



Archdiocese of
Birmingham

St Thomas More

Catholic Academy

Work Experience Policy

Date of Policy: September 2024

Member of Staff Responsible:

SLT: Elizabeth Todd
Headteacher: Mark Rayner

Chair of the Academy Representatives: Rob Fielo
Nominated Academy Representative:

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United in Faith, Love and Learning

Mission Statement

Christ is at the heart of our community, where everyone is known and loved.

In fulfilling our mission we are a school of prayer. We live as a community of love, peace and reconciliation, valuing everyone's dignity as a child of God to promote and celebrate the growth and achievement of the whole person

Summary

All Year 10 and 12 students are expected to attend a one-week work experience placement at the end of the summer term. In addition, students are encouraged to use the placement tool to source additional opportunities within school holidays or as enrichment as part of their sixth form timetable. By using the placement tool school is able to check that employers follow the necessary guidance to host a student.

2024-25 Dates

Year 10	30th June – 4th July
Year 12	14th – 18th July

Support and information is given in school throughout the year but **it is the student's responsibility to apply for a range of placements**, so that they have at least one confirmed place by the end of the Spring Term. They also need to complete the placement form on Unifrog. This allows school to check that employers have the appropriate insurance in place to host a student.

Parents must ensure they are happy with the arrangements their child has made and give their permission on Unifrog. School provides the [Unifrog Work Experience Placement Tool](#) to administer the placement arrangements and collect Health and Safety and Safeguarding reassurances.

Introduction

St Thomas More Catholic Academy provides students with an incredible array of opportunities and activities in which they can become involved. Whilst all of these experiences will be developing students' skills and helping them understand what strengths and interests they have, none is the same as the unique experience of a Work Experience placement.

The government recommends that all young people should have had at least one week's work experience by the time they have left school. Experiences within workplace settings, and encounters with employers and employees, are key for supporting students in their future career journey and decision-making. Placements help students to get to know themselves and their preferences, as well introducing them to various roles, tasks, and industries.

Some higher education pathways require relevant work experience, including Medicine, Veterinary, and Dentistry. Many employers, and some higher education institutes, will look for evidence of work experience in the UCAS/ job application, as it shows that a student is motivated, has commitment, and has been proactive in seeking out opportunities to develop their skills and interests.

Aims of Work Experience

By undertaking a work experience placement week, students will:

- Learn skills related to: applying for placements; researching opportunities; writing letters and CVs; and networking; and dealing with some of the challenges of job-hunting.
- Gain valuable experience of a workplace setting.
- Have encounters with employers and employees.
- Have opportunities to practise and develop their employability skills.
- Test out their interests, skills, and strengths, in order to come to a better understanding of themselves.
- Have the opportunity to experience work tasks and work environments, which are different to those at school, and assess which they enjoy.
- Develop networks and networking skills for the future and meet people who inspire and interest them.
- Gain confidence when relating to the adult world of work.

Procedure

1. Assembly on the importance of the placement and how to go about finding a placement. Support is given on resources to use, including CV and letter templates, video links etc. Parents are sent a letter to outline the process.
2. It is recommended that students start their research and applications as soon as possible, as some placements are competitive and allocated on a 'first come first served' basis.
3. Easter is the deadline for confirming their placements. Students should complete the placement tool student form on the Unifrog portal by the end of the Spring Term. The student will need the name of the placement contact, business name, and email. Mrs Kerr is the School Placement Coordinator.
4. March/April - Employers should fill out the Unifrog form and parents should review the details sent to them by Unifrog. They will be asked to give their consent. If an employer does not populate the form, students will need to check and chase them for the information. Mrs Kerr will also chase from school to ensure that as many placements as possible are confirmed by the start of the work experience window.
5. Work Experience Week takes place (see table for exact dates). During the week a phone call or visit will be made by Mrs Kerr or someone from school.
6. Summer Break - Reflection of placement to be written and uploaded to Unifrog. Feedback also received from employer.

Question and Answer

Will the school find a placement for the students?

No, students are responsible for finding their own placement. This provides them with an opportunity for developing their employability skills. Students can ask Mrs Kerr about previous placement providers and contacts relating to their preferred sector. The school may be able to suggest certain employers that could be approached, but it does not find placements for students.

Why do students need to think about this so early, if they are not doing the placement until the summer?

The timings are carefully chosen to support students, so that they can focus on Mocks and GCSE examinations at the allotted time. Students will be expected to have secured a work placement by the end of the Spring term. This allows time for the appropriate checks to be made and the placement confirmed. Furthermore, some placements are highly competitive and students need to apply early.

What if a student can't find a placement?

If a student is struggling or unable to find a placement, they should contact Mrs Kerr in the first instance. The onus is on the student to do this, as this proactivity is a crucial part of developing their employability skills. She will support them to create an action plan to search for appropriate placements. **If a student has not been able to find a placement, or if a placement has fallen through, they are expected to come into school during Work Experience Week.**

What if the placement offered doesn't fit the school Work Experience Week?

If a student has found a placement but it does not coincide with the school Work Experience week, this should be discussed with the Head of Year. Please note that if a student manages to secure more than one placement, this is encouraged and these can be undertaken in their own holiday time. Students can add more than one placement to Unifrog, if they want to use it for administering further placements.

Where can students find out about Work Experience?

Students are expected to do their own research. Students should use a three-pronged approach:

- Use personal contacts of friends and family;
- Make speculative applications to local organisations and businesses they are interested in. Visits can be made in person and emails, letters, and CVs sent;
- Research big businesses and well-established providers of work experience placements with online application processes.

Students should also be checking their school Careers TEAM where Work Experience information will be advertised. There are also resources on the Unifrog 'Writing' and 'Special Opportunities' tools.

How does the Unifrog Work Experience Placement Tool work?

Students will need to upload a placement contact name, email, and telephone number to the

Placements tab on their Unifrog account (visit Unifrog.org and click 'resend welcome email' if they have forgotten their login). School provides this Unifrog Work Experience Placement Tool to administer the placement arrangements and collect Health and Safety and Safeguarding reassurances. Once the employer has filled out the form, it will be sent to the parent for consent. It is up to the parent to ensure that they are happy with the placement arrangements, before they allow it to go ahead. School will not chase the student, or employer, if Unifrog forms have not been filled out.

What if the employer doesn't fill out the Unifrog form with their information?

Students should chase the placement provider with nudge emails, or a phone call. If a placement provider requires a paper copy of the Unifrog form, or alternative paperwork, please contact Mrs Kerr. Parents must ensure they are happy with the arrangements their child has made, before they allow them to go on the placement.

What if a student is ill or has a problem on the placement?

In instances of illness, the placement provider and school should be notified of the absence at the earliest possible opportunity. If a student has a serious concern, or feels unsafe during their placement, they should speak to their placement contact immediately. If the circumstances make it difficult to do so, they should immediately remove themselves to a safe place and contact a parent and school as soon as possible.

What if a student does not engage with the process and does not complete a work experience?

The school will not force students to engage in this opportunity, beyond extolling the benefits of doing so and offering the support outlined. Work Experience Week is a valuable part of our students' education and all are strongly encouraged to participate. Any student who does not engage with a placement is missing an opportunity for their own personal development and, ultimately, this may have a negative impact on university or job applications and at future interviews.

Appendices

- Year 10 letter
- Year 12 letter
- Y10 work experience launch ppt – form groups
- Launch of work experience – delivered in the hall