

# Information for Employers



Dear Partner,

Welcome to West Dunbartonshire Council's Employability Skills Programme. We are delighted to be working with you in order to help our pupils prepare for their next steps and develop skills for learning, life and work. Some of you may have worked with school pupils in the past and will already be aware of how rewarding this can be, but for those of you who have not been involved with the programme before and would like some advice about working with your trainee, this guide offers some useful ideas.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to us.

**Thank you**

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## **Background information**

After a Scottish and local review of work experience, West Dunbartonshire Council concluded that the Work Experience Programme was no longer fit for purpose. A new programme of work placements was initiated in session 2009 -2010. Working in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council Skillseekers, the programme began with S4 leavers in session one, S5 winter and summer leavers in session two and in session three, S6 pupils were involved. Placements are designed to be adaptable and flexible. There is not a 'one size fits all' policy, it is very much pupil and business centred. In year 4 of the programme, the Education Employability Transition Officers moved their base into schools with a view to further embedding Skills for Learning, Life and Work within the developing curriculum

Placements have ranged from one day a week for 6 weeks, to one full week, or a day visit/ employability taster. The placements differ in length to accommodate business constraints along with pupil need. Supported study and exams, coursework and school responsibilities all have to be taken into consideration when arranging a placement.

By taking account of the pupil's interests and career aspirations, it has been possible to more accurately match the needs of the pupil which has helped to maintain their enthusiasm and desire to be successful. In 2009, at the start of the programme, 81 pupils attended work placements. Since then, the programme has grown considerably with 548 pupils going on an experience last year.

Employers play an important part in the organisation and preparation for a pupil placement. As well as providing feedback after the placement, employers are involved in the Health and Safety check, planning of the timetable of events and induction of the pupils.

The support from local employers allows the young people of West Dunbartonshire to explore their interests and future careers aspirations. It also gives employers an opportunity to help shape the workforce of the future. Partnership working is an important part of the transitional process for young people into positive sustained destinations, whether that is into employment, training, further or higher education. Allan Shields and Rachael Doyle, our transition officers work closely with schools and employers to facilitate placements and support links within the curriculum.

## **Why become involved?**

Benefits for the employer:

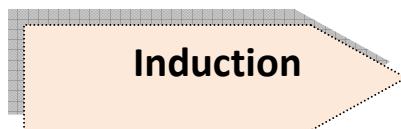
- Raises the profile of the company / business with parents, pupils, the local community and other interested parties
- Gives an opportunity for staff development by taking on a mentoring and managing role
- Raises awareness and is a reminder to staff of health and safety procedures
- Fresh approach of young people which raises motivation and creativity in the workforce
- Ability to influence /shape the workforce of the future by emphasising what is important to the employer
- Access to potential future employees – attract pupils at a young age and help them discover your industry.
- Helps build links with schools
  - Keep school staff updated with industry changes and requirements
  - Keep abreast of educational developments

Benefits for the pupil:

- Can gain firsthand experience and knowledge from experts in the field
- Opportunity to recognise and develop the skills and qualities they already have
- Opportunity to learn how those skills and qualities can be applied and developed in the workplace.
- Can appreciate how the work within the school curriculum fits with the workplace
- Gain an opportunity to experience responsibilities within an adult community
- Development of interpersonal relationships and teamwork



## Planning

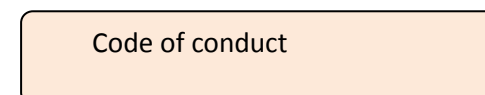
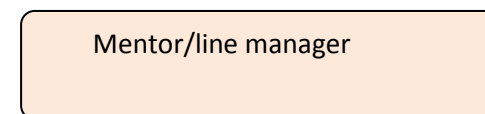
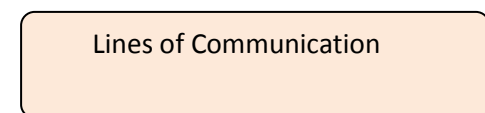
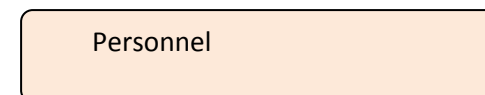
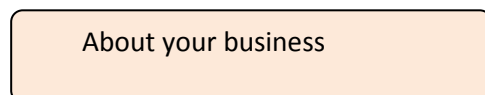
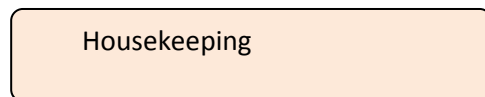


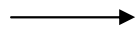
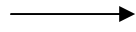
It is important to have an induction to familiarise the pupil with the various aspects of the organisation and introduce them to the world of work.

This is the time to make sure the pupil has all the information they will require to fit in with company policy and help them to feel more at ease with their new surroundings.

There should be an opportunity for the pupil and their mentor/line manager, who will be responsible for them throughout their visit, to meet and discuss the programme that they will follow.

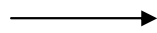
Questions should be encouraged.



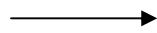


Placement expectations:

- The employer
- The student

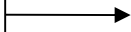


Health and safety - equipment, clothing, procedures

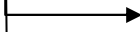


Familiarisation tour

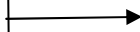
**The Programme**



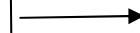
What jobs are available within your business?



What skills and qualities are needed for those jobs?



What are the pathways into working with you?

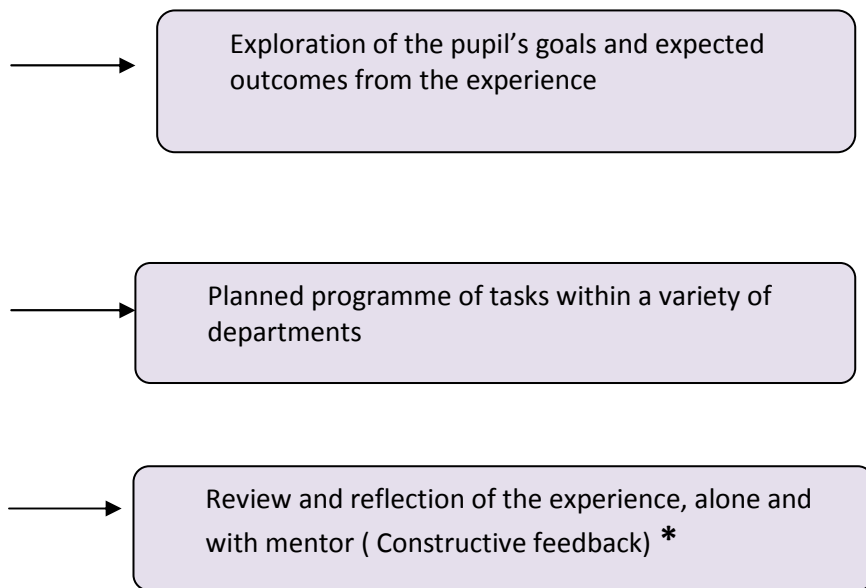


What opportunities exist within your business?

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**Constructive feedback – hints and tips**

- Feedback should be given as soon as possible after a task has been undertaken – while it is still fresh in the mind of the participant
- Start with things that have been done well to build confidence



## Outcomes for the pupil as taken from Curriculum for Excellence,

### Experiences and Outcomes<sup>1</sup> :

- I know I can demonstrate how to travel safely. HWB 4-18a
- I am developing the skills and attributes which I will need for learning, life and work. I am gaining understanding of the relevance of my current learning to future opportunities. This is helping me to make informed choices about my life and learning. HWB 3-19a
- I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/howisthecurriculumorganised/experiencesandoutcomes/index.asp>



is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave. HWB 4-04a

- I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible. HWB 4-16a
- Based on my interests, skills, strengths and preferences, I am supported to make suitable, realistic and informed choices, set manageable goals and plan for my further transitions. HWB 4-19a
- When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can:
  - communicate detailed information, ideas or opinions
  - explain processes, concepts or ideas with some relevant supporting detail
  - sum up ideas, issues, findings or conclusions. LIT 4-09a

**In addition, the pupil should:**

- Have an opportunity to practice vocational skills under limited supervision
- Find out about work routines and conventions
- Comply with placement health and safety
- Comply with placement requirements/procedure at all times
- Be able to deal effectively with unexpected situations
- Match their skills and qualities to that of the tasks
- Listen attentively and ask appropriate questions when relevant
- Volunteer accurate and sensible information and judgments when relevant
- Form cooperative working relationships, explore working with others
- Modify behaviour as is fitting the needs of different situations.

## Skills to consider

### Communication

listening understanding hearing  
timekeeping

trust determination  
positive attitude

sharing clarity explaining  
health and safety

attentive expressing describing  
conduct

language persuading engaging  
management

teamwork  
motivated

### Responsibility

attendance

self self discipline

organisation travel

asking/clarifying

perseverance time

meeting targets initiative

### Knowledge

company procedures jargon etiquette job related skills

company ethos project / task planning( meeting deadlines) company  
development plan how to present feedback

personal skills career options training routes

roles within the company local market issues school/work link

role related responsibilities how to gather, organise and evaluate  
information management skills

## Mentoring - Information for Employers

The role of the mentor is to guide, challenge and support the mentee throughout their preparation for transition to their next steps, whether that is training, employment or Further or Higher Education. The mentor's role is not one of managing the mentee, rather as one who offers help and support to allow them to progress and successfully achieve their goal. The mentor does not impose their ideas upon the mentee, but assists them to formulate their own judgments as they complete tasks, carry out projects and prepare applications.

Being a mentor has its benefits.

- The mentor has a vast amount of knowledge of their industry which they can share with the mentee. They will be able to relate the route they followed into their current As a result they will have a clear picture of where they are and have an opportunity then also to reflect on their own development and set themselves some realistic targets.
- They have an opportunity to recognise their own skills and qualities as they pass on their practical experience and skills. It is an opportunity for the mentor to take stock of their progress and celebrate their achievements.
- They can develop their confidence through working with and supporting others, as they see their mentee successfully move to their next step.

Mentors would benefit from having the following skills:

- patience, persistence and commitment
- effective communicating skills –take time to listen, give clear concise explanations
- ability to use appropriate questioning techniques to help develop mentees creativity and decision-making
- the skill to give helpful and constructive feedback
- established planning and decision making skills which they can pass on

- ability to motivate, encourage and steer the mentee towards setting their own short and long term goals/ targets

Mentors can help the mentee with:

- Industry knowledge
- Career routes into the industry
- Research skills to allow the mentee to identify appropriate resources to fulfil tasks/solve problems
- Development of essential skills
  - Interpersonal communications
  - Self-confidence
  - Negotiation skills
  - Problem solving
  - Accessing resources
  - Networking
  - Realisation of personal goals
  - Decision making
  - Establishing positive relationships
- Discussion of ideas - challenge and support
- UCAS application
- Interview techniques/mock interviews
- Personal statements

Mentees would benefit from regular contact by e mail or phone. This helps build confidence/value in the mentee. It also helps keep mentee focused and on task and reassures the mentee that the mentor is interested and has time for them.

What else should be in the planning?

- Discussion of any course work/project / dissertation issues that are causing concern and finding out where you can be most helpful.
- Discussion of a schedule and planning for meetings
- Talking about time management / workload
- Encouraging a planned approach to preparation for applications and interviews
- Liaison with employability transitions officer for updates on progress and to register any concerns.