

# Students on Work Experience

A HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDE  
FOR SCHOOLS AND EMPLOYERS

# Students on Work Experience

**WORK EXPERIENCE IS A LONG STANDING TRADITION FOR MANY YOUNG NEW ZEALANDERS WHEREBY THEY VISIT A WORKPLACE FOR A DAY OR A WEEK AS A ONCE OFF EXPERIENCE.**

Students can enter the workplace through many means while at school. This can be through a Gateway programme, school organised work experience, structured workplace learning or part-time/casual paid employment arrangement that is part of a learning programme. This guide focuses on students participating in **work experience** organised by a school which generally lasts up to a week.

This guide contains information on how to prepare students for work experience in terms of health and safety. Schools and employers need to work together on their shared duties to ensure the health and safety of students while they are on work experience.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the **Health and Safety Practical Guide for Boards of Trustees and School Leaders**. We suggest you also read the 2016 **Gateway Handbook** published by the Tertiary Education Commission which contains information on how to plan student work placements through a Gateway programme.

This guide is intended as a supplementary resource that will support schools and employers to develop a clear understanding of what the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) means for students on work experience and host employers. However, the primary source of information must be the HSWA itself, the Regulations made under the HSWA and WorkSafe New Zealand (WorkSafe).



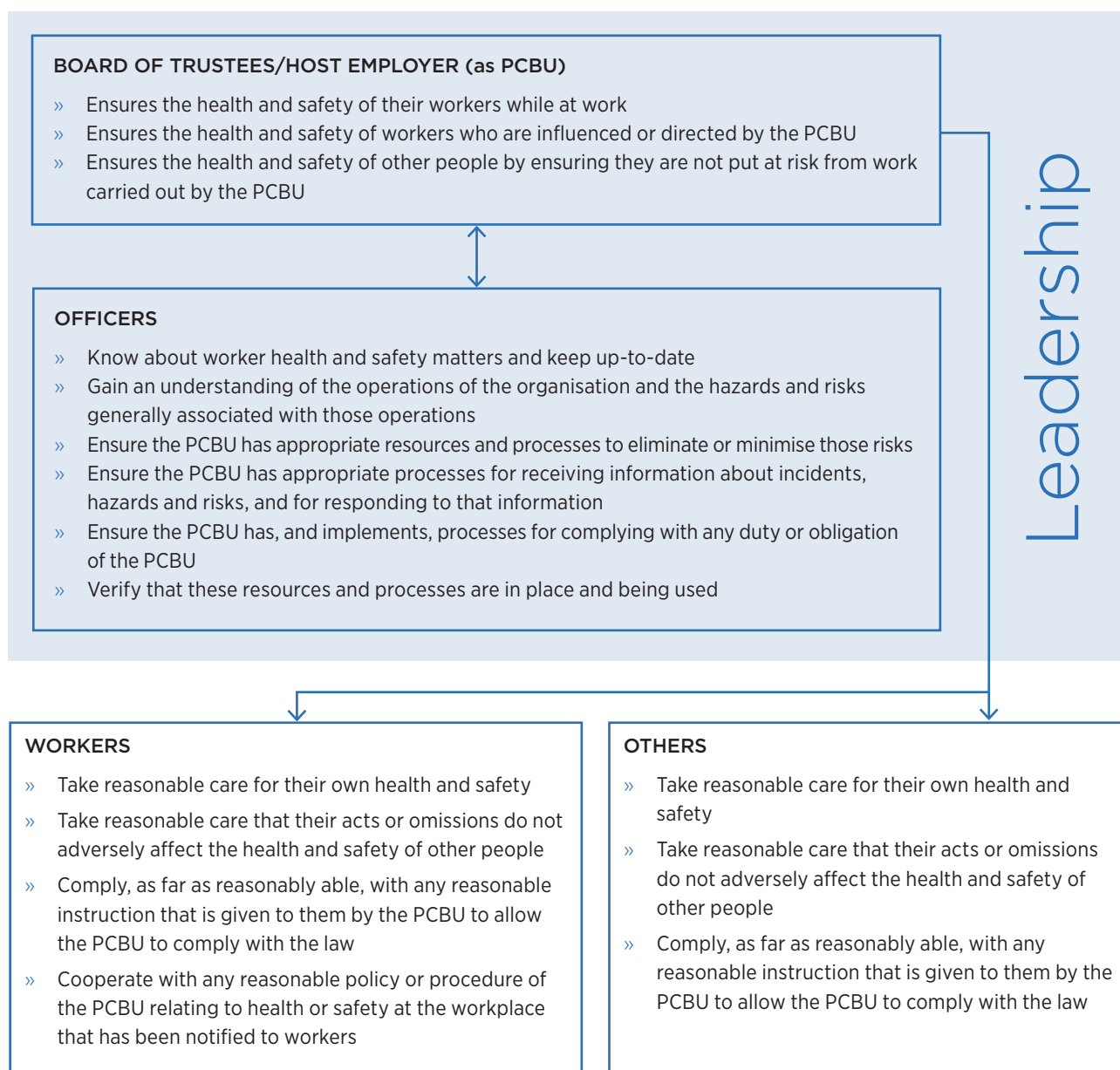
# Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

## STUDENT SAFETY WHILE ON WORK EXPERIENCE IS PARAMOUNT.

We recommend schools and employers to discuss health and safety management when work experience is arranged. Under HSWA employers are referred to as “a person conducting a business or undertaking” (PCBU). While workplaces present a potential risk to health and safety, with due care and attention risks can be either eliminated or minimised.

The HSWA specifies health and safety duties for PCBUs, Officers, Workers and Others. HSWA specifically includes “an apprentice or a trainee; or a person gaining work experience or undertaking a work trial” as a worker. This includes school students on work experience.

## Roles and responsibilities





**The business as a PCBU** must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers, and that other persons are not put at risk by its work. This is called the 'primary duty of care'. Workers and Others in the workplaces have their own health and safety duties to keep themselves safe and not cause harm to Others.

Duty Holder	
PCBU (Employer/Board)	The PCBU is usually a legal or corporate entity, including a self employed person. In a school this is the board of trustees. They have the primary duty of care for the health and safety of workers and others.
Officers	As individual members of the board including: principals, elected, members, appointed, members, staff and student board reps
Workers	Workers work for the business or undertaking and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» employees</li> <li>» contractors or subcontractors and their workers</li> <li>» labour hire company employees</li> <li>» apprentices or trainees</li> <li>» people on work experience or a work trial</li> <li>» volunteer workers</li> </ul>
Other persons at the workplace	Other persons include parents, visitors, other volunteers, general public and those who may be put at risk by the work of the PCBU. It does not include people who unlawfully enter the premises.

## Early Learning Services

If you are hosting a student on work experience, you may have safety checking obligations under the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014. Refer to part 4 of the *Vulnerable Children Act 2014 A practical guide for Early Childhood Education Services, Ngā Kōhanga Reo, Playgroups, Schools and Kura* for more information.

<http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/VCAPracticalGuide.pdf>



# Why do students need health and safety skills

– through induction, instruction or training and supervision after training?

**YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED WORKERS MAKE UP A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF PEOPLE INJURED OR KILLED AT WORK.**

Experience in the workplace while at school introduces young people to the world of work and is a valuable and essential part of their education. A work experience opportunity provides students with the ability to learn about their rights and responsibilities and create an awareness of common workplace risks and hazards. This is balanced by the fact that young and inexperienced workers may be unfamiliar with the work environment, unaware of risks or lack sufficient maturity. They may also be more susceptible to specific hazards, less aware than older workers of their workplace rights and responsibilities, and may not have the confidence to speak up about health and safety issues that affect them. It is therefore important that students acquire health, safety and wellbeing skills to prepare them for the transition from school to work.



**A student is an **Other** in the workplace while they are at school. However a student becomes a **Worker** while on work experience for another PCBU.** So when they are on work experience, the host PCBU will have the most influence over their health and safety. The host PCBU has the “primary duty of care” for students on work experience. A PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of students on work experience.

All students, as workers, are obliged to:

- » take reasonable care of their own health and safety;
- » take reasonable care that what they do or don't do doesn't adversely affect the health and safety of others;
- » cooperate with any reasonable policies or procedures the business or undertaking has in place on how to work in a safe and healthy way; and
- » comply with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU so that they can comply with the HSWA and the regulations

Other persons at workplaces need to:

- » take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- » take reasonable care that others are not harmed by something they do, or do not do
- » comply, as far as they are reasonably able, with the PCBU's reasonable health and safety instructions

# How do I prepare a student for work experience?

## THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL BEING SKILLS MUST START BEFORE ENTRY INTO THE WORKPLACE.



**It would also be beneficial for students going on work experience to have an understanding of the more common workplace hazards, such as:**

- » manual handling
- » slips, trips and falls
- » machinery
- » noise/vibration
- » bullying/harassment
- » stress/fatigue
- » extended/excessive hours
- » ventilation
- » hazardous substances
- » exposure to disease
- » contact with electricity
- » dust

A student may not have:

- » any experience in a workplace
- » an understanding of why they should follow safety instructions
- » the ability to make sound judgements about the safety of themselves and others
- » background knowledge or understanding of warning signs to recognise that they may be exposed to a hazard
- » experience in using personal protective equipment
- » the ability to work with minimum supervision.

## Induction

A student on work experience needs to undertake an appropriate health, safety and wellbeing induction before the work experience commences. It should be done in conjunction with the **school** and the **employer** and ensure that students have an understanding of:

- » their role, rights and duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, including the right to **worker engagement** and to be consulted about health and safety matters that directly affect them
- » the obligation the employer has to ensure a healthy and safe workplace for the student and fellow workers, including providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where appropriate
- » what to do in an emergency situation and evacuation
- » what a hazard is, and the potential a hazard has to cause death, injury or disease
- » how the risks from workplace hazards are identified, assessed and controlled, and the role that students may play in identifying hazards
- » the procedures for students to follow if they become aware of any hazards
- » the reporting of health and safety matters such as, incidents, injuries and near misses
- » how to access first aid and how to complete a hazard/incident report
- » what is appropriate behaviour for persons in the workplace and what is inappropriate behaviour, such as workplace violence and bullying
- » the tools and equipment that they are not permitted to use and the activities they must not engage in
- » the right to refuse to undertake work activities if they consider them to be unsafe
- » the way to communicate their health and safety concerns to their workplace supervisor, school principal/teacher/work placement coordinator or vocational consultant



**Ongoing supervision of students is an important aspect of keeping students safe.**

# What do I need to do...

## ...as a school?

### **SCHOOLS IN GENERAL ARE INCREASINGLY INCORPORATING WORK-RELATED LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND PROGRAMMES INTO THEIR CURRICULA.**

This is an important role and opportunity for schools to ensure students leave school with a good understanding of health and safety.

In addition to health and safety education being incorporated into curricula, schools may also establish and maintain cooperative relationships with local businesses frequently used for student work experience.

In assessing whether the work experience placement is suitable for a student, schools should:

- » Contact the placement host and discuss workplace health and safety to determine what types of health and safety risks exist in the workplace and how these risks are managed. If possible, and especially for long periods of work experience, schools should conduct a workplace visit
- » Review the records of previous student work experience placements (where applicable) to determine if the workplace has ensured a safe and healthy working environment for students in the past
- » Establish a communication system involving the student, host employer
- » Ensure that students receive general health and safety training before being placed with host employers
- » Consult, cooperate and coordinate with the host employer to ensure all relevant induction and training is covered and supervision provided.

## ...as a host employer/PCBU?

### **EMPLOYERS AS PCBUS ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL WORKERS AND OTHER PEOPLE, BY ENSURING THEY ARE NOT PUT AT RISK FROM WORK BEING CARRIED OUT.**

This means a PCBU must among other things:

- » provide a safe and healthy environment for workers, including access to facilities
- » provide the right information and training to all workers and others
- » provide and allow for worker participation and engagement in health and safety matters
- » notify all serious illness, injury or near misses
- » monitor workers' health and workplace conditions to prevent illness or injury

Employers will need to undertake risk assessments that consider the special needs of young people in the workplace, such as their lack of experience in a work environment and their possible immaturity.

Employers should also ensure that they can provide the extra supervision a student may require. Employers need to provide students with workplace and job specific training equivalent to that provided to any paid employee in the same position as the student. This training should be completed before students commence work at the workplace. Furthermore, employers should ensure that students are competent and able to work safely before students begin work.

**If a student is injured while in the workplace, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) will determine if it will be able to cover the injury. Workplace accidents involving students on work experience would not generally be counted against the employer's safety record.**

# Consult, cooperate and coordinate

Where students are going on work experience, this will involve multiple PCBUs that have overlapping duties. For example, car manufacturer, ECE service, farm, retail shop etc etc that provide work experience for one or more high school students will involve the school working together or alongside the work experience provider (eg the ECE centre) to set up the work experience. The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 covered this, so the need for PCBUs to work together to meet their duties is not new.

Overlapping duties do not automatically require PCBUs to duplicate efforts. Instead PCBUs will need to consult, cooperate and coordinate activities to meet their shared responsibilities. They should make reasonable arrangements and coordinate responsibilities with the other PCBUs to fulfill their duties and they should also monitor each other to ensure everyone is doing what they agreed.

## Assessing the suitability of the workplace

**THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS THAT BOTH EMPLOYERS AND SCHOOLS WILL NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT PRIOR TO THE WORK PLACEMENT:**



- » Does the workplace have a documented health and safety policy, developed in consultation with employees, stating a commitment to a safe workplace?
- » Is there a process for consulting with all employees on health and safety matters and enabling employees to report hazards?
- » Is there a specific induction programme for workplace students and does it include training on evacuation and emergency procedures, and safe and correct work practices, including the use of tools, machinery and equipment?
- » Are all foreseeable hazards that may cause injury to work placement students and other workers identified and controlled?
- » Are records of previous student placements including time spent at the workplace, details of induction, training, incidents and injuries reviewed?
- » Does the workplace have sufficient staffing resources to provide skilled and close supervision that students on a work experience are likely to require?



# Communication

**GOOD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EMPLOYER, SCHOOL, STUDENT, PARENTS/GUARDIANS IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT.**

It is beneficial if the conditions of the work experience placement are put in writing and this may be combined with consent from the parent to the placement. This allows for all parties to see the workplace assessment and control measures and any details specific to the student.

## What happens after the work experience?

At the end of the work experience placement it is recommended that the student participate in a post placement debriefing with other post placement students at the school. This will provide the school with more information about the health and safety of the different workplaces for future work placement students. Any health and safety issues should be recorded for future reference.



### Sources

Health and Safety Practical Guide for Boards of Trustees and School Leaders (2016). <http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Initiatives/Health-and-safety/Tools/Health-and-Safety-at-Work-Act-2015.pdf>

Tertiary Education Commission (2016). <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Documents/Publications/Gateway-Handbook-July-2016.pdf>

WorkSafe New Zealand [NZ] (2016). Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015: Special Guide. <http://www.worksafe.govt.nz/worksafe/hswa/understanding-hswa>

### Resources

WorkSafe New Zealand: <http://www.worksafe.govt.nz/worksafe>

Ministry of Education Health and Safety webpage: <http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/health-and-safety>

[www.bullyingfree.nz](http://www.bullyingfree.nz)

[www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)

[www.ACC.co.nz](http://www.ACC.co.nz)



# Work Experience Agreement

## EXAMPLE FORM

(Use of this form is not required; it is a sample that may be adapted as needed)

**SCHOOL NAME:** .....

**STUDENT NAME:** .....

Reason for work placement/learning goals:

.....  
.....  
.....

### EMPLOYER:

.....

Workplace address (physical):

.....  
.....  
.....

Contact person: .....

Phone: .....

Unit/Achievement Standards to be delivered (number, title, credit value) / detail of other assessment method(s) if applicable:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Proposed Duration in Workplace:

From: ..... To: .....

Timetabled for:  Mon  Tues  Wed  Thurs  Fri Hours: .....

**EMPLOYER (CONTINUED):**

Details of supervision of student:

.....  
.....  
.....

Process for early termination of work placement:

.....  
.....  
.....

**STUDENT DECLARATION:**

I agree to the learning plan outlined above and agree that I will comply with both school and workplace rules while undertaking work experience.

Student signature: .....

**EMPLOYER DECLARATION:**

I agree that [insert student name] will undertake work experience at my organisation as outlined above.

Employer signature: .....

Employer name: .....

**PARENT/CAREGIVER CONSENT:** (required if student is less than 16 years old)

I agree to [insert student name]..... carrying out work experience as outlined above.

Parent/Caregiver signature: .....

Name: .....

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