

Blackpool Aspire Academy - Work Experience Policy

This policy outlines our dedication to delivering a structured, inclusive, and progressive work-related learning programme for students in Years 7 through 11. It features our 10-day Work Experience Guarantee, ensuring every student engages in meaningful workplace and employer encounters each academic year. This aligns perfectly with the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Department for Education's Statutory Careers Guidance from June 2026.

Our Aims

Through this programme, Blackpool Aspire Academy aims to:

- Fulfill Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6 by providing students with direct employer encounters and workplace experiences.
- Equip students for the expectations and demands of the modern working world.
- Cultivate essential employability skills, including problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and adaptability.
- Expand students' awareness of various industries, qualifications, and career trajectories.
- Guarantee equitable and inclusive access to work experience for all, including students with additional needs.
- Elevate student aspirations and support their ongoing personal development.

Rationale

We believe that high-quality work experience is crucial for preparing young people for life after education. By offering meaningful and structured opportunities from Year 7, we strive to:

- Connect classroom education with real-world career pathways, helping students understand the relevance of their studies.
- Challenge career stereotypes while raising aspirations and broadening horizons.
- Assist students in making informed decisions regarding their future career plans, post-16 education, and GCSE choices.
- Foster vital skills such as resilience, teamwork, adaptability, communication, and problem-solving.
- Build strong connections with the wider community and local employers to keep our careers programme aligned with the evolving labour market.

This approach reflects the updated Gatsby Benchmarks, the Baker Clause, and the DfE's Statutory Careers Guidance, emphasizing the role of workplace experiences in boosting student outcomes, especially for disadvantaged groups.

The Work Experience Guarantee (Years 7–11)

We guarantee that from Year 7 to Year 11, every student will participate in at least one meaningful work-related experience per academic year. These activities become increasingly independent and challenging as students progress.

Year Group	Type of Experience	Description
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Year 7	Workplace Awareness	Introduction to the working world via curriculum-linked career learning, workplace visits, and employer talks to raise aspiration and awareness.
Year 8	Exploration	Students explore a broader range of industries and job roles through workplace visits, enterprise events, and employer encounters via projects.
Year 9	Engagement	Understanding pathways and skills through virtual or in-person taster activities, sector-themed career days, and employer-led workshops.
Year 10	Work Experience Placement	A formal placement (usually one week) with an approved virtual provider or local employer, featuring hands-on experience supported by pre- and post-placement reflection and preparation.
Year 11	Workplace Extension and Preparation	Additional encounters aligned with post-16 choices (e.g., A Levels, T Levels, apprenticeships, vocational pathways), including CV workshops, mock interviews, and targeted work experience.

Definition of a "Meaningful Experience": In accordance with Gatsby Benchmark 6, an activity is meaningful if it involves structured preparation, active workplace or employer participation, and subsequent opportunities for reflection.

Key Stage 3 Workplace Encounters

To bolster early career exposure, progressive and age-appropriate workplace encounters are embedded throughout Key Stage 3. These ensure meaningful employer engagement well before formal placements begin. Examples include:

- **Workplace Visits:** Excursions to industry hubs, public services, and local employers.
- **Employer-Led Curriculum Projects:** Collaborative lessons or projects between employers and subject teachers to show real-world applications of the curriculum.
- **Career Insight Panels:** Q&A sessions or talks with multiple employers representing different roles within a sector.
- **Challenge Days & Enterprise Events:** Team-based enterprise competitions or real business problem-solving activities.
- **Virtual Tours:** Recorded or live workplace tours featuring interactive employee sessions.
- **Themed Career Weeks:** Weeks dedicated to key sectors (e.g., Green Jobs, Creative, STEM) with active employer involvement.

These activities are not one-off assemblies; they are planned, recorded, and evaluated structured learning experiences that contribute to Gatsby Benchmark 5.

Year 10 Work Experience Week Procedures

For a complete explanation of our Year 10 Work Experience processes, [please click here](#).

During the summer term of Year 10, students undertake a week-long work placement. Blackpool Aspire Academy actively fosters relationships with industry providers and businesses to maintain a variety of appropriate placement opportunities.

- **Coordination:** Arrangements are shared between the employer, the academy, and the Unifrog online platform.
- **Sourcing:** Students are encouraged to independently secure a placement relevant to their employability needs and aspirations, ideally supporting equal opportunities and challenging gender stereotypes. If a student struggles to find a placement, Mr. Ewart (Deputy Headteacher and Careers Lead) will help source suitable options through business contacts, though some may require travel to areas like Fleetwood, Lytham St Anne's, Kirkham, or Preston.
- **Consent:** Parental permission is coordinated via Unifrog prior to the week. Parents must approve the specific placement details. Please ensure the academy has your most up-to-date email address.
- **Checks & Support:** The Career Lead uses Unifrog to conduct final checks, ensuring appropriate placement matching. The designated safeguarding lead and SENDCO are consulted when necessary. Any additional support needs or medical care plans are shared with the employer (with parent/pupil permission).
- **Preparation:** Supported by form tutors and preparatory assemblies, students research their placements before contacting the provider via email, letter, or phone.
- **Briefing:** A pre-placement briefing ensures students are prepared regarding clothing, timings, health and safety regulations, and journey planning.
- **The Placement:** Students are responsible for themselves during this time. Employers may set a work programme, and tasks will be discussed. A school staff member will contact or visit each

student to provide feedback. Any concerns should be reported immediately to the academy.

- **De-briefing:** Upon returning to school, students reflect on their experience, complete diaries, write thank-you letters to employers, and record learning outcomes. A Google Form is also sent to gather their thoughts and reflections.

Student Objectives for Year 10 Work Experience

During their placement week, students aim to:

- Engage in experiential learning to develop work-related skills.
- Transfer classroom skills directly into a working environment.
- Understand and practice the procedures required to seek employment.
- Learn how to be a responsible employee and cope in a professional setting.
- Fully grasp the qualifications, attributes, and skills needed in their chosen field.
- Enhance their social and personal skills.
- Ease the transition from school into further education or the workforce.
- Secure references for future employment or study applications.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School will:

- Use the Unifrog platform to coordinate the programme and liaise with external providers and employers.
- Ensure all statutory safeguarding, safety, and health requirements are met.
- Support students throughout the process and prepare them for their placements.
- Evaluate and monitor the impact of the experience on student outcomes.
- Record all activities on Compass+/Unifrog for Gatsby Benchmark tracking.

Students are expected to:

- Work alongside their families to source their own placement.
- Behave professionally and engage positively with all activities.
- Adhere to school behaviour expectations and workplace rules.
- Complete all required employability and health & safety training preparations.
- Reflect on their placements to guide future decisions.

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Assist their child in finding and attending their Year 10 placement.
- Provide necessary safeguarding or medical information to the employer and school if required.
- Ensure the school possesses their current email address.
- Respond promptly to consent requests sent via Unifrog.
- Encourage their child to reflect on and discuss their experiences.

Safeguarding, Health & Safety

- Employers providing placements must complete a health and safety assessment and hold valid insurance, with documents uploaded to Unifrog for review.
- Employer checks are carried out by the school in conjunction with Unifrog and the Local Authority.
- Before any placement, students receive a briefing on safeguarding, health, and safety.
- A designated school contact remains available to support students throughout their placement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Career Lead: Responsible for implementing the policy to ensure equal opportunities. They track participation for the guaranteed experiences, collect feedback from staff, employers, and students, and evaluate the programme's quality to drive continuous improvement. They ensure statutory requirements regarding work-related learning are met and report necessary policy or practice changes to the headteacher.

Headteacher (Mr Woods): Holds overall responsibility for the application of this policy and monitors the quality of provision regarding individual student learning outcomes.

This policy is reviewed annually. Last reviewed July 2026.