

Work Experience Guide 2026/2027

A handy guide to Work Experience for all year 10 and 12
students at Hele's School.

A note for students:

Work Experience is vitally important for lots of different reasons. It provides some of the following-

- Hands-on knowledge of the world of work
- Develops skills that make you attractive in the job market
- Boosts confidence
- Helps with career exploration
- Enhances job prospects
- Builds professional networks
- Can lead to a part-time job or full-time work after school
- Contributes to personal growth & maturity
- Makes you aware of what you are capable of
- Makes you proud of what you can achieve.

Most importantly IT HELPS YOU STAND OUT IN A SATURATED JOB MARKET & CAN PROVIDE THE COMPETITIVE EDGE NEEDED TO BE SUCCESSFUL!

We ask all students to undertake WEX (work experience) during the year 10 & year 12.

Please be proactive in searching for a placement.

Those who start looking early have more choices and are more likely to have a positive WEX week.

WEX is crucial when writing your CVs in year 11 – it provides a firm foundation to build your strengths and allows you to demonstrate how good you are!

A note for parents and carers:

Finding WEX can be time consuming, but the benefits far outweigh any of the frustrations that may form part of the experience.

Finding a placement, not being accepted, or having to chase emails and make phone calls is all part of real working life and helps build strength and resilience.

Some students may need extra support in finding a placement, and you may know someone who can help:

- Do you work in an organisation that can host a WEX placement?
- Does your child have an interest that you can help them identify as a WEX placement?
- Please encourage your child to start looking early and remind them of why WEX is so important.
- Please help your child talk to friends and family for inspiration and potential leads.
- Remind students that it is their responsibility to find a WEX placement.
- Please ensure they know how to use Unifrog (more to follow about this) and that they fill the form out correctly, as this saves time and energy in the long run.

It is essential for parents and carers to have realistic expectations about the work experience placement, as it may not always be a perfect fit for their child's aspirations, but it can still be a valuable learning experience.

Important to Remember:

- Work Experience for year 10 will be 5 days in February 2027, and we would encourage you to stick with that date as it makes the programme run more efficiently when everyone is out on WEX at the same time.
- Unifrog is our online careers platform, and it is designed to make the WEX processes easier.
- There are templates on Unifrog that can be used when contacting potential placements.
- We suggest the following timetable:

September

Research potential placements using the internet, your friends and family network, your interests or by looking at what businesses there are around you.

October

Students should make an appointment with Miss Miller in the careers office to discuss potential WEX and/or confirm their chosen placement. This can be done via email or by visiting the careers office on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday break times. Begin emailing organisations and follow up with a phone call or in-person visit.

If you have a CV, you can include that in your email.

Once a business has agreed to host you, please upload the CORRECT details to Unifrog.

November 15th

This is the cut-off date for WEX applications.

You should have your form complete on Unifrog and signed off by the employer, parent/guardian and Miss Miller/Careers Department at school.

December

Confirm placement details, dates & times.

Careers Office to mop up any mistakes/placements that have fallen through.

January

Attend any pre-WEX meetings at school.

Contact placement to check-in and confirm details.

Ensure the correct contact details are on Unifrog.

February 8th to 12th

Do your WEX placement!

What is Unifrog?

Every student, parent & carer has a login for our online careers platform: **Unifrog**.

Unifrog has a series of forms that need to be filled out by all those involved in the WEX placement: student, employer/placement, parent/carers, and school careers office. It is a chain of communication that once each section is complete, rolls on automatically to the next section. Therefore, the Work Experience placement is organised smoothly and easily, all in one place.

1. Access your **Unifrog** account (via the school website/Google search) and sign in (reset password if needed).
2. Go to 'Placements'.
3. Watch the short video on 'Placements' found in the 'Work Experience' section.
4. For extra support and help, read the 'Work Experience – How to Contact Employers' and 'Work Experience – Researching Possible Placements' guides.
5. Add new placement details by clicking on 'New Placement' (this is where you upload the contact details of the employer/place where you want to do your work experience).

6. **Unifrog** will contact the employer/placement for you, then your parent/carer will be contacted to fill out their part, then the school will finish the chain of forms to be filled out.
7. Placement will be confirmed.

Remember!

- It is down to you to contact your preferred placement and arrange your WEX there.
- Please contact potential placements **as soon as possible**. Popular placements will be contacted by other eager students very early, and all the places will soon be used up.
- When contacting your preferred placement, please ensure you have all their correct contact info: name, email, phone number etc.
- Please use **Unifrog's** tools for letter and CV writing – these templates are designed to make things easy for you.
- Don't be afraid to think outside the box – past Year 10 students have done everything from helping at a dance school to working at the Barbican Theatre; from a vet to serving coffee at a café; hair and beauty to a bakery; or an architect's studio to a charity shop. The opportunities are endless!
- Make the most of what's around – The National Trust at Saltram, the National Marine Aquarium on the Barbican, or a local primary school. Think about how easy it will be to get to your placement.
- Placements should be uploaded by 15th November.

Why do we use Unifrog?

Unifrog's Placements tool puts all things work experience in one place, providing an easy tracking process for students, employers,

parents/carers, and teachers. The tool is a series of forms that are easy for teachers, students, and employers to complete.

You can also use **Unifrog's** other tools including quizzes on personality and your strengths and weaknesses, how to write a personal statement, or how to explore your options post 16.

If you need any help please contact Miss Miller, Careers Support Manager, at millerr@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Please note:

A WEX placement is not confirmed until the school has received a fully digital copy of the WEX forms on Unifrog.

Unifrog check Health & Safety, additional safety guidelines, risk assessments, and insurance GDPR.

Some Ideas for WEX Placements

Every year we have students unsure of who to approach regarding their WEX placement.

If you do not know where to begin then please have a think about your hobbies and interests, and what sort of job you would like to do when you leave school.

We hold regular WEX drop-in sessions in the Careers Library at school to help with suggestions.

Here are some ideas:

- Primary & Secondary schools.
- Plymouth University, Marjon or the Arts University (in one of their subject departments or the events/catering teams).

- Garages & Car Dealerships.
- The National Trust at Saltram, Antony, Buckland Abbey etc.
- Theatre Royal, Barbican Theatre, Soapbox Theatre.
- Friary Mill, Yield Bakery, Warrens.
- Cafes & restaurants.
- Nurseries & Pre-schools.
- Hair & Beauty Salons.
- Nail Bars.
- Garden Centres & DIY shops.
- Vets, Pet Shops & Animal Shelters.
- Architects, builders & construction.
- Fashion retailers, wedding shops, dress shops, dress makers/tailors.
- Plumbing & electrical engineering firms.
- Babcock, Princess Yachts, Kawasaki.
- Aerospace companies.
- RAF, Army, Navy camps – please talk to your CCF leader.
- Plymouth City Council – for The Box, Libraries etc.
- Charity shops – Red Cross, Oxfam, RSPCA, St Lukes etc.
- Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Florists, plant shops, gardeners/landscaping companies.
- NHS – dentists, Derriford Hospital, doctors' surgeries etc.
- Pennywell Farm.
- National Marine Aquarium.
- EE
- Equestrian centres & horse-riding schools.
- Argyle, water sports, gyms etc.
- Hotels and pubs.
- Golf clubs, tennis clubs, rugby etc.

- Travel agents, caravan parks, campsites.
- Residential & care homes.
- The Land Registry.
- Retail shops.
- Accountants & banks.

Please note:

Some large organisations have a set application process for WEX, and the cut of dates are early in the year, so you need to be organised and start researching these in September.

These include:

- Plymouth City Council (responsible for libraries & museums)
- Babcock
- National Trust
- NHS
- Plymouth University (academic subject areas)
- Theatre Royal
- Lloyds Bank.
- Livewell.

On Placement

Please remember the following when on placement:

1. Rules are there to be followed.
2. Health and Safety is important to keep you safe.
3. Please listen to instructions.
4. Be mature and polite.
5. Don't spend time on your phone or share things about WEX to social media.

6. We will check in on you (in person or by phone).
7. You need to access your WEX journal and complete it (it will help with CVs and job/college applications).
8. Please utilise Unifrog – explore all the different tools, videos, presentations etc.
9. Use Unifrog's online WEX journal to record your experience.

Please ensure you are aware of the following before your placement starts:

- A bit of research on the organisation will help you prepare in advance.
- How you will get to the placement - don't pick somewhere too far away.
- What uniform or clothing is suitable?
- Can you buy food and drink for lunch on site, or do you need to take your own?
- What time do you start and finish?
- Who is your point of contact and where do you meet them on the first day?
- Have you got realistic expectations?
- Who do you contact if you are late or absent?

If you are ill, please contact school as normal to report your absence AND contact the placement.

If you have any questions or concerns, then please email Miss Miller: millerr@heles.plymouth.sch.uk or call 337193.

Other help available:

Monthly Drop-in Sessions in the Careers Library (computer suite of main Library) with year 11, 12 & 13 students who have already done WEX.

Ask them anything you like about WEX: sourcing placements, things they loved/hated, mistakes they made

Check ClassCharts for times & dates.

After School Parents & Carers WEX Presentation – sessions in the library after school for help, advice and Q&A

Check ClassCharts & emails for times & dates.

Year 10 WEX Assembly – September every year.

Hele's School Website – Check out the careers pages on the school website for lots of interesting help & ideas.

School Careers Library – (computer suite of main Library) Have a look at a range of leaflets, books, posters and other info regarding WEX & careers. Watch some of our careers videos on the digital display or use the computer to do online searches.

Please read:

- You are not allowed to go on any placement that involves using dangerous machinery / chemicals/ equipment.
- Working at height – There are clear guidelines which prevent any of you working above 3ft/1.2 metres.

- No student is permitted to serve alcohol.
- You are not advised to attend your previous primary schools. It is important that you experience the 'real world of work' rather than a 'trip down memory lane'. If teaching or childcare is a route you would like to investigate further, you are welcome to contact other primary schools.
- Please do not arrange a placement with an immediate family member, relative or friend. Note that the placement must have a structured programme to ensure the best experience for you.
- The placement will not necessarily reflect the eventual career choice of the student but should allow a broad experience of the workplace and an opportunity to develop skills for the future.
- Work experience is part of the school curriculum and therefore students are not paid.
- Health & Safety is paramount – please look at the WEX PowerPoint Miss Miller sends out via email in the weeks running up to your placement.
- Please stick to the cut-off dates for placement applications.

Appendix 1.

Learning Outcomes of WEX Placements

Traditional Work Experience

Year 10 & 12

5 Days of Meaningful WEX

Core Theme 1:

Introduce and Inspire

Learning Outcome

Increased Opportunity Awareness:

Learners have a broad knowledge of a range of career opportunities which enables informed decision making.

Learning Objective:

1. Learners understand that there are different types of workplaces such as, offices, warehouses and home working, and that there are different types of employment such as, self-employment, freelancing, and full-time employment.
2. Learners can recall a range of different sectors and jobs, and describe the characteristics of the workplaces these jobs might take place in.
3. Learners can identify links between the curriculum and essential skills needed within the workplace and can give examples of careers linked to subject areas.

Learning Outcome

Improved Self-Awareness:

Learners are aware of their passions, skills and work preferences and understand how these could inform their career choices.

Learning Objective:

1. Learners are aware of essential workplace skills and can self-assess their current skill level.
2. Learners can identify their passions, interests and skills and consider how they might inform potential jobs or career pathways.
3. Learners can describe their work style and ideal working environment and can give examples of workplaces that would and would not suit their preferences.

Learning Outcome

Inspiration:

Learners are inspired and motivated by careers opportunities which they may not have otherwise considered.

Learning Objective:

1. Learners are inspired and motivated by careers opportunities which they may not have otherwise considered.
2. Learners can recognise and challenge stereotypes about career pathways and understand that their career aspirations should not be limited by them.
3. Learners can identify career role models and articulate their early career aspirations.

Core Theme 2:

Investigate and Explore

Learning Outcome

Career Readiness:

Learners have developed essential skills which will support them to transition to the workplace.

Learning Objective:

1. Learners can evidence the essential workplace skills they have developed.
2. Learners can demonstrate essential skills applicable to different workplaces, including skills required when working in a remote environment.
3. Learners can create, develop or design something based upon a brief set by an employer, and identify the essential skills they used.

Learning Outcome

Exploration of roles and responsibilities:

Learners have a deeper level of knowledge and understanding about the role responsibilities, and pathways of careers in areas of interest.

Learning Objective:

1. Learners understand the different routes into employment and understand the differences between pathways.
2. Using real life examples, learners can describe the roles of different people within an organisation and talk about what they do.
3. Learners can create, develop or design something based upon a brief set by an employer, and relate the essential skills they used to a potential career pathway.

Core Theme 3:

Apply and Demonstrate

Learning Outcome

Applying Knowledge and Skills in the Workplace:

Learners can evidence when they have applied their knowledge and skills within the workplace, can articulate this to potential employers, and can use their experiences to make informed career decisions.

Learning Objective:

1. Learners can evidence when they have applied careers knowledge, essential skills and behaviour within a workplace environment, and have received employer feedback on their work.
2. Learners can demonstrate what they have learnt because of their experience of the workplace and articulate how this will inform their future decision making.
3. Learners can evidence when they have applied careers knowledge, skills and behaviour within recruitment processes, such as mock interviews or mock assessment centres.
4. Learners can compare their experiences of different workplaces and evaluate the impact each has had on their career readiness and decision making.
5. Learners can critically assess how their experiences of the workplace have challenged stereotypes and raised their aspirations.

Core Theme 1 – students are encouraged to explore varied examples of workplace environments through the following events, and via family and friend networks:

Careers Fair

Careers Assemblies

Careers Drop-In Sessions

Careers Workshops & Talks

Careers Specific Presentations in Lesson Time

Careers Info on Digital Displays

Careers Knowledge Organisers

Careers Newsletters and Posters/Displays

Thus, allowing them to discover work experience placements with confidence and ensuring placements are meaningful and not just easy.

Core Theme 2 – students partake in 5 days of traditional work experience etc build on transferable skills including communication, teamwork, organisation, problem solving etc. Students are asked to:

Research potential placements after student/parent/carer wex drop-in sessions, wex assembly and year 10/12 launch.

Contact placements themselves and arrange wex.

Upload details to Unifrog.

Make any arrangements necessary prior to placement.

Record activities on Unifrog.

Produce a placement report at the end of wex.

Skills are added to CV using the Star method.

Core Theme 3 – students are encouraged to do extra wex, volunteer and build networks for their future career. This demonstrated through completion of their CV in year 10/11.

Students seek out feedback from wex employer and record.

Experiences should be fed back to school via careers office to see which placements were meaningful and how they have impacted on students' future aspirations and challenged stereotypes.

Appendix 2.

How Unifrog Can Help You Find WEX

This guide was put together for parents and carers by Unifrog. The links and information refer to the Unifrog website which each student, parent & carer has a login for and can use for free at home or in school. Work placements (also known as work experience) can help your child to explore different careers, build key skills, and make informed decisions about their future. Use this guide to find out what a good placement should look like and how to help your child find one.

What a good work placement is (and isn't)

A good work placement helps your child to understand what it's like to work in a particular job or sector. It should:

- be safe and well-structured
- include real tasks or observations
- offer chances to speak with professionals
- build skills like communication, time management, or teamwork
- help your child reflect on their interests and future goals

And it **shouldn't** be:

- unstructured or poorly supervised
- limited to repetitive tasks like filing or making tea
- unrelated to your child's career interests
- lacking in opportunities for learning or feedback

The goal is for your child to have a meaningful experience that will help them take their next step towards a career.

How to find a work placement

Your child may need some help getting started. Here are some steps they can follow – with your support – to find a great placement:

1. Identify their interests and goals

Talk with your child about:

- the type of careers that interest them
- what kind of work environment suits them
- if there are any skills they want to build, like communication or technical skills

Then, encourage them to use our [Careers library](#) to research different careers or career sectors, and our ‘Get on the ladder’ guides to find sector-specific advice. Each guide includes:

- a snapshot of what the sector involves
- common entry-level roles
- suggestions on how to find work placements

Our [marketing, advertising and sales](#) guide is a great example, and you can find the whole series [here](#).

2. Find employers

Use your connections

Ask friends, family, or neighbours if they know of any businesses offering placements. You could also use LinkedIn to reach out to people.

Use Unifrog’s employer profiles

Our **employer profiles**, which you can find [here](#), will give your child a clear picture of what a company is really like. Each profile shows:

- whether the employer offers work experience
- tips on how to apply successfully
- insights into company culture, roles, and benefits

Each profile links to the company's website, so your child can reach out to them directly

Use Unifrog's Apprenticeships tool

Even if your child isn't applying for apprenticeships, our [Apprenticeship tool](#) can help them to find work placements. You can use it to:

- search for employers in your area
- filter by sector or interest
- visit employer websites directly from your shortlist

Employers who are actively recruiting apprentices often offer work placements as a way to support early-career talent.

3. Contact employers directly

Help your child draft a short, professional email or letter that:

- explains why they're interested in the company
- outlines what they'd like to learn
- mentions when they're available

Our student-facing guide is a great starting point: [Guide to work placements](#)

Unifrog's virtual work experience week

As well as looking for in-person work placements, your child can explore different sectors online with Unifrog's **virtual work experience week** (30 June - 4 July 2025).

The week includes:

- live sessions with professionals
- Q&As and practical tasks
- a certificate of participation
- insights your child can include on their CV or personal statement

To find out more, check out our FAQs page: [Virtual work experience week – FAQs](#)

Encourage independence

Finding the right placement can be a time-consuming task that requires plenty of patience. If you can, try to step back a little – your role is to support and encourage your child, while they take the lead in finding and applying for placements. With Unifrog's tools and your guidance, they can find an opportunity that supports their goals and builds real confidence.

Appendix 3.

Work Experience Help Sheet

Useful Tips:

- Use Google and LinkedIn to find a contact name for the organisation – a named email or phone call will go a lot further than a message sent to a general enquiry mailbox.
- Emails are easy to ignore, so once you have a name **give them a call**. Explain what you want and why – give some details about why you have picked their organisation and what it means to you.
- Write a **cover letter** – this will act as a script for phone calls or can be printed and taken to organisations. **In person visits** are the most popular way to gain a WEX placement (and address the letter to your named contact).
- Don't believe age is a barrier: 'existing employers' liability insurance policy will cover work placements provided your insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers (ABI), or Lloyds, so there is no need for you to get any additional employer's liability insurance if you take on work experience students' (taken from the government's Health & Safety website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/employer/work-experience.htm>).'
- Make use of the Hele's School website – there is a section on our Enterprise Adviser, Darren, who organises work experience at EE. There are other tips and hints for work experience on these pages.

Why is WEX Important?

- Work Experience (WEX) is the bridge between academic learning and the real world of employment. It gives students the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life jobs and workplace environments.
- All the external organisations we work with—including Babcock, EE, the Department for Work and Pensions, the National Marine Aquarium, and Plymouth City Council—consistently emphasise that **work experience is a vital component of a student's CV**.
- Work experience helps students develop **essential transferable skills**. This is why structured, and meaningful placements are so valuable. WEX builds on students' strengths while also highlighting areas for development, helping them better understand their own abilities.
- Employers increasingly view work experience as a qualification in its own right, and for some businesses it is even more important than academic grades. WEX allows students to stand out by demonstrating resilience, confidence, and proactivity.
- Research shows that high-quality work experience programmes significantly improve employability. There is also a clear government expectation that all students complete work experience before leaving school.
- For these reasons, WEX is a core component of school careers programmes and is widely recognised as essential in preparing young people for the world of work.

Which Bit Matters?

- Work experience does not have to directly relate to a student's future career. What matters most is the development of skills, attitudes, and understanding of the workplace.

- The government promotes student work experience to improve youth employability, address skills gaps, and strengthen the economy. By giving students real-world experience, work experience helps them make informed career choices and connects them with employers, creating future talent pipelines.
- For students, work experience increases confidence, resilience, and career readiness. For employers, it provides opportunities to “grow their own” talent and reduce recruitment risks, resulting in a more prepared workforce for the future.
- Work experience also provides valuable knowledge: an informed understanding of workplace expectations, how to succeed at work, the range of options available, and the different routes that can be taken to achieve career goals. It helps to raise aspirations and broaden perspectives.
- In some cases, work experience can lead directly to part-time employment or an apprenticeship offer. It is not designed to be easy and reflects real-life conditions in the job market, preparing students for the realities of work.

Ultimately Work Experience...

- **Adds Value to Your CV:** Provides tangible achievements and experiences to showcase on your resume, differentiating you from others.
- **Enhances Employability:** Shows employers you're reliable, capable, and ready for work, making you a more attractive candidate.
- **Develops Key Skills:** Cultivates essential "soft skills" like communication, resilience, responsibility, and a strong work ethic, alongside practical, career-specific knowledge.

- **Clarifies Career Goals**: Provides firsthand insight into an industry, helping you confirm your interest or explore different roles to find the right fit.
- **Builds Confidence**: Prepares you for future challenges and boosts self-esteem by proving your abilities in a real work environment.
- **Expands Your Network**: Connects you with employers and professionals, opening doors to future opportunities.

Finally, there is a

Government Mandate: The UK government's Work Experience Guarantee ensures every student in England gets two weeks of quality work experience during school/college.

The following is a list of places that have taken Hele's students on work experience in the past:

1. Cornwall Glass Factory
2. Red Cross Shop on the Ridgeway
3. Babcock
4. Plymouth Community Homes
5. White Room Tattoo
6. Woodford Primary School
7. Notre Dame School
8. iOutlet
9. GWR
10. Aecom

11. Friary Mill
12. Plymouth Argyle
13. Plymouth Bike Hire
14. Boringdon Golf Club
15. Livewell
16. Specsavers
17. Sound Unlimited
18. Woodside Animal Shelter
19. The National Trust
20. Kingdom of Beauty
21. Torridge Way Post Office
22. Torridge Way Coop
23. Royal Mail
24. Elm Veterinary Group
25. Plymouth City Council
26. NHS
27. Airbus
28. Kawasaki
29. Stars hair and Beauty
30. Longbrook Care Home
31. Rock Oyster Media
32. Ocean BMW
33. Vospers
34. Pennywell Farm
35. EE
36. Drew and Co
37. Citizens Advice Bureau
38. Oxfam
39. The Range
40. Land Registry

41. Poole Farm
42. Elm Community Centre
43. Candy Rain
44. UK Parliament
45. Barbican Theatre
46. The Devonshire Health Club
47. Theatre Royal
48. National Marine Aquarium
49. Hays Travel
50. Marjon Sport and Leisure
51. Tesco
52. Hospital Radio
53. Whites Auto Centre
54. Age UK
55. Dukes Coffee House
56. Aerial Allsorts
57. Becton Dickinson
58. Olive and Twist
59. Plessey
60. Royal Navy Base
61. Karsal
62. Summerlees hair & Beauty
63. AWL Security
64. Drake's Den
65. Natwest
66. Rev7 Community Hair Salon
67. Pugs & Pals
68. Harlequin Hounds
69. Newquay Airport
70. The Bright Stitch

- 71. Identity Fashion
- 72. M Subs
- 73. Ginsters
- 74. Mollies Coffee House
- 75. Merafield View Carehome

There are many more organisations that have already hosted WEX students so please keep trying.