

11th March 2022

Work Experience July 2022

Dear parents/carers of Year 10 students,

It is time to launch the year 10 Work Experience (WEX) programme, so that we may be ready for the event taking place on the **13th, 14th and 15th July 2022**.

As mentioned in the last letter, the government would now like to ensure all students have the opportunity to gain experience in the world of work, before the end of Year 11, and Oriel believes that the addition of a WEX programme in lower school, to be of significant value to our students. This opportunity will help students to understand the work environment, give students vital experience in the work place, and allow them to learn key employability skills.

To be able to do this, we need to ask parents and carers to utilise their networks and help to arrange either a placement within their work place, with a family member or friend of the family. Any students unable to find a placement for themselves can seek assistance from Mr Thornton our Careers Administrator, who will be available to help suggest companies (that we know have offered placements previously), for the student to contact. Should your student not be able to secure any WEX placement, then students will undertake a 'Virtual WEX programme' in school, which will enhance their key employment skills.

Once you have considered where your student is going to go, contact should be made with the employer and an initial confirmation of intent returned to Mr Thornton at school with all of the contact details for the company and person responsible for your student whilst on placement (form attached to email). **This should be returned by Friday 8th April to Mr Thornton.** If your student needs some help to find a placement themselves, attached to this email is some information to help them. I urge students to contact Mr Thornton at school sooner rather than later, to give him as much time as possible to try and help them secure a placement in July. If you think it unlikely that your student will be able to secure a placement, please complete the form for Virtual WEX to aid our planning, but please do continue to look for a physical placement. This form should be returned by the same date of Friday 8th April.

For students, WEX can be quite a daunting prospect, but one that they will remember for the rest of their lives. Whilst some students may know what they would like to do in the future, many more will not have made decisions like that at this point in their lives. This is perfectly fine and any student in this position should be reassured that this is normal. Students should also be reminded that careers change over time, and statistics now show that the work force of this country typically have many different types of career over their working lives. This needs to be reflected in their approach in finding a placement and their attitude towards being part of it. If your student knows what they are interested in, then finding a placement within that field will obviously be of benefit, however for all of those not in that position, then a more generic WEX can be equally valuable, teaching them key employability and organisational skills that will serve them well in the future. There will also be time in year 12 for WEX too, which might be at a point when your student has more of an idea what they would like to do, so could be more focussed on that specific career.

The students will be expected to take part in the WEX over the three days, completing full working days as the company prescribes, and similar to a full-time employee. It is important that prior to the WEX the student has spoken with the contact at the company who will be responsible for them, initially to introduce themselves and then to check what jobs and tasks they are likely to be involved in. The student should also take this opportunity to ask their contact if there is a dress code or required clothing, if there any security concerns or requirements, the timings of the day and finally, lunch and break arrangements.

When commencing the WEX, students will be given a small pack to fill out containing essential information, such as noting down emergency procedures and who to contact in case of emergency within the company. This pack will also be the place the student will keep a record of their tasks and link them to key employability skills. This will help in the future when they are asked to apply for jobs, are at interview or applying for sixth form, helping them to demonstrate where they have displayed these skills previously.

Many employers are often reticent about talking on work experience students for fear of extra work. However, there is no need for an employer to feel this way and included in this pack is information that you can provide to the employer to allay any fears. In short. If an employer takes on a work experience student, then their duty of care is no different to that of any other employee, depending upon the nature and risk of the business. No extra insurances need to be taken out, with the company's current employers liability insurance being sufficient. If there are any risks at the placement, then the company should mitigate these with PPE and supervision, and at no times is a student allowed to do certain jobs where additional training is required (such as fork lift truck driving). Companies will be contacted by Mr Thornton to discuss placements and discuss any requirements or needs of the student or company, to ensure both have a productive and enjoyable experience. Also attached to this email are extracts from the HSE regarding some 'Myth Busting' which may be of interest to you and the employer that relate specifically to taking on a WEX student.

Good luck finding your placements! We will be in touch again in the summer term with more information, once we know the numbers of students in physical placements and requiring a place in school on the virtual WEX programme. Until then, should you have any queries, Mr Thornton will be happy to assist you, so please do get in contact if you have any.

Yours sincerely

Owen Svoboda
Director of Learning, Careers Leader