

Work Placement Policy

[Including work experience and industry workplace activity with employers]

*Excellence • Integrity • Valuing Others •
Supportiveness*

Our Mission

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

Our Values

Excellence, Passion, Team Work, Integrity, Innovation,
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

Sparsholt College Group

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

This latest updated to the *Work Experience Policy* was approved by the Board of Governors in December 2022 and supersedes previous editions..

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WORK PLACEMENT POLICY

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WORK PLACEMENT POLICY

Introduction

Work placement activities are central to the Sparsholt College Group (“the College”) curriculum and play a key role in the development of students’ practical, technical and employability skills directly relevant to their vocational course. This Policy applies to all learners of the College who undertake a period of paid or voluntary/unpaid work in a relevant workplace as an assessed part of their programme of study.

The College has a curriculum in which work placement is featured across a large proportion of both Further and Higher Education programmes. Learners undertake placements within a range of industries across many different sectors, with varying activities. While most take place within Hampshire, a proportion occur nationally and overseas.

Types of Work Placement

Work placements endorsed by the College will normally relate to two types of activity – ‘work experience’ and ‘industry work placements’.

Work Experience activity is linked directly to vocational and technical study programmes undertaken by learners and is used as part of assessed evidence towards their qualification. Typically, work experience can last between 1-4 weeks in the academic year and is undertaken largely during term time. Additional College-based duties and practical sessions are undertaken to complement work experience.

Industry Work Placements are an extended version of work experience and are predominantly focused at Level 3 learners in line with the Government’s introduction of T-Level provision. This work placement activity will last for the duration of the academic year, normally on a 1-day a week basis timetabled in alongside the learner’s taught sessions. There is additional opportunity to complete activity outside of the college week and term time. As Industry Work Placements are longer than traditional work experience endorsed by the College, this should realise significant benefits for learners in terms of developing skills they need over a longer period of time to progress in their chosen occupational area.

Principles and Practices

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the College promotes work placement activity as an integral part of the curriculum, and an essential tool for students to inform career pathways and progression into employment. Inherent in the policy is the commitment from the College to support students in selecting an appropriate placement and meeting the College’s obligations regarding relevant risk assessment of placements, including insurance requirements.

The College shall, in accordance with its Health and Safety policy, take all reasonable steps to secure the health and safety of learners undertaking work placements.

Access to work placements for learners with any disability is actively promoted by the College, who will work with providers to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made to facilitate this. Additional risk assessments will also be undertaken as required.

All placements will undergo a checking process relevant to the age and course level of the learner, taking into account the activities to be undertaken on placement. This process is to ensure that the placement is of high quality, that it has appropriate risk assessment, insurance provision and safeguarding measures in place and that the placement can provide activities that stretch and challenge learners in relation to their programme of study.

All UK placement providers will have to provide evidence of Employers and Public Liability insurance, and where learners travel in company vehicles as part of their placement, evidence of Motor Vehicle insurance will be required as appropriate.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks may have to be completed by some learners before placements can begin, e.g., Health and Social Care, Child Care and Sports learners. In addition, in line with Department for Education guidance¹, it is expected practice to request a DBS check for relevant placement staff “where students are...likely to be alone regularly with the adult as part of their placement...”.

Overseas placements are considered for students 18 years of age and over where these will realise significant benefits to a learner’s study and progression and will not impact planned study sessions. The college will seek to ensure any overseas placements are safe and in-line with the relevant health and safety standards required. If this cannot be verified through appropriate evidence, the college may not be able to sanction that work placement.

All placement activity is subject to College staff approval. Learners who have not reached the age of 18 years are considered more vulnerable and at risk of injury in the workplace. Placement activities are discussed with each placement provider to ensure tasks are appropriate to the age, competence and safety of each learner and meets requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999).

It is expected that learners, regardless of age, will not be transported alone in employer vehicles with only one member of staff. In any cases where it is thought necessary for a learner to travel alone in an employer’s vehicle, this should be considered by the college Designated Safeguarding Lead to consider appropriateness and risk mitigation where travel with the employer is thought to be absolutely necessary.

Higher Education students will be responsible for liaising with the workplace provider prior to commencement, to ensure agreement about objectives to be achieved during placement, to comply with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education chapter B10.

¹ T-Level Industry Placements: Delivery Guidance; July 2020; Department for Education; Page 29; Employer Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Responsibilities

The College

The College has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, as far as is reasonable practicable, that learners, employees or visitors are not exposed to risks to their health and safety arising out of College activities. This will include the provision of robust and auditable systems to ensure work placement takes place in appropriate work environments and meets both awarding and governing body requirements. The College has a responsibility to ensure that any staff involved in the management or administration of placements have appropriate training, and are competent in undertaking their responsibilities in the process, including when monitoring placements with both phone and onsite visits.

Placement providers

Learners on placement are employees of the placement provider under the terms of either a contract of employment or the Training for Employment Regulations 1990 and, as such, are owed a duty of care. The employer (placement provider) must ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of the learner. This includes assessing the risks to which the learner on placement is exposed at work and providing training, instruction and supervision. These are particularly important aspects given the youth and inexperience of many of the learners on placement. The primary responsibility for meeting statutory Health & Safety requirements within a placement remains with the employer (placement provider).

Students

Students on placement have the same Health & Safety responsibilities as any other employees in the workplace. They must take reasonable care for their own Health & Safety and for the Health & Safety of other people who may be affected by their acts and omissions. They must also cooperate with the placement provider in complying with the placement provider's legal duties.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Work Placement Procedures document as well as other College policies, in particular the Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Learners Policy, and the Curriculum Delivery, Teaching & Learning, & Quality Improvement Policy.