

Dear Year 9 students and Parents

### **Work Experience – 1-5 March 2010**

In March 2010 all Year 10 students spend a week on work placement with a local company or business. The aim of work experience is to provide young people with a greater insight and understanding of the world of work. It helps to develop self awareness, self confidence, personal and social skills as well as often encouraging students to think about their future career choices.

#### **Legal requirements**

All placements have to be checked, ensuring they confirm to Health and Safety requirements for young people and that they carry the necessary Employers' Liability Insurance. The school works with Trident to help arrange and check placements but in order that this can be done, there is a fairly strict timetable.

- **Placements in London have to be confirmed by 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009**
- **Placements out of the local area by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009**
- **Local placements by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010**

The vast majority of students go to a local placement but there are always a few who wish to go further afield. To be able to guarantee legal requirements are met, it is necessary to keep the above dates.

#### **Finding placements**

March may seem a long time in the future but arranging to find 236 work placements takes a lot of organisation time, particularly this year with the Credit Crunch and many companies working short time.

This year we were able to place a small number of students on taster days at Swindon College, and shadowing experiences at a few local companies. Currently, it is too early to confirm if this will be available for students next year.

#### **Private arrangements**

Some students have a personal contact within a company who has agreed or is prepared to offer a placement. This is ideal as it ensures the student is happy with the placement. There is an additional form which needs completing. **The pink form attached is the private arrangement form;** it is your responsibility to obtain signatures. Please be aware the deadlines listed above become even more important. Therefore the sooner a placement is confirmed by the company the better. Please use your family and friends as contacts. This will ensure you are more successful than cold calling a business. You may be informed that the business you have approached only provide placement via Trident, in this instance please see Mrs Hall, Work Related Learning Co-Ordinator. Once a student, has been offered a placement and accepted it, if they then change their mind, an administrative fee is charged to the school. With ever tightening school budgets, it is important that

if a pupil has accepted a placement, they do not change their minds except in very special circumstances.

### **How to choose a placement**

Everyone has a different reason for choosing a particular area of work.

- Some are interested in a particular career and want to use the opportunity to find out if it is suitable for them.
- Some have an interest in a particular type of work and want to find out more but have no intention of following it as a career.
- Some students decide on a particular area of work because it links directly to a subject they are studying in school.
- Occasionally students opt to do something non-traditional for the experience e.g. a girl working as a motor mechanic.

### **Expectations**

Although the school will try very hard to find a placement in a requested area of work, the number of placements available in some areas is very limited. Examples of these are journalism and graphics. For this reason it is important students consider carefully their choice of placement, and utilise any personal contacts for a **private arrangement**.

The main aim of work experience is to have an experience of the world of work but some students have unrealistic expectations as to what they can do or what a job involves. At the age of 14/15, young people have not acquired the training or skills to do anything but the most basic jobs. If you choose to work in a solicitor's office, you are not going to be defending someone in court, although there is a very good chance that you may be able to sit in on a court session. Working in a leisure centre is not all about playing games all day; some of the work is very mundane such as cleaning out the changing rooms. Most companies will try to give students a real idea of what the work involves including the high and the lows.

### **Summary**

Without doubt, the vast majority of students have an excellent and enjoyable learning experience on work placement and report that it was as good as or often better than expected.

But like all things, to be successful you need to prepare for it carefully and the first step is to think about what you want to do. If you are not sure, discuss your ideas with your parents, your mentor or Mrs Hall, Work Related Learning Co-ordinator.

Yours sincerely

Mr Steve Colledge