



**Salesian Secondary College**

## **Policy Governing the Management of students on Work Experience**

### **Mission Statement.**

The mission of the Salesian Secondary College, Pallaskenry, is to provide the best possible education based on Christian/Catholic values in partnership with parents and within a caring community. This school incorporates the characteristics of Salesian Education as practised by St. John Bosco in his “Preventive System”.

In order to achieve this we aim to provide opportunities for students to:

1. gain skills, knowledge and understanding that will be of lasting value throughout their lives;
2. develop each individual’s talents to the level of his/her personal potential for the benefit of Community and Society;
3. develop the characteristics appropriate to a member of a Christian community, including those of mutual respect and concern for others, irrespective of race, colour, gender or creed;
4. promote the physical and emotional well-being of students by developing self-esteem, personal responsibility and the ability to live and work with others;
5. work with staff committed to these ideals.

### **Definition.**

For the purpose of this policy, the phrase “work experience” placement refers equally to “work experience” and “work shadowing” placements.

### **Rationale.**

This policy was developed in order to provide a context and a direction for the management of work experience programmes for students of Salesian Secondary College. Such programmes attempt to introduce pupils to quality work experience/work shadowing within a supervised framework that provides learning objectives and assessment as well as realistic and positive feedback.

### **Scope.**

This policy applies to all students of Salesian Secondary College as they go out on work placements / shadowing. It also applies to students of the college who undertake work experience programmes in the college itself.

### **Stakeholders.**

The following stakeholders are involved in work experience programme in Salesian Secondary College.

1. Insurance – Willis Insurance Brokers / Alliance
2. Parents / guardians
3. Pupils
4. TY Programme co-ordinator /TY Team
5. Guidance teacher
6. Deputy Principal
7. Principal
8. Board of Management
9. Employers

### **Responsibilities.**

#### **School Management.**

- School personnel are bound by Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and teachers are bound by the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers 2012 and the Children First Act 2015.

- The Board is responsible for ensuring that school policy reflects appropriate guidelines around Garda vetting and Child Protection Procedures.
- The Principal and Senior Management Team are responsible for enabling the Placement Coordinator to follow the guidelines of this policy.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the college insurers of placements.

### **The Placement Coordinator**

Work experience placements occur in 5<sup>th</sup> Year, LCVP and Transition Year. In addition, some students will seek to arrange placements in preparation for college applications. In every case, a coordinating teacher will play a role in working with the student before, during and after placement. This may be the Transition Year Coordinator or a member of the TY team, the LCVP or Business teacher or the Guidance Counsellor.

The placement coordinator's role is to:

- To articulate the purpose of work experience
- To integrate work experience into the Transition and Fifth Year Programme
- To ensure all stakeholders are informed about work experience
- To keep documentation of work experience clear, coherent and consistent
- To prepare pupils prior to placement
- To monitor pupils when they are on work experience
- To debrief pupils after work experience
- To assess work experience at pupil, employer, parent/guardian and teacher levels
- To build evaluation into the work experience programme
- To acknowledge employer assistant and ensure employers receive feedback from the school when work experience concludes

### **Parents/ Guardians.**

- Parent / Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their son / daughter is enabled to travel safely to and from his / her placement

- Parent / Guardians are responsible for ensuring that he / she is dressed appropriately (in terms of professional / health and safety attire) and that any failure of the employer to supply safety equipment or clothing is notified to the school
- The Parent / Guardian is responsible for ensuring that the student has packed lunch , where this is necessary.
- Parents / Guardians also have a responsibility to report any matter of concern which their son / daughter raise concerning the placement with the school, and to allow school authorities to address these concerns directly with the employer. Parents/ Guardians are asked NOT to address any grievance directly.

#### **The student.**

- The student has a responsibility to uphold the good name of Salesian Secondary College, to remember that they represent the school and his / her family.
- She / he is required to commit to the tasks assigned to him / her wholeheartedly and positively and to contribute positively where he / she can
- He / she bears the responsibility of reporting concerns about the placement to a parent / guardian or to the school directly. The student has NO responsibility for addressing concerns himself / herself and is, in fact, prohibited from doing so in the first instance.
- She / he is responsible for seeking to understand the culture of the organisation where the placement occurs and to observe and understand interpersonal relationships in the workplace. This particularly refers to acceptable practices in the workplace, including the use of a mobile phone and other personal technology, taking breaks, chewing gum, use of foul language etc.
- The student may have many questions about the requirements which the employer will have of him / her. These questions should be asked as soon as is practicable, if not before the placement commences.
- Although a work placement is, by its nature, a learning experience, the student is responsible for presenting himself / herself in a way that might be considered “professional” in an adult, to the best of his / her ability,

- He / she is responsible for his / her attire, grooming and personal hygiene during the placement.
- He / she is responsible for the security of his/ her personal belongings.

### **The employer.**

The College is grateful to all employers who offer placements. School authorities are hopeful that placements fulfil the objectives of the programme. Where this is not the case, the College hopes to liaise with the employer to improve the placement. The College reserves the right to end the placement, if terms continue to be unsatisfactory.

There is no obligation on the employer to compensate the student on placement.

### **Aims and Objectives of Work Experience.**

1. To develop job seeking skills
2. To understand the many elements in working life
3. To obtain knowledge of a chosen career
4. To observe and experience professional relationships in the workplace

### **Organisation of the work placement.**

1. There are 3 weeks work experience for Transition Year and 1 week for Fifth Year students
2. A letter is sent to each parent/guardian to inform them when work experience will take place.
3. Work experience is organised collaboratively by both students and teachers involved in the programme
4. The list of work experience pupils and their placements is given to the Principal in advance of the commencement of the work experience placement
5. All employers will be contacted by the students in advance of the start of the placement, along with the school's insurance letter. This letter will also document the school's rationale for work experience
6. All pupils should meet with their employer the week before work experience commences

7. All employers are contacted mid-week by a teacher where the pupils progress is documented

#### **NOTES**

- Salesian Secondary College strongly encourages students not to work with a family member or in an existing part time job and we make our wishes known to parents /guardians.
- When possible, all foreign national pupils will be paired with a native pupil for work experience.
- Employers are made aware of pupils with special educational needs.
- No pupil will work on a construction site or with a tradesman unless they are over 16 years of age and have completed a Safe Pass course
- A pupil who obtains work experience in a hospital or nursing home must complete a manual handling course if their duties include lifting patients.
- Salesian Secondary College has ratified its Garda Vetting Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement and other policies which have a direct bearing on this policy. Students may require vetting. This is completed through the school, in advance of a placement, when parents / guardians have supplied relevant information to the Placement Coordinator.
- It is worth noting that often, the value of a placement is that a student learns that the work is *not* for them.

#### **Preparing the student for his / her work placement.**

The college's Wellbeing Programme prepares students for working relationships, managing change and conflict, self-care, personal hygiene and self-organisation.

The following material is covered with students during career guidance:

1. researching careers of interest
2. CV preparation
3. job seeking skills
4. interview skills
5. health and safety act
6. safety signs

#### **Sourcing a placement.**

The school has a large resource of local employers. A high proportion of our employers are past pupils or parents of students in the school.

Students are encouraged to look for a variety of work experiences in their choice of placement. Equally, students should consider looking at areas which will give them new experiences, rather than simply opting for what is convenient.

Students who source their own placement must liaise closely with the Placement Coordinator.

### **Monitoring placements.**

It is our policy to investigate any new employer who is taking part in our programme. This may be carried out by a phone call or where possible a visit to their premises prior to the pupil taking up the work experience placement.

Our pupils are monitored during the week by a teacher by visiting their place of work or by a phone call to the employer

### **Debriefing.**

While on work experience placement, pupils complete a daily report of their experience. The report focuses on four main areas:

1. The job
2. Health and safety in the work place
3. Technology in the work place
4. Roles and duties of the people and relationships

This report is submitted to the Career Guidance Department on the student's return to school.

When pupils return to school, they share their experience with one another during Career Guidance class. The pupils also complete a debriefing worksheet.

### **Reflection.**

***Pupils' reflection and evaluation.***

After their work experience pupils reflect upon and evaluate their experience on work placement. This assessment is then compared with their employer's evaluation.

***Parents' reflection and evaluation.***

Parents are encouraged to give continuous feedback to the coordinator and teachers about the work experience programme. This can be done during the parent teacher meetings, through the Parents' Council, through the use of the school journal or by phone. If a Parent Guardian would like direct feedback about their son/daughter's work experience placement, he/ she is invited to contact the school office and arrange a meeting with the work experience coordinator or Principal.

***Employer's reflection and evaluation.***

During the work experience placement, employers receive an assessment/evaluation sheet and are asked to complete it and return it in the SAE to the work experience coordinator.

**Proper Procedures.**

***When a pupil is sick***

If a pupil cannot attend his / her placement, he / she is asked to ring the employer first, on the morning of the absence, and then the school to talk to the work experience coordinator.

***When the pupil must take part in a school activity.***

The employer is informed prior to the work placement about a school activity and asked if the student could be allowed to take time off for this activity.

***When a pupil is not happy with the type of work they are doing.***

Pupils are asked to continue with this work and also inform their work experience coordinator as soon as possible so that it can be investigated. The pupil is asked not to directly engage with the employer about their grievance.



**When a pupil has been caught stealing.**

If such a case occurs the work experience coordinator, Deputy Principal and Principal will investigate the allegations.

**When an employer is not satisfied with the pupil's level of work.**

The work experience coordinator will meet with the pupil to discuss this matter. If no improvement is noted in the pupil's effort, his / her placement will be terminated and this will be dealt with by the Principal.

**When there is a child safeguarding concern or a health and safety concern.**

Parent / guardians should converse with their child during the placement and be aware of the challenges faced as he / she enters a very adult environment. Any concerns which arise should be communicated immediately to a member of the SMT or the Placement Coordinator.

**Evaluation.**

School management will accept feedback from staff, students and parents made through the proper use of the appropriate channels ie staff meetings, student committees and PSAC. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by Management.

This policy is incorporated into the body of School Policy from the date of ratification.

Proposed date of review: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of ratification: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A.

### Work Placement Guidelines.

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#### Work Placements: Teacher Guidelines



Work placements are a popular activity for TY students, and form an important part of both the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Vocational (LCVP) programmes. These placements can be invaluable learning opportunities for students and are often referred to by them as one of the highlights of their school year.

Work placements allow students to not only learn about the world of work and explore possible career options but also to actively develop skills for future enterprise and employability.

Organising a work experience programme for students can be a complex task. Depending on resources available, geographical location and students needs, schools have implemented a variety of approaches to organising placements.

For the LCVP and LCA, work placements are an integral part of the programme, typically last one week (LCVP) and two weeks (LCA), and are organized by the programme teachers. For TY, some schools will prefer to send out students on one or two week blocks while others find that a system of weekly day-release works better.

Sometimes a single teacher or the Guidance Counsellor will be responsible for the programme, while in large schools the tasks may be divided among a core team. There is no one right approach, but it is essential that responsibility for the programme is clearly allocated so as to ensure a structured and beneficial programme for all.

#### Key elements of a successful work experience programme include:

- Ensuring clear communication about the programme to all parties involved, i.e. students, parents and employers
- Preparing students prior to their work experience so as to ensure that it is a valuable learning experience
- Monitoring – putting in place a system to monitor students when on work placement
- Documenting – ensuring appropriate records and consent forms are kept
- De-briefing and assessing the students on completion of their placement
- Evaluating the programme at the year end



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#### BEFORE THE PLACEMENT...

##### Work Placement: Student Worksheet

This Worksheet introduces the idea of a work placement and provides details on some of the most important factors a student needs to be aware of. It includes sections on:

1. Finding a placement
2. Setting realistic expectations
3. How to make contact by phone and letter
4. What employers want
5. Identifying key skills and setting targets and objectives
6. Dealing with problems if they arise



#### DURING THE PLACEMENT:

##### Career Skills: Career Investigation Workbook

One of the purposes of work experience is to enhance the employability of eventual school leavers by providing them with the opportunity to understand and practice what is needed to be successful in the workplace. In preparing students for work experience, Guidance Counsellors and teachers can work with the students to help them understand the different competencies that make someone employable and provide guidance on how students might improve on these competencies during work experience.

If you choose to get students to complete a career investigation while on a placement, then this workbook can be used to collect and store the information. The career investigation teaches students to be more aware of the work they are doing/observing and to discuss the work in more detail. It includes sections on:

1. Describing the career
2. Knowledge requirements – what areas of study are important for the job
3. Courses that lead to the career
4. Key transferable skills observed
5. Skills developed
6. Specialist knowledge requirements



#### AFTER THE PLACEMENT:

##### Career Skills: Self Assessment Exercise

This exercise can be used after the work experience to allow students to reflect on any transferable skills developed so far, and to identify areas of weakness that may be addressed in a further work experience or training.

##### Work Placement Summary

This is a short summary worksheet that facilitates a simple de-briefing and reflection on a work placement.



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#### Preparing the Students

Ideally students should be prepared for work experience through regular timetabled classes where there is an opportunity to:

- introduce them to how the work experience links in to the school curriculum
- explain the objectives of the work experience
- help them develop an understanding of the personal and key skills required in the workplace
- guide them in how to research and source placements
- advise on appropriate behaviour and health and safety issues during placement
- inform them of assignments they will need to undertake before, during, and after the work experience, e.g. logbooks or diaries.



#### Getting the most out of the Placement

There is much that can be learned during the course of a work experience if students are appropriately prepared, and know what to look out for. The LCA and LCVP programmes have specific learning outcomes associated with work placements, and credits are awarded to students for their final Leaving Cert exam. Outside of these programmes, work placements need some focus to maximize the time being spent. It is an opportune time to encourage students to complete a Career Investigation, get familiar with many Transferable Skills, build up their CV, and determine whether a particular line of work appeals to them or not.

CareersPortal.ie has a number of worksheets available to teachers to download from the Guidance Professionals section of its website which can assist in the preparation of students.



#### Communication

The communication process around the whole work experience needs to be handled in a planned and coordinated way so as to ensure that everyone involved and affected is kept fully informed.

- ✓ Students need to be informed of the plans early in the school year so that they have adequate time to prepare and find placements.
- ✓ Parents need to be informed of proposed dates, insurance issues, consent requirements and may be invited to assist in providing placements where possible (see the worksheet: Work Placements: Parent Guidelines).
- ✓ Employers need to be communicated with before, during and after placements (see the worksheet: Work Placements: Employers Guidelines).
- ✓ Staff – as the absence of the students on work experience will affect all other teachers lesson planning, all teachers involved with the class groups need to know the dates and duration of the work experience well in advance.

#### Sourcing Work Placements

The practice of sourcing work experience placements varies from school to school. Some schools encourage students to find their own work experience placement while others have developed partnerships with local employers and it may be the role of the Guidance Counsellor or programme coordinator (TY, LCA, LCVP) to assign students to the various placements available or it may be a combination of both approaches.

Ways for the student or school to source work placements:

- Contact employers who provided placements for your school students in previous years. If it is the students' job to source placements, information could be provided to students on where placements were secured previously.
- Approach businesses in the local area to support the school. If the student is making the approach, explain the process of making a phone call and following up with a letter (see the worksheet: Work Placements: Student Worksheet).
- Encourage students to network with family and friends to find out what opportunities might be available. In terms of finding out what it is like to work in a new different environment, it is usually recommended that students do not opt to work in a family business or where another family member is working but perhaps the placement could be made available to another student in the school. The school can also directly correspond with parents – parents can be a very valuable resource to schools suggesting possibilities, providing contacts and in some cases providing actual placements.
- Many well known organisations and public bodies run transition year work experience programmes every year. They usually have an application process and early closing date and a lot of interested applicants. Research a list of these organisations and display details with closing dates etc on the student notice board.



### Monitoring

The extent to which schools can monitor students while on work experience will vary depending on school resources and the number of students on work experience. A short visit by a member of staff to a student on work experience can be important in reassuring students, employers and parents of the value the school places on the work experience programme. It provides an opportunity for the teacher/coordinator to observe the work-places at first hand which can help when reviewing any subsequent employer feedback reports. It also helps to strengthen the links between the school and local employers.

When making initial contact with employers, whether it is through direct phone contact or an information sheet that the student makes available to the employer, make sure to advise that you may wish to visit the premises while the student is on placement.

Where it is not feasible to visit every student while on work placement, it is advisable to make phone contact with the employer and separately with the student to ensure that the placement is going smoothly. Students and employers should also be clearly advised as to what process should be followed if a student is absent from the placement for any reason or if an incident or accident occurs.

### Debriefing & Assessment

To complete the learning process, it is important for students on completion of their placement to have the opportunity to reflect on their experience and what they gained from it. This might take the form of written assignments (in the case of LCA & LCVF), completing evaluation worksheets (as mentioned above) or simply engaging in a classroom discussion.

Some of the debriefing questions which students should discuss are:

- how the experience has influenced them or changed their perspective
- the skills they used, observed, needed
- competencies they may need to improve on
- insights they gained into the world of work
- how relevant the experience is to their subject choices and future career decisions

Getting each student to present a summary of their experience to the whole class is recommended as it develops many core skills as well as provides insight into the working life of a variety of career areas to all students.

Most employers will also be happy to complete a student evaluation form that provides some useful feedback for the student, and for the school. A sample form is available at the back of this document. Students should also be encouraged as part of the completion process to write 'Thank You' letters to the employers.

Participation on work experience programmes would normally form part of a student's overall assessment at the end of a school year. Student's diaries and reports, employers' reports and perhaps notes made by a visiting teacher could all form part of the assessment. In addition the assessment should reflect the effort a student has put into the whole process from preparation to debriefing.

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### Documentation

There can be a lot of documentation required to support an effective Work Placement programme. The range of documentation which may be required include:

- Briefing sheets for employers and parents (see CareersPortal.ie 'Work Placement' series)
- Material for classroom work with students (see CareersPortal.ie Worksheets)
- Parent Consent Forms
- Insurance Indemnity documents for students to give to employers. Note: school insurance company should also be notified of student work placement programme and the document should contain insurance policy number (Sample below - print on school headed paper)
- Student CV's and application letters
- Contact details for all proposed placements, including students and employers contact details
- A database of past work placements
- Employer Report/Assessment forms (Sample below - print on school headed paper)

### Evaluation

To ensure that the work experience programme is meeting the needs of students and employers, the programme should be reviewed on an annual basis with input from employers, parents, students, management and staff. The evaluation could be carried out by issuing questionnaires to the different groups, i.e. students, employers parents and/or meeting with representatives from each group to hear their perspectives on the success of the programme and suggestions for improvement.



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### Work Experience Insurance Cover

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This school actively participates in a Work Placement programme for our students. As part of this programme, each student is encouraged to gain Work Experience during the school term, and during normal working hours.

The Pupil will be available for a period of: \_\_\_\_\_ days during the following dates: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

The school's insurance policy has been extended to cover each pupil during this period of Work Experience. The policy details are as follows:

The Pupil understands that they must comply with any conditions you lay down regarding activities, safety, and confidentiality. They are also given instructions beforehand about attendance, punctuality and codes of behaviour in the workplace.

The school appreciates your assistance in accommodating one of our Pupils. If you require any further details, please contact me at the school.

Many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Pin:  
Mobile:

### Employers Report on Work Experience

Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Work Experience / Duties

	Not Observed	Observed	Assessment	Feedback	Comments...
Attendance & Punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personal appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attitude towards job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to follow instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to complete jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Practical skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to handle technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relationship with supervisors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relationship with staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please add any other comments you wish to make about this participant...

Would you be willing to take our students for work experience next year?  
YES ☐ NO ☐ If yes, contact details: \_\_\_\_\_