



Teach First

# Ignite her

# potential

Your guide to  
hosting virtual  
work experience  
placements



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

**AKO** Foundation

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# Just one week learning with you....

## ...could change a young person's future



We're one of the richest nations in the world, so why aren't all our young people getting the opportunities they deserve?

The poorest schoolchildren don't have the role models, support and connections they need to succeed. Doors are closed to them before they know they exist – and COVID-19 has only made this worse.

- ◆ In a recent Prince's Trust poll, 46% of young people said **finding a job now feels impossible**.
- ◆ 63% of teachers believe that **opportunities for young people to meet a range of employers from different sectors are more vital than ever** (Teacher Tapp, July 2020).
- ◆ The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) predicts **youth unemployment is soon set to double**, bringing the total of unemployed young people to over a million.

# Building a fair education for all

**We know that when we get the foundations right for disadvantaged pupils – giving them access to great teachers, brilliant leaders and opportunities otherwise unavailable to them – we can unlock the potential of every single young person.**

We also know that schools, including those serving the most disadvantaged communities, will be at the heart of our country's efforts to recover from the recent pandemic. They're already doing all they can to prepare the next generation for whatever lies ahead. But they can't do it alone.

This is where you come in.

Our work experience programme, in partnership with the AKO Foundation, is designed to inspire and motivate bright young pupils from schools in low-income communities.

By hosting a one-week placement, you'll provide building building blocks towards a successful career.

The catch is that these placements now need to be hosted online. That's why we've put together this guide to support you to do so.

## **What are the benefits of virtual work experience placements?**

- ◆ Even more young people can be supported to kick start their careers.
- ◆ With no location or travel restrictions holding them back, pupils in remote areas can be reached, giving them access to a wider range of sectors and roles.
- ◆ Young people can get the chance to meet people from across the UK, reflecting real-life workplace experiences.

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If you want to know more about the work we're doing and how to support us, please visit our website:  
[www.teachfirst.org.uk/corporate-partnerships](http://www.teachfirst.org.uk/corporate-partnerships)



# Let's change things

Our programme offers pupils from schools eligible for Teach First support a chance to experience the workplace virtually. There are three main aims of the programme:

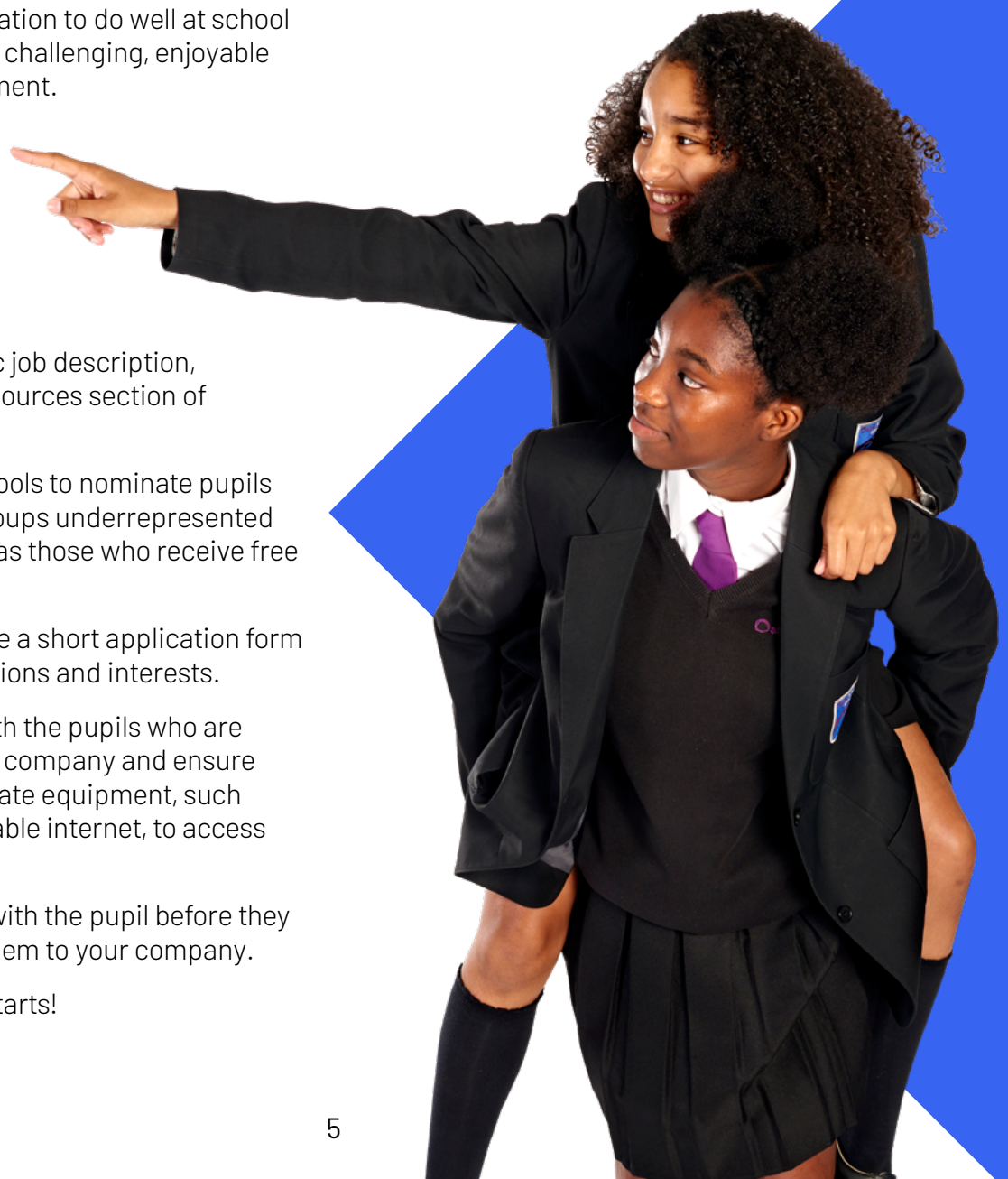
- Build disadvantaged young people's employability and skills – such as communication, teamwork, confidence and time management – through project work and a variety of other working styles.
- Increase their awareness and understanding of the world of work and different career options.
- Increase their motivation to do well at school after experiencing a challenging, enjoyable and inspiring placement.

The available dates for hosting work experience placements are:

- ◆ 26-30 October 2020 (half term)
- ◆ 15-19 February 2021 (half term)
- ◆ 6-16 April 2021 (Easter)
- ◆ 28 June-27 August 2021 (summer holidays)

## How does it work?

1. We'll ask for a basic job description, as shown in the resources section of this booklet.
2. We'll invite our schools to nominate pupils who come from groups underrepresented at university, such as those who receive free school meals.
3. Pupils will complete a short application form about their motivations and interests.
4. We'll match you with the pupils who are the best fit for your company and ensure they have appropriate equipment, such as laptops and reliable internet, to access the placement.
5. You'll get in touch with the pupil before they start to welcome them to your company.
6. Work experience starts!



# Get ready

## What is virtual work experience?

We'll ask you to nominate an Employee Lead. They'll be the single point of contact in your company. They'll manage the programme on behalf of your company and ensure the experience is high-quality. We'll work with them to help develop a great programme that works for both the pupil and your organisation.

### There are six elements that make virtual work experience successful:

1. Providing live experiences, led by facilitators.
2. Offering short and varied sessions.
3. Using online collaboration tools and technology to replicate the working environment.
4. Supporting the pupils to market their skills.
5. Combining interactive skills sessions alongside guided independent activities.
6. Giving opportunities for dialogue through digital mentoring.

## Muster the troops

Bring colleagues on board, send them Teach First's Code of Conduct to read and prepare them to support the pupil.

The Employee Lead will support the pupil day-to-day with their work. Make sure this person has enough capacity to spend a substantial amount of time with the pupil during the week.

They'll be responsible for:

- checking-in with the pupils every day
- monitoring the pupil to make sure they're completing their tasks and keeping busy
- being a point of contact if the pupil has any questions or safeguarding concerns



# Designing your week

There are lots of things to consider when setting up your virtual work experience week. Here are just some of our recommendations:

- **Programme duration** – we recommend five consecutive days to maintain engagement and ensure retention.
- **Session duration** – short sessions over 90-120-minute blocks will keep pupils engaged and allow meaningful content to be covered.
- **Time of day** – young people tend to be more energised in the morning, so pre-lunch is a good time for group learning.
- **Rest break** – have these at least every two hours to help with concentration.
- **Offline working** – young people from disadvantaged areas often have other responsibilities at home, so allow flexibility with offline activities in the afternoon if you can.
- **Quantity of attendees** – consider how many young people can take part before the quality is compromised. We'd recommend 10-20.

## How to structure the week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:30am - 10:30am	FACILITATED	FACILITATED	FACILITATED	FACILITATED	FACILITATED
10:30am - 11:30am	FACILITATED	FACILITATED	FACILITATED	FACILITATED	FACILITATED
11:30am - 12:30pm	BREAK				
90 - 120 minutes self scheduled	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT

Key: FACILITATED INDEPENDENT

An example timetable can be found at the back of this booklet.

# Timeline

It's really important to engage with pupils in the lead up to the placement week. A recommended timeline is below.

Activity	Responsible	Stage
<b>Acceptance onto the programme</b>	Teach First	
<b>Welcome email:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share programme overview</li> <li>• Provide pre-reading</li> <li>• Schedule briefing call</li> <li>• Share consent forms to be signed in advance</li> </ul>	Host company	Four weeks before placement
<b>Internet speed tests and equipment check</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for laptop requirements and internet speeds</li> </ul>	Teach First	Three weeks before placement
<b>Participant briefings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure tech set up is good to go</li> <li>• Do internet speed test</li> </ul>	Host company	Two weeks before placement
<b>Participant pre-welcome call</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get everyone together to share last minute details and make sure everyone is logging into the calls properly</li> </ul>	Host company and Teach First	One week before placement
<b>Work experience week</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily emails with reminders about what the next day will entail</li> </ul>	Host company	

Take a look at the comms plan template we've shared to help you.

# The week itself

## Pupil details

We'll send you contact details for the pupil and some information about them before the placement. You'll need to keep this safe and discard it after the placement ends.

## Final presentation

We'd like pupils to present their work to you, their mentor and anyone else who's worked with them at the end of the week. This will help them to reflect on what they've achieved. It also develops confidence and important communication skills.

The presentation could include:

- ◆ an introduction to the business and the tasks or project set for the week
- ◆ what skills they applied and developed during the week
- ◆ what they found most challenging
- ◆ what they are proud of
- ◆ the outcome of their project
- ◆ how your organisation works together to achieve its aims

We'll check in with you on the first and last day to see if everything has gone smoothly. Please let us know if the pupils have settled in well, if you'd like to flag any concerns or if they're absent. Of course, we'll be available at any point in the week if you need us.

## Afterwards

Feedback is vital for pupils to grow and learn. You can give your own feedback session during the week, but we'll also ask you to fill out an evaluation form. You'll find it in the [resources section](#) of this booklet. It would be great if you could tell us what worked when setting up the work experience and how the programme could be improved.



# Bridging the digital divide

Hosting virtual work experience placements can inadvertently widen the digital divide, so we want to make sure there are no barriers for disadvantaged young people taking part.

## Hardware and connectivity

We'll have calls with the pupils before their work experience week to find out if they have appropriate equipment to access the placement. If a participant doesn't have an appropriate home set-up or reliable internet connection, we'll make sure they have what they need before the week begins.



## Software

It's helpful to make use of free trials of MS Teams, Zoom or Google Classroom, unless you specifically want or need a particular programme to deliver your placement. You'll probably want the pupils to use:

- ◆ **Microsoft Office Suite** – required for producing work such as PowerPoint presentations, Excel spreadsheets or Word documents
- ◆ **A video conferencing tool** – pupils will partake in conference calls with facilitators, mentors and each other. Software with instant messaging is recommended
- ◆ **Collaboration tools** – pupils will be required to prepare documentation in response to various tasks. Tools like online whiteboards are useful to allow them to solve challenges together
- ◆ **Interactive polling tools** – these are useful to easily gather input from multiple pupils

Speak to us about your ideas and we'll happily give you guidance on what software you might want to use to make your week successful.

# Important things to remember

We want to make sure you and those involved in our virtual work experience programme know what to do to ensure the safety of young people. This involves having the right checks in place so they're protected while they're online and under your care.

Taking on virtual work experience pupils should be straightforward. We're here to help make it simple.

## Safeguarding

We're committed to keeping our young people safe in line with our [Child Safeguarding Policy](#).

- We'll need the Employee Lead from your organisation to complete an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.
- We'll ask you to share our mentor guidelines (found in the [resources section](#)) with the employees who'll have contact with pupils. This is so they know how to deal with certain situations, such as disclosing sensitive information.

## DBS checks

Hosting virtual work experience for under 18s for over four days in a one-month period constitutes as regulated activity. That means you'll need your Employee Lead to have an enhanced DBS check valid within two years.

They'll act as the safeguarding lead, and check in with the pupils every day to ensure they've got everything they need that day. They should also be active in any calls and have access to all call links should any issues arise.

Any pupils in your organisation must be made aware that they can speak to the safeguarding lead about anything that's concerning them. They can also talk to Teach First.

You can use any DBS checking service to do this. There are a couple of things to remember when putting your eligibility request in:

- It can sometimes take up to six weeks to receive the results of a check – make sure you arrange this well in advance of the start of the placement.
- When asked what your role is, always say the role is voluntary and your title is 'Work Experience Supervisor/Mentor'.
- If you're asked who the pupil will be working with, select 'always with the same group' or similar – you'll have oversight over all interactions the pupil has with your colleagues, so this is important.

**The service may have some additional questions. We'll support you no matter how big or small the query is.**

# Resources: Host overview form

<b>Organisation name</b>				
<b>Placement dates (please select)</b>	October half term	February half term	Easter	July/August
<b>Number of pupils</b>				
<b>Employee Lead name and contact number</b>				
<b>Preferred age group (between 15-18)</b>				
<b>Overview of company</b>  (If you have any presentation or documents that we can use, please do send them to us.)				
<b>Overview of planned work experience</b>  (This will be sent to the pupils who apply, so please make your placement as exciting and accessible as possible.)				
<b>Person specification</b>  (Are there any interests or qualities you feel the pupils should have?)				
Are there any compliance or other considerations we should be aware of?				

# Resources: Pupil evaluation form

Please take time to give feedback on your work experience pupil. This information can be helpful for future job/ university applications or general personal improvement. The evaluation will be shared with the pupil.

PUPIL NAME

ORGANISATION

DATES OF PLACEMENT

EMPLOYABILITY AND PERSONAL SKILLS

EXCELLENT

AVERAGE

POOR

N/A

1

2

3

4

5

GENERAL BEHAVIOUR: POLITENESS AND COURTESY

PRESENTATION, APPROPRIATE DRESS, ETC.

PUNCTUALITY AND TIMEKEEPING

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH COLLEAGUES/CLIENTS

WORKING AS PART OF A TEAM

COMMUNICATION

ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY/INITIATIVE

PROBLEM-SOLVING

COMPLETION OF ALLOCATED TASKS

POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO WORK

Please write a short summary of the pupil's performance and tasks below:  
(the pupil may use this as a reference for future applications)

Signed by

Position

Date

# Resources: Example timetable

**Before day one** - Pre-reading, supporting and set up materials

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY								
9:30am	Welcome Expectations Icebreaker Introduction to week's challenge	Group discussion on independent work	Application options, routes into your business and apprenticeship opportunities	Spotlight on area of business / senior manager talk / Q&A	Presentation task Final check-in with mentor								
10:00am	Introduce your organisation <b>BREAK</b>	Introduction to digital skills Future of work, interviews, online / video conferencing	My journey: Apprentice discussing their journey with your business, Q&A	Introduce presentation task	Final presentation to judges - constructive feedback								
10:30am	Spotlight on area of business	Spotlight on area of business	Spotlight on area of business	Presenting / pitching skills									
11:00am	Introduce afternoon's activities	Introduce afternoon's activities	Introduce afternoon's activities										
11:30am	<b>OVERFLOW</b>				Complete feedback survey Judges choose winner								
					Closing and wrap up								
12:00pm	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>				End of programme								
12:30pm					Networking lunch with vouchers								
1:00pm	Research topic you heard about in the morning session <i>(provide source material)</i>	Activity in group	Research / activity	Presentation task check-in with mentor Agree and split tasks	<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Key</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td>All groups together</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: lightblue;"></td> <td>Independent work time</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: blue;"></td> <td>Mentor-led/Mentor present</td> </tr> </table>	Key			All groups together		Independent work time		Mentor-led/Mentor present
Key													
	All groups together												
	Independent work time												
	Mentor-led/Mentor present												
1:30pm	Employability task: create / work on your CV <i>(provide source material)</i>	Complete feedback survey	Feedback session on previous task	Prepare final presentation for final idea.									
2:00pm	Introduction session and ice breaker Feedback to group / mentors on afternoon work	Individual task based on morning session	Introduce and begin tomorrow's task	Presentation task Midway feedback call with team and mentors									
2:30pm													
3:00pm	Reminder of tomorrow's schedule												

# Resources: Mentor guidelines

## Working online with under 18s: Guidance for virtual work experience mentors

As a virtual work experience mentor or supervisor, you're a person with lots of responsibility. You're there to make sure that young people taking part in virtual work experience are safe and comfortable when they're online. Even though you might be a stranger to them, you're also a role model and a source of knowledge and expertise.

### Roles and responsibilities

As a virtual mentor, you might be asked to take part in the programme in the following ways:

- ◆ Provide career advice and answer any questions or concerns.
- ◆ Facilitate a session on a topic of your choice.
- ◆ Be on a Q&A panel.
- ◆ Provide feedback to students on their work sessions.
- ◆ Run team breakout sessions.

No matter what your role during the week may be, you have a duty to follow the safeguarding rules that your organisation has agreed to with Teach First and report any concerns you may have. You can view a copy of our [Child Safeguarding Policy here](#).

Your responsibilities are:

- ◆ Prioritising the welfare of all pupils and providing a safe online environment.
- ◆ Ensuring calls and chats are used safely by all pupils.
- ◆ Reading and understanding these guidelines, following the safeguarding policy, and taking action when appropriate.
- ◆ Modelling good behaviour for pupils.

## Raising a safeguarding concern

We take the safeguarding of young people online as seriously as we do in person. We want you to be able to identify concerns and raise them to the correct person.

### What does online abuse look like?

Online abuse can range from cyberbullying to grooming. Being online with young people can also highlight other types of abuse that may be happening offline, such as physical or emotional abuse. The below list shows some examples that you could come across during online sessions with young people.

- ◆ Sending threatening or abusive messages to someone.
- ◆ Sharing embarrassing images or inappropriate content.
- ◆ Shaming or excluding someone.
- ◆ Physical violence visible on webcam, involving themselves or someone else in the background.
- ◆ Obvious signs of physical abuse visible on the webcam, such as large bruises or cuts.
- ◆ Inappropriate language being shouted in the background from someone else in the home.

# Resources: Mentor guidelines

## Process for raising concerns

If you notice any of the signals mentioned on the previous page that make you feel uncomfortable, you should always share what you've seen or heard with your the person acting as your safeguarding lead. It doesn't matter if you think what you've seen is really small. It's better to note it down than do nothing.

If a young person participating in the virtual work experience has a safeguarding concern, they will raise this with your organisation's safeguarding leads, as well as Teach First's safeguarding leads. We will also provide the NSPCC helpline for any concerns that young people don't want to raise to us.

The steps you should follow are:

- ◆ Report all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection policy. This includes behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.
- ◆ Take note of everything you've seen. If you can, take screenshots of images or a chat history and send these to the the person acting as your safeguarding lead at your organisation as part of the escalation process, and then delete them.
- ◆ In the case of bad behaviour that goes against the students' Code of Conduct, you should tell the Employee Lead, the person acting as your safeguarding lead and Teach First about it. Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and in a serious incident the pupil will be removed from the programme.

## What does best practice look like?

Virtual mentors need to be aware of safeguarding at all times. These are some things mentors can do to ensure you are not putting yourself or the safety of young people in danger:

- ◆ Take all calls in a quiet but open space, like a living room or office.
- ◆ Take care of your background to ensure nothing inappropriate can be seen. We suggest you blur out your background in all video calls.
- ◆ Monitor collaboration between pupils in chats or in calls for signs of emotional and physical abuse and cyberbullying.
- ◆ Never share the link to your video call with anyone who shouldn't be there to prevent unauthorised access to the meeting.
- ◆ End any calls if someone joins who shouldn't be there and contact the person acting as your safeguarding lead at your organisation.
- ◆ If there's only one young person on the call with you, explain that you must end the call and arrange with the programme lead for the young person to be moved into a bigger group.
- ◆ Never share your personal telephone number or email address – all communication should be made through your work account.
- ◆ If you're recording the call, you must explain the reason why, what it will be used for and when it will be deleted. Consent will in most cases already have been given by the young person's parent/guardian for your organisation to record sessions, but check with the organiser if you're unsure.
- ◆ If you're sharing your screen, get rid of any confidential information (like your email inbox) and close your internet browser.
- ◆ Don't share your social media information, such as Facebook or Instagram, and ignore any friend requests that you may get. It's okay to connect via LinkedIn as long as you don't have any personal information public.

[Contact your Employee Lead or the person acting as your safeguarding lead for more information, or if you have any questions about this guidance.](#)