# Workplace Learning

# Additional Information for Parents and Carers

## Supporting your child in workplace learning

Please note: the page reference in this document after each question refers to pages in the Workplace Learning Guide for Parents and Carers provided to you for workplace learning.

### Can my child do work experience in another state or territory? (See page 6)

Most placements will be within commuting distance of home. It is rare for an interstate placement to be warranted unless the school is located on or near an interstate border or the industry does not exist in NSW.

If you are considering an interstate placement, you should first contact the school, or where relevant the Externally delivered Vocational Education and Training (EVET) provider in conjunction with the school. Interstate placements may need additional documentation and/or take longer to plan.

### Are there any prohibited activities for workplace learning? (See page 7)

Yes. Some activities are completely prohibited, e.g. working on a roof, while other activities have conditions attached. There are restrictions on the operation of machinery and equipment, the service of alcohol, work on construction sites and adventure or sporting activities in industries such as tourism.

Students are not allowed to undertake activities requiring a licence (e.g. a drivers licence), permit or certificate of competence unless they already hold the relevant licence, certificate or permit. Even then, the activity must relate directly to the learning activities of the work placement. Employers must list these activities on the Student Placement Record prior to the placement being approved by the school.

Please note, students are not expected to drive their own vehicles while undertaking activities on behalf of the host employer. They should not be asked or directed to drive the employer's vehicles or any client's vehicles while they are on a workplace learning experience.

Some higher risk industries will require a student to undertake training prior to their work placement. For example, all students doing workplace learning in the construction industry must complete the general construction induction training (also known as a White Card) as a prerequisite to their placement.

For the full list of prohibited activities, go to Prohibited Activities and Activities That Need Special Consideration.

The school or EVET provider can also advise you if you have any further queries.

## Special consideration is needed with the following activities that have conditions.

**Placements involving the driving of golf carts, quad bikes, tractors or other farm vehicles**

Placements involving the student operation of golf carts, quad bikes, tractors or other farm vehicles **must be carefully considered**, even where these activities are considered to be essential to achieving the outcomes of the placement.

For these placements to be approved, the vehicle and the activity must be adequately risk assessed as being safe for the student. Students must have successfully completed an accredited formal training course or related course competencies or have demonstrated substantial experience in the safe operation of these vehicles. **Students riding quad bikes must be at least 16 years of age** and wear an approved helmet with the strap in place.

Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) other than helmets include:

- eye protection for example goggles
- hand protection for example gloves
- long sleeve shirt and full-length pants
- sturdy footwear for example boots.

Note: Helmets must comply with Australian Standard AS/NZS 1698.

**The student still needs to be closely supervised. They must not be reckless or careless.**

**Students with little or no experience** must not operate these vehicles. The only exception is where the school or relevant EVET provider is satisfied (before the placement is approved) that the host employer can satisfactorily manage the activity for the student and has substantial experience in providing the appropriate quality training and on- going close supervision. This is a decision for the school or EVET provider in consultation with the school.

In order to ensure the school or EVET provider is satisfied that the activity is safe, the risk assessment must be documented and sighted by the school principal/EVET provider manager prior to approval.

## Placements involving working with horses (equine work)

No matter how experienced or competent a student may be in riding or working with horses, there are still potentially high risks. Extreme caution is needed to avoid injury or disability.

**A risk assessment must be undertaken** to ensure the activity is appropriate and safe and that the horse is fit for purpose and the age and experience of the rider.

**SafeWork NSW** information about horse-related injuries is available in the Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses and information about horse-related injuries.

Approval of the placement rests with the school or EVET provider in consultation with the school.

## Placements requiring prior training (See page 7)

All workplace learning in the construction industry requires as a pre- requisite that the student completes Work Health and Safety induction training for construction work, and holds the general construction induction training card (or White Card). **The department expects school students to undertake this training in a face-to-face or a real time virtual delivery mode**. This supports duty of care considerations.

## When are vaccinations needed? (See page 8)

Students undertaking courses within the Higher School Certificate (HSC) Industry Curriculum Framework, Human Services or other health related Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses may be required to undergo screening and vaccination.

The host employer, school or EVET provider will advise the student of any vaccination requirements. These will be recorded on the Student Placement Record.

In addition, there might be times when an early childhood education host employer advises students planning to undertake a work placement that it is desirable for the student to be vaccinated against particular childhood illnesses. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends that all educators and other staff are immunised against pertussis; measles-mumps- rubella (MMR); varicella and Hepatitis A. Vaccination against influenza is also recommended for staff.

## What insurance and indemnity provisions are in place for approved workplace learning programs? (See page 7)

The NSW Department of Education (the department) has specific insurance and indemnity arrangements for students who are injured while on approved workplace learning which also includes travelling directly to and from the workplace. **Parents and carers need to first finalise any medical accounts and then claim from their Medicare and/or private health funds** before a request can be made to the department to cover any outstanding expenses.

If a student sustains a significant injury as a result of participating in an approved workplace learning program, the department ensures the student will not be worse off than someone undertaking paid employment who sustains the same injury and who is covered by workers compensation. For that reason, the department uses the *Workers Compensation Act 1987 No 70* as a benchmark to compensate students for medical treatment and rehabilitation costs. Students are not being paid, therefore compensation does not include loss of income. Similar to paid employees, students also have a right under common law to seek compensation if it can be established that the injury was caused by the negligence of the host employer, the department or a third party.

**Please note** – these insurance provisions only apply to workplace learning programs approved by the school, or where applicable, approved by the TAFE NSW, or an EVET provider. Approval must be recorded on the Student Placement Record prior to student attendance at placement.

The school continues to have a duty of care while the student is participating in a course conducted by an EVET provider that has been contracted to deliver a course for the students. EVET providers liaise regularly with schools when arranging work placements for school students.

## In terms of workplace learning, what does the department regard as normal business hours? (See page 7)

**Normal business hours** are the hours we generally known as 9am-5pm. This may vary an hour either side of this time and your school or EVET provider will inform you of the timeframe when staff are contactable for supporting your child during workplace learning.

## Who can be the alternative nominated contact for my child outside normal business hours? (See page 7)

The contact must be an adult person and cannot be the host employer or any of their employees. This is to ensure your child has a contact who is independent of the host workplace.

## What responsibilities will my child have in the workplace under work health and safety legislation?

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) the definition of 'worker' includes 'a student gaining work experience'.

Under the Act students must:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care that what they do, and what they do not do, does not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- comply with reasonable instructions about health and safety given by anyone on behalf of the business
- co-operate with reasonable workplace health and safety policies and procedures that they have been told about.

Penalties are possible for breaching these obligations.

## Where can I get further information about Work Health and Safety legislation for my child?

SafeWork NSW has developed the Young Workers eToolkit. In this e-Toolkit, you can access a range of resources that have been specifically developed to support young workers' safety. There are sections for Parents and Carers, Young Workers and Employers.

In Working Order contains resources and useful links to help young workers develop strategies and skills to prevent injury and promote workplace safety.

In Working Order is a tool kit for parents of young workers as well as educators, employers, and supervisors. It will assist in developing young people's understanding of:

- Workplace safety rights and responsibilities
- Recognising, assessing and managing workplace hazards
- Communication and negotiation skills.

## Who can I contact to discuss aspects of my child's workplace learning program? (See page 10)

1. In the first instance, contact your child's school as they have developed the program of learning for your child.
2. Contact the NSW Department of Education by emailing seniorpathways@det.nsw.edu.au.