

# 10 Top Tips to Finding Meaningful Work Experience

Many schools provide students with an opportunity to do either one or two weeks' work experience during Year 10 or 11. This is a really exciting opportunity for your son or daughter and obviously needs planning if they are to get the most from this experience.

1. Firstly your son or daughter will need to consider **what they want to gain from their work experience.**

Do they want to use this as an opportunity to:

- gain insight into a particular career, they have an interest in? E.g. physiotherapy, journalism, speech and language therapy etc.
- give them an understanding of a sector/career to help them decide if they would be suited to this area?
- help them get a 'foot in the door' for a future weekend job?

2. Having established what they want to gain from their work experience, the next step is to **research where they might be able to gain this work experience.** It is probably easiest to start by researching on-line to find the name of local organisations or companies. Remember to use contacts you may already have in these areas - it will obviously be easier if you know someone who works there. **Make sure you start early!** John Lewis, for example, recruits work experience students in October to start the following June/July.

3. **A DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is required** is required for individuals aged 16 or over and if their work involves regular contact with children or vulnerable adults.

4. Start by making a quick phone call to **establish if the company or organisation offers work experience to pupils.** The last thing you want to do is invest time and effort into a company that does not offer work experience.

5. If they do offer work experience, ask them to **outline what your son or daughter needs to do next.** They will probably want to see a copy of their CV and after that if they are interested will arrange a meeting or interview to discuss the opportunity in more detail.

6. If they don't offer work experience or seem unsure, your son or daughter should take this as an opportunity to **sell the concept and benefits to them.** Remember for the company it is:

- **Two weeks unpaid work** in a variety of the unskilled/semi-skilled roles. If your son or daughter has got some specific skills that they

can offer even better. IT, artistic, creative and organisational skills for example might be very useful to a small company.

- **Excellent PR.** I have seen a letter of thanks from a work experience student displayed at my local garage. I was very impressed that they support the community.

7. **Health and safety is important** and work experience students should be covered by the employers' existing workplace risk assessments. Do let your son or daughter's school know of your arrangements so that they can undertake any further health and safety checks if necessary.

8. **Agree the working arrangements before you begin.** This is particularly important if this is the first time the company has taken on a work experience student. You don't want to find that your son or daughter has been assigned to do the washing up for two weeks! It might be useful to get in touch with the company again about two weeks before the agreed start date to confirm dates and times. This will also act as a reminder to them.

9. **Make sure your son or daughter keeps a diary or at least some notes about the things they have learnt.** This is particularly important if they are doing this experience to help decide if they want to go into that area of work. They might also find these notes useful to refer to, if and when, they apply for university or other opportunities.

10. **Be sure that your son or daughter formally thanks the employer** at the end of the work experience period. If appropriate they could let them know what they enjoyed and learnt from the work experience. This might help the company when taking on other work experience students in the future and may be useful for your son or daughter if they need a reference in the future.

*If applicable please check current government guidelines regarding Covid 19 restrictions at the time of commencing work experience.*

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