



8<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## Work Experience July 2025

Dear parents/carers of Year 10 students,

It is time to launch the year 10 Work Experience (WEX) programme taking place on the **9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (Activities week)**. Last years' successful programme was well received by students and parents alike, with both students and parents reporting a perceived increase in motivation in studies. In one-to-one meetings, we have heard first hand how students valued the experience, and in many cases, it has given them new ideas or career fields to explore further.

The Oriel Work Experience (WEX) opportunities in year 10 (and later in year 12), are part of our drive to engage, and help students be prepared for the world of work. These opportunities for Oriel students in term time, comply with the government's desire 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 give students vital experience in the workplace, allow them to learn key employability/soft skills and could help to guide them in making decisions about their future pathways.

In addition to WEX, in the days leading up to the WEX, we hope to be able to run face-face mock interviews in school with employers with **every year 10 and 12 student** as we have previously. The students that take part in the mock interviews, whilst nervous before the event, afterwards are all very enthusiastic about the experience, and can appreciate the advantage this gives them over others without the experience. Students learned lots, with some of the students making such a good impression, they secured further WEX in holidays, and some of the companies would have happily given them a job there and then!

To be able to do facilitate this huge task of organising a WEX for 240 students, we need to ask parents and carers to utilise their networks and help to arrange either a placement within their workplace, 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 have worked with or know have offered placements previously), for the student to contact. **Should your student not be able to secure any WEX placement, then students will be expected to undertake a 'Virtual WEX programme' and employment related workshops in school**, which will enhance their key employment skills.

We would like you to start the process now, knowing that it may take some time to set up a placement for your student. We ask that the process is completed by **May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025**. Each year, we have students who put off this task until the last minute and ultimately cannot complete the required documents in time to secure a placement. If a placement request is made after the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, we cannot guarantee that all the necessary paperwork is completed in time because it requires each party involved to submit the relevant documents. This process can be very swift, or slow, depending upon the company involved.

Parents, students and businesses will utilise an online method of registering the placement and completing the required documents. This system will be automated, and each action will form part of a sequence of events and tasks that both yourselves and the employers needs to do, prior to any placement starting. Mr Thornton our Careers Administrator will be managing the process, and he has put together instructions (attached to this email) on how to use the online system and begin the process of registering your

placement. Mr Thornton is your student's contact/co-ordinator, and his name should be used when required, so that he receives all updates into his inbox.

We will set up the WEX using Unifrog. Unifrog is an outstanding online platform that all our students have access to and can be used at any time to help with future planning. It will also be the location students should record key competencies they have developed, which will be spoken about in the accompanying WEX booklet given to students nearer the time. The login details are their school email address. If your student hasn't logged in before, then please go to the login page and click on reset password. Enter their school email address and click on reset. An email will be sent to their school email address with instructions to set a new password. If your child is relatively new or having trouble getting on the site, please contact us directly to ensure their profile is set up on Unifrog correctly.

If your student needs some help to find a placement themselves, attached to this email is some information to help them. If a placement is still proving to be difficult, then Mr Thornton will be happy to help students and may even be able to find them one with our business partners. If this is the case, I would urge students to contact Mr Thornton at school sooner rather than later, to give him as much time as possible to help.

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 will not have made decisions like that yet. Students should be reassured that this is normal. They 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 during 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 WEX in year 12 which many more take specific jobs related to future pathways.

The students will take part in the WEX over the three days, completing full working days as the company prescribes. 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/safety concerns or requirements, the timings of the day and finally, lunch and break arrangements.

When commencing the WEX, students will be given a pack to fill out containing essential information. 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 taking 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. Companies will be contacted by Mr Thornton if required, 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! 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- Careers Leader**

Telephone: 01293 880350 | Facsimile: 01293 880351

Student Absence Telephone: 01293 880363 (24 hours)

Email: [office@oriel.w-sussex.sch.uk](mailto:office@oriel.w-sussex.sch.uk) | Website: [www.oriel.w-sussex.sch.uk](http://www.oriel.w-sussex.sch.uk)

