

Corporate Guidance on Work Placement Risk Assessment

Introduction

Well-planned and organised work experience is a valuable part of a young persons education as it helps to deliver the skills and attitudes which young people need for the world of work and provides important opportunities for students to learn directly about working life and the working environment.

The successful health and safety management of work experience placements relies on the close co-operation between the (Placement) organisers, the participating students, their parent or guardian and the placement provider; in this case Merton Council.

This guidance sets out what you need to do when assessing the health and safety risks to work experience students under the age of eighteen.

Definitions

A Young Person is below the age of eighteen

A Child is anyone of compulsory school age (16 or under) *

Managers responsibilities

The employer has clear responsibilities (section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) to the student on work experience. Under the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990, these students are regarded as your employees and are owed the same duty of care as regular employees to ensure their health, safety and welfare.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR), you are required to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for young people under 18 years old, **before** they start work experience and tell them what the risks are.

The Council has a Risk Assessment Procedure that should be consulted before carrying out the Risk Assessment.

N.B: Information on the risks associated with the placement and any preventive and protective measures must be sent to the student's parents or guardian.

It is important to look at the workplace from an adolescent's viewpoint. The risk assessment must take into account that what may be considered safe for an experienced adult may not be safe for the younger employee. Young people may be at particular risk from:

- Their possible immaturity and inexperience of work
- Being unaware of the potential risks to their health and safety; and
- Being eager to impress or please other people in the workplace
- The young person's physical and psychological capacity.

Health and Safety legislation prohibits young persons from engaging in a number of operations and activities if the risk assessment identifies a significant risk, which cannot be eliminated. The following is not intended as a complete list of prohibitions, (the full list can be found in the (MHSWR)

No employer shall employ a * young person for work which –

- Is beyond their physical or psychological capacity
- Involves potentially dangerous machinery
- Involves operating vehicles
- Involving the risk of accidents which it may reasonably be assumed cannot be recognised or avoided by young persons owing to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training; or
- In which there is a risk to health from: -
 - (a) Extreme cold or heat
 - (b) Noise; or
 - (c) Vibration.

Exceptions to this are only made under very special circumstances;

- The work is necessary for their training
- The work is properly supervised by a competent person; and
- The risks are reduced to the lowest level, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Please note: * Children below compulsory school leaving age must never do work involving these risks under any circumstance.

Training and Supervision

Young people need to be trained to do the work without putting themselves or others at risk. Students will need to be made aware of their own responsibilities for health and safety and you will need to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision according to the learners needs as soon as they start.

The (MHSWR) requires formal induction training in health and safety matters for all new employees. This includes students on work experience.

Young people will be facing unfamiliar risks from the job they will be doing and from their surroundings and are therefore likely to need more supervision than adults. Good supervision will also help you to get a clear idea of their progress in the job and to monitor the effectiveness of their training.