GETTING THE BEST FROM WORK EXPERIENCE

To get the most from a work experience placement, it is worth thinking in terms of **THREE** stages. For you to get the maximum benefit, it is important that each stage goes well.

The three stages are:

1. **Preparation**

- Searching for a placement that will suit your interests.
- Presenting yourself to the employer and making a good case for yourself.
- Understanding what the employer expects from you.

2. **Placement**

- Turning up in good time presenting yourself appropriately (dress well).
- Following instructions given by your supervisor.
- Checking safety procedures.
- Performing the given tasks getting on with the other workers.
- Dealing with people in a friendly and courteous way.

3. **Reflection**

- Thinking about the placement (what did you learn?)
- talking about your placement in class
- writing a report on your placement
- clarifying, in the light of your work experience placement, your plans for future employment

After you finish you should write a 'thank you' letter to the employer who allowed you to visit or who gave you a temporary job. Address the letter to the person in charge - the Managing Director or the Personnel Manager. The letter will probably be passed around the people who helped you so it's a good idea to add their names. One day you may apply for a permanent job or summer job with that organisation and they may remember your politeness.

TYPES OF WORK EXPERIENCE

- ***Work Shadowing*** – watching people at work

or

- **Work Experience** – doing some form of job

PREPARATIONF FOR WORK EXPERIENCE – CHECKLIST

Before

- Choose a placement that will give you a chance to see if you would like to pursue this job as a career in the future.
- Research the place you are going to.
- Find out the name of the contact person.
- Organise work placement well in advance of the prescribed dates to ensure availability.
- Make contact by e-mail, letter and follow up with face to face meeting if possible.
- Request an outline of job description, if available.
- Check out dress code.
- Check out start & finishing times & lunch breaks.
- Confirm placement details a few days prior to commencement.
- Ensure that you have ten/ eleven full Fridays.

During

- Be punctual.
- Dress appropriately & maintain standards of excellence in personal grooming & hygiene.
- Inform your employer and teacher if you are unable to attend work for any reason
- Be courteous at all times, smile, thank etc.
- Familiarise yourself with and adhere to all health & safety practices and procedures.
- Familiarise yourself with and adhere to all internet & ICT use and policies.
- Adhere to all instructions given by your employer.
- Switch off mobile phone during work hours and do not chew gum.
- Respect the confidentiality of any sensitive information that you may encounter.
- Use the placement to learn — ask questions when appropriate.
- Observe and take note of good working practices.
- Ask for assistance if required.
- Inform your supervisor of any difficulties you are experiencing.
- Complete diary entry at the end of each day to fulfill portfolio criteria.
- Keep diary entries factual and reflect upon and evaluate your own daily performance; be respectful of the workplace, employers and co-workers.
- Endeavour to enhance skills such as:
    - ICT
    - Communication
    - Interpersonal
- Make links with activities and information in work placement and curriculum content of subjects being studied for leaving certificate.
- Thank your employer.

After

- Submit diary of work experience as soon as possible to your teacher for correction.
- Write a letter of thanks to your employer.