities.

The College has introduced VESPA to ensure learners are focussing on their own skills and employability development.

Every one of our students on study programmes has timetabled tutorial sessions (CDS), and the content of these includes practical advice in support of writing CVs, applying for jobs and identifying employability skills; Course tutors supply job references, which are targeted firmly upon the skills of the industry professional or industry most values.