

Experience of the Workplace Format

Students at Sutherland House School are supported to access a wide range of work-based learning during their time at school. Our students have a wide range of learning needs; this could make specific tasks and experiences difficult to access without support. The school provides appropriate staffing support to ensure that students can have their needs met and shine in their workplace.

At Sutherland House School, we recognise that finding employment for autistic people presents barriers. Recognising the importance of employability, we have developed a robust and effective framework designed to help prepare our students for the labour market in the broader world. For autistic students and young adults, The Disability Employment Gap is still too wide, with around half of disabled people in work, compared to over 80% of non-disabled people. However, the autism employment gap is even more comprehensive, with just 22% of autistic people reported in paid work. While not all autistic people can work, we know most want to. Sutherland House School has sought to improve the support autistic people receive to find and keep work via the robust Careers, Education, Information and Advice (CEIAG) programme; we have clear career plans to support our students around achieving their employability goals.

We aim to work with individual employers to determine the specific skills and attributes they require in their employees and then develop these skills in our students. We recognise that each placement is different, providing unique development opportunities, and so by tailoring the learning for each student, we can maximise the benefits to both the students and the employer.

Expectations

We feel it is essential to provide clear guidance to employers outlining the placement expectations to our students, and in turn, provide assurances as to how we as a school will support our students to bring worth and purpose to your workplace. In this way, we can ensure that all placements are mutually beneficial. The expectations for work placements – before, during and after – are set out here for the following groups:

- SHS Students
- Sutherland House School
- Employers

Equality and Equity

All parties are responsible for the issue of equality. This universal standard, expressed as a universal entitlement for young people to gain work experience, must be clear that not all young people enjoy the same advantages, nor face the same challenges. Equality means that each individual or group of people can access the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognises that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

A student's background and circumstances should never limit their potential, and all parties will seek to develop a practice that ensures improved outcomes for all young people. All those involved in any work placement should provide advice, guidance and opportunities that contribute to:

- Eradicating discrimination;
- Promoting mutual respect and equality of opportunity across genders, social backgrounds, disabilities, ethnicities, sexual orientations and religions.

SHS Student

Before commencing a placement, I will:

- Be provided with the opportunity to participate in work placements at a time that is mutually suitable for my needs, the employer and my school;
- Be supported in my work placement in such a way that takes account of any challenges I may face around my physical, social and emotional wellbeing and any specific support needs;
- Agree on the duration of my work placement with my employer.
- Agree with my school and employer which goals I aim to achieve during the placement;
- Understand the placement conditions regarding the time, the expectations of the employer and the location, along with dress and behaviour codes. This information will be available through my school and I will be supported to conduct my research. I will also know who my primary employer contact is and take every opportunity to use my direct contact within the organisation and with my school before embarking on my work placement to acquaint myself with any hazards when I am there.

During the placement, I will:

- Complete the relevant sections of my work experience booklet and work toward achieving my agreed goals and targets.
- Demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes that my employer would expect to see in an exemplary employee.
- Follow training and instructions provided by my employer and wear any PPE provided (where appropriate).
- Take full advantage of the opportunities to develop my skills, gain knowledge and develop a positive attitude to work.
- Reflect on the support provided by my employer and other partners to allow for adjustments to my participation if required.

After placement, I will:

- Reflect on my learning as I continue with my studies – using my placement experience to support my ongoing learning.
- Reflect on feedback from my employer.
- Add relevant details of my work placement to my career planner.
- Share information about my placement experience with school staff and peers, highlighting the skills I have acquired and available opportunities within my specific work context.
- Provide feedback on my experience to my employer to support potential future developments.

Sutherland House School

Before commencing a placement, we will:

- Initiate a pre-planning meeting with the student involved to register interest for all parties.
- Meet with potential employers to establish the arrangements.
- Plan pre-placement meetings to take place between the school, the employer, and the students
- Carry out thorough environmental and individual risk assessments.
- Have robust record-keeping that monitors and tracks where and when each young person participates in a work placement. (Compass Plus).
- Ensure that the duration and timing of the placement will be mutually agreeable to SHS and the employer.
- Identify how the placement aligns with the young person's studies, career aspirations, abilities, and capabilities. Define learning outcomes and differentiate accordingly.
- Ensure we pass on any information on the young person relating to their physical, social and emotional wellbeing and specific support needs (in compliance with Data Protection).
- Note that the goals and targets the young person will be working towards during their placement, ensuring they are appropriate and productive. Liaise with the employer to support their achievement.
- Be satisfied that the employer/placement provider has arrangements in place to manage health and safety risks.
- Prepare young people for their placement, ensure they understand expectations, including information on health and safety in the workplace and how to deal with any issues that may arise.
- Practice essential critical skills with the students in preparation for placement, identifying progress and recording it.

During a placement, we will:

- Monitor and track the success of the placement in collaboration with the young person(s) and employer, taking account of the length and nature of the post and the needs of the young person(s).
- Work with the young person(s) and employer to resolve any difficulties preventing a successful placement.
- Provide appropriate staffing to support young people whilst undertaking their placement, and that pupil support is reviewed with the employer in line with safe working practices.

After placement, we will:

- Support the young person(s) in maximising the placement learning and retain evidence to support relevant accreditation.
- Ensure the placements quality assurance process is contributed to by constructive feedback from the young person(s) and the employer.
- Provide feedback to the employer on any aspects of the placement that were particularly strong or might be enhanced - from both the students view and SHS.

- Explore ways for the whole school community to gain maximum benefit from the placement, enabling the young person to continue developing their skills to enhance learning and teaching further.
- Identify ways of sharing knowledge of the workplace with staff and young people.
- Continue to develop relationships with the employer alongside our school's self-evaluation processes.

Employer

Before commencing a placement, we will:

- Liaise with the school to promote our opportunities.
- Ensure that risks are controlled before the placement starts and share all control measures with the school.
- Ensure that the placement will occur at a mutually suitable time for our organisation, the school and young person.
- Identify key member(s) of staff from our organisation to support the young person(s) during their placement.
- Know who the school link person is to support the young person.
- Be provided with, and consider, any information relating to age and stage details of the young person undertaking our work placement (in compliance with Data Protection) along with their career ambitions, particular interests and skills, including any specific support needs.
- Have agreed on learning targets with the school and the young person(s) and provide materials to support induction into the workplace.

During a placement, we will:

- Support the young person by providing appropriate training and guidance, including a health and safety briefing, to enable them to undertake essential tasks and explore areas of particular interest as we would with any new employee.
- Provide ongoing feedback to the young person(s) and their support staff.
- Offer a rich and varied experience that enables the young person to understand our organisation's culture and practices and develop practical skills whilst undertaking meaningful tasks.
- Take stock of the young person's knowledge and skills, and their views about our organisation concerning our values and mission and the way we work;
- Invite the young person to use 'pupil voice' to improve work placements in the future.

After the placement, we will:

- Take the opportunity to share our views on the young person's performance relating to their personal goals/targets with the school and young person.
- Receive and reflect on feedback from the young person and the school regarding the placement and experience.
- Take the opportunity to participate in a quality assurance survey of the work placement to support the development of future working partnerships.