Information for Workplace Providers

Workplace Learning

Workplace learning aims to extend the school curriculum by enabling students to gain practical real work experiences designed to assist them in their transition from school to work and further study. This is undertaken at a worksite without the direct supervision of a teacher.

Students will observe a variety of work and may undertake supervised work appropriate to their skill level.

Students can be involved in workplace learning in two ways:

- **Structured Workplace Learning (SWL)** involves an integral link to an accredited Vocational Education and Training (VET) program being undertaken by the student. The onsite activities are negotiated as they may contribute to the formal assessment of competencies in the workplace, according to the training package requirements.

- **Work Experience** involves a short term industry placement, which enhances their experience and understanding of the work environment as well as informing career options.

Students undertaking SWL or Work Experience should not exceed 240 hours per year. Any request to vary the agreed hours must also be negotiated between the school, parent/caregiver, workplace provider and student and not by the workplace provider and student alone.

**Placement of students**

Every teacher has a duty of care towards every student under their supervision. Their duty is to take reasonable care to protect the student from foreseeable risk of injury.

In the context of workplace learning, this means that teachers and schools need to take reasonable steps to ensure that students are not placed in a work situation which may pose a risk due to factors which include the student’s age, gender, capacity and maturity.

Schools understand that when students undertake workplace learning:

- the student/s will be adequately supervised by the workplace provider.
- the student/s will be safe and protected from harm.
- that the workplace provider holds appropriate insurance.

Schools must ensure that a teacher or staff member visits the student personally or makes direct telephone contact with the student at least once during their placement. This requirement is part of the duty of care and cannot be discharged. Such a visit or contact should include liaison with the workplace provider or worksite manager.

**School expectations during workplace learning**

To encourage a positive and meaningful learning experience for students undertaking workplace learning the following represent a common, not necessarily a complete, list of expectations.

Students are required to:

- behave as a responsible ‘commencing’ worker while on placement, conforming to the identified rules, instructions and expectations of the workplace.
- understand that workplace learning may involve confidential and sensitive information which must be kept private.
- take responsibility for their own safety ensuring their actions do not put themselves or others at risk.
- complete ascribed activities set by the school to support their learning during the placement.
- seek advice from a responsible adult if they feel unsafe in the workplace environment.
- wear the appropriate footwear/protective clothing/uniform as requested by the workplace provider.
- seek participation and performance feedback from the workplace provider.

Workplace Providers are asked to:

- organise appropriate supervision and a child-safe environment to ensure the safety and well-being of students.
- provide an engaging program of learning for students with an opportunity to observe and / or participate in a variety of activities. Schools may be able to assist in this area.
- complete an evaluation on completion of the students work placement.
- immediately contact schools of incidents or where concerns are raised regarding specific placements.

Please Note: Workplace providers have a duty to provide an induction for the student/s, specific to their work site, prior to them commencing workplace learning.

**Essential student training prior to workplace learning**

Prior to students attending workplace learning, schools have the responsibility to ensure participating students undertake an appropriate general induction program. As relevant, the program will deal with a range of matters from the following:

- Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2012 (or as amended from time to time)
- Equal Opportunity (EO) Act 1984 (or as amended from time to time)
- Children’s Protection (CP) Act 1993 (or as amended from time to time)

Work Health & Safety (WHS)
Students have the right to a safe and healthy workplace. Under the WHS Act 2012 workplace providers must make sure the workplace is as safe as possible. This includes machinery and equipment, developing safe work practices, training workers on safe work practices and providing personal protective equipment.

Also as part of the WHS Act students as a worker are also responsible for safety. They must take care of their own and other’s safety by:

- always following health and safety instructions
- using protective equipment as required and by
- reporting workplace hazards

Child safe environments
The right to feel safe and free from harm at all times during workplace learning is an expectation of all participating students. Workplace providers should ensure that all employees are aware of the special responsibilities associated with working with young people and of the consequences of any abuse. Child Protection legislation also applies to students undertaking workplace learning programs.

Examples of unacceptable conduct by a workplace provider or their employees include inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature; obscene language of a sexual nature; suggestive remarks; actions, including showing of publications, electronic media or illustrations which are sexually suggestive; jokes of a sexual nature; obscene gestures; unwarranted and/or inappropriate touching; sexual exhibitionism; personal correspondence with a student in respect of the workplace provider’s or employee’s sexual feelings for the student; sexual intercourse with a student and deliberate exposure of students to the sexual behaviour of others.

Additionally, students must not be treated in a manner that may be psychologically harmful or that would constitute physical assault. This would include pushing, grabbing, pulling or hitting a student as well as berating, humiliating or belittling the student.

Age
Students must be 15 years of age or older before participating in a formal workplace learning program.

Hours of work
Workplace learning should occur during the normal working hours for the industry in which students are placed. If these working hours are unusual when compared with normal school hours the workplace provider should consult with the school.

Working with family
It is not recommended for students to undertake workplace learning either in a business owned by family or in an organisation where there is a pre-existing social relationship with any of the employees.

Travelling to work placement
It is the students’ responsibility to make arrangements for getting to and from the work place.

Remuneration
Students engaged in workplace learning in South Australian must not be paid or receive a reward of any kind for the work undertaken during their placement. All insurance, legal and industrial arrangements in relation to workplace learning exists on the understanding that a workplace provider/worker relationship is not established.

Insurance
The Workplace Learning Guidelines require students to be covered by insurance in the event of injury or damage during an approved placement.

Students are required to be covered by an appropriate Personal Accident and Injury Insurance. This is the responsibility of the school.

Workplace providers are required to hold the appropriate level of Public Liability Insurance.

It is the school’s responsibility to advise students and families that they may not be covered if any subsequent injury or damage during work placement was the result of the student’s negligence or failure to follow clear and reasonable instructions.

Workplace Learning Agreement Form
The Workplace Learning Agreement form must be approved and signed by all parties prior to the commencement of workplace learning. The original completed Workplace Agreement Form must be kept as a school record at least until the student has reached the age of 25 years.

Variations to an approved and signed Workplace Learning Agreement form, must involve notated consultation between all signatories to the agreement.

Schools are responsible for providing a copy of the completed and approved Workplace Learning Agreement form to the workplace provider. Workplace learning must only commence when the approved documentation is completed and copies held by all respective parties.

Concerns during the placement
Students are advised that should they feel uncomfortable in their workplace they should talk about their concern with the workplace supervisor. If the problem still continues or they do not feel comfortable talking with the workplace supervisor they should make contact with the teacher nominated by their school. It is of paramount importance that workplace providers contact the school as soon as possible, where concerns are raised about a student’s placement.