



**Ballymena Academy**

# **Work Shadowing Policy**

**Reviewed :  
April 2025**

**Ratified at Board of Governors' Meeting  
April, 2025**

**This policy adheres to the relevant sections of guidance provided by the Education Authority ‘Work Experience Arrangements for Controlled, Maintained and Irish Medium Schools’ September 2019.**

## **Rationale**

‘Whilst work experience is not a statutory requirement, work related learning is a core component and is seen as best practice in the provision of a quality CEIAG programme.’  
Education Authority ‘Work Experience Arrangements for Controlled, Maintained and Irish Medium Schools September 2019’

Ballymena Academy is committed to offering well-structured and meaningful work placements that will give students the opportunity to gain an awareness of the adult working world and the skills which are required in that environment. The school will work in direct partnership with employers and Work Inspiration to ensure that experience of the world of work significantly contributes to the learning of the students involved.

The Department of Employment and Learning (now the Department for the Economy) and Department of Education document ‘Preparing for Success’ CEIAG, (2009) clearly states that:

*‘Work-related learning experiences are the opportunity for planned and appropriate experiences of the world of work to increase learners’ motivation, develop their employability skills and give relevance to their learning programme.’*

## **Definition**

Work experience (referred to in this document as ‘work shadowing’) is defined in paragraph 63 (3) of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1998, as follows:-

*“the participation of children in employment in industrial, commercial, public authority and statutory undertakings, the object of which is to give the children a greater understanding of the conditions, disciplines and relationships of those undertakings”.*

## **Legal Position**

Under Article 82 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998,

*‘pupils are eligible to participate in work experience as follows:*

- *In the school year in which they cease to be of compulsory school age; and*
- *In the school year immediately preceding that year.*

*‘ While Article 63 refers to young people of compulsory school age within key stage 4, these arrangements are also relevant to young people in post 16 education.’*

In Ballymena Academy, pupils should take part in a programme of work shadowing whilst in Year 13, and, should students in Year 14 wish to gain further relevant experience, this may be arranged at the discretion of the Head of Year in consultation with the Work Shadowing Co-ordinator and Head of Sixth Form. Provision may also be made, on an individual basis, for those pupils who do not intend to return to school post GCSE.

Work shadowing usually takes place over 2 – 3 days, preferably with the same employer, after the completion of ‘AS’ examinations in June. Individual circumstances should be discussed with the Work shadowing Co-ordinator.

## Roles

It is the duty of the Principal and Board of Governors to ensure that the curriculum available to students is balanced and broadly based. Within these constraints it is the responsibility of the Work Shadowing Co-ordinator, who will liaise with the Head of the Careers Department, to develop and implement a work shadowing programme which is appropriate to the needs of its students, meets curricular and statutory demands and is accessible to all. During the work shadowing period, each student will be contacted by a member of staff, for the purposes of monitoring.

## Intended Educational Outcomes of Work Shadowing

Work shadowing placements will offer many and varied opportunities. These will include:

- **Careers Education and Guidance:** raising students' awareness of the factors which may determine career choice and the requirements of particular employment sectors.
- **Attainment in individual subjects:** enhancing students' understanding of the knowledge and skills that are being developed within the curriculum.
- **Support for vocational qualifications:** improving students' understanding of the vocational areas they are studying and acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills.
- **Learning about the world of work:** preparing for the transition from education to work and a recognition of "employability" skills and attitudes required by employers; such as problem solving, flexibility, types of communication used, time keeping and the ability to work with others.
- **General personal and social development:** enhancing students' self-confidence, maturity and interpersonal skills.
- **Breadth of curriculum experience:** supporting students' learning in a range of areas which will prepare them for adult life, such as an understanding of social, economic and industrial issues, citizenship and enterprise.
- **Health & Safety:** helping raise students' awareness of the importance of following Health & Safety requirements in the workplace.
- **Career Planning:** contributing to the development of a student's career plan.
- **Motivation and achievement:** helping raise students' motivation and self-esteem through experiential learning.
- **Curriculum Vitae and Personal Statements:** recording of personal learning and experiences of work-related activities which can be presented to potential employers in various formats.

## Types of Work Shadowing placement available to students

### - Block release in Year 13

This form of placement will involve the student attending work shadowing for a continuous period of up to three days. Where the employer cannot offer work shadowing for the duration, students may seek a placement with another work shadowing provider, but they must discuss this with the Work Shadowing Co-ordinator first to seek approval.

A student will normally go on a block placement once per year and this will, preferably, take place for a maximum of 3 days after the completion of 'AS' examinations.

According to EA Guidance, work shadowing organised by the school must not be undertaken during school holidays and weekends as schools are not available to monitor the placements and indemnity is therefore not in place. Hours of work shadowing will be specified on the schedule attached to the work shadowing form of indemnity and no indemnity is available outside these specific times. The school accepts no liability for work shadowing arrangements made solely by parents during holidays.

If someone with parental responsibility agrees to or organises work shadowing for their child during the holidays, weekends or at a time when the school is unable to fulfil its duty of care, no indemnity is available.

- **Tailored placement in Years 13 and 14**

This form of work shadowing is designed to meet the specific personal or curricular needs of an **individual** student and is likely to involve one of the following:

- short term sampling progressing to a longer placement;
- sampling in a series of placements;
- work shadowing which best meets the needs of the pupil designed as part of an agreed programme by a multidisciplinary team and with parental agreement. This programme should support pupils in meeting their vocational aspirations as part of their personal development planning.

The arrangements for 'tailored placements' must be negotiated and agreed with the Work Shadowing Co-ordinator. Where possible, the individual pupils should be working towards a recognised award or units of an award. Administrative procedures will be followed, as normal, however, it will not be possible to arrange a visit during a tailored placement and parents/guardians should be made aware of this prior to organising a placement during these times.

### **The Role of Work Inspiration, Northern Ireland**

Work Inspiration offers a centralised database service to match employers with the needs of students in schools. They have access to a database of suitable employers willing to offer placements to our students. They liaise with both the school and the employers to ensure that there is good communication and that job descriptions, risk assessments, insurance and other health and safety procedures are in place. They also try to ensure that employers offer students quality work experience placements that match their vocational interest and career choice.

Work Inspiration supplement existing workplace opportunities organised by Ballymena Academy, for example, all medical placements can only be organised by Work Inspiration, on behalf of the school. This is to permit fairness and equal opportunities for schools across Northern Ireland.

**N.B.** Work Inspiration will only liaise with the appointed Work Shadowing Co-ordinator. Parents are asked to respect this request and therefore, should not contact Work Inspiration directly.

### **Work placements outside Northern Ireland**

In accordance with Education Authority guidance, if a pupil chooses to take up a placement outside Northern Ireland, indemnity cannot and will not be provided by the school. Those with parental responsibility will be informed of this position if such a placement is being considered and that the school cannot be held responsible for the pupil's travel and accommodation including (but not limited to) the suitability and cost of same.

### **Framework for placements**

The following constraints pertain to all types of placement. They have been put in place in order to meet requirements set down in legislation and for the general health, safety and welfare of the students:

- i. Students will not be paid for work undertaken as part of the school's work shadowing scheme. They are not employees, but visitors to the company, who are still in full-time education.
- ii. Students should not be asked to work outside the hours of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm unless there are justifiable reasons to the contrary. Alternative arrangements must be agreed between the school, those with parental responsibility, the pupil and the employer. These arrangements should be noted on the Employer Consent Form.
- iii. Under no circumstances should students be asked to work more than 36 hours per week; this does not include travel.
- iv. Students should not work for more than five days in any consecutive seven-day period.

- v. Students will not undertake work shadowing in a place where they are under the statutory age limit – [Appendix 1 ‘General Regulations’]
- vi. Students will not drive, manage, control or move mechanically propelled vehicles of any description.
- vii. Students should not take a placement in a horse-riding establishment.
- viii. Students should not take a placement with parents/guardian **or** in an establishment where they have already got a part-time job.
- ix. Residential placements on Ministry of Defence (MoD) property and requests for placements outside Northern Ireland will be considered in accordance with Education Authority Guidance.
- x. Students will not undertake work shadowing in a setting where Child Protection Guidance cannot be adhered to. There should be no one-to-one arrangements. No work shadowing placements should be held in an adult’s home.

### **Organisational Aspects of Work Shadowing**

In order to ensure the successful implementation of a quality assured work shadowing programme, it is vital that care is taken in the establishment, monitoring and evaluation of placements. It is therefore essential that appropriate procedures are put into effect in advance of, during, and subsequent to, the placement. Therefore, the school will adhere to Education Authority Guidance on procedures (see Appendices 2 - 9 ) in relation to each of the following :-

#### **Prior to placement**

- Role of the school in advance of placements being arranged – [Appendix 2 ]
- Information for parents once placements have been provisionally arranged - [Appendix 3]
- Information to employers – [Appendix 4]
- Briefing for pupils – [Appendix 5]
- Visiting pupils on placement - [Appendix 6]

#### **After placement**

- Debrief – [Appendix 7]

### **Health and Safety, Child Protection Related to Work Shadowing**

The Careers Department views as high priority the safety and protection of all students on work shadowing. It endeavours to reflect the school’s Health and Safety and Child Protection policies in both the preparation of students for work shadowing and while they are in the workplace.

Procedures are put in place both before and during the placement to ensure students are fully aware of the issues which they may encounter. They also address how they should cope with any issues if they arise. The areas dealt with are:

- Health and Safety – Appendix 8
- Child Protection – Appendix 9

### **Review of Work Shadowing**

The Work Shadowing Co-ordinator and the Head of the Careers Department will undertake a periodic review of work shadowing practice in order that best use is made of this valuable resource. Employers, pupils, parents and staff can all provide a useful contribution and therefore, where possible, will be involved.

A review may focus on the following key aspects:

- An analysis of the extent to which the programme is meeting its stated aims and objectives;
- The outcomes of employer and pupil evaluation exercises; and
- An audit of current/active placements.

This policy will be kept under review.