



Castle Tower School

Post 16 Work Experience Policy

Date Ratified by Board of Governors	
Review Date	

Castle Tower welcomes pupils aged 3-19 who face a wide range of barriers to learning. Educational opportunities are provided within our Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Post 16 departments.

Our Vision

Vision:

To be a leading light in special education through educating, nurturing and inspiring all our school community.

Mission:

Castle Tower School is committed to creating a community which:

- Ensures everyone is safe and included
- Always learns
- Promotes independence and resilience
- Celebrates achievements
- Looks forward with hope to the future

Everything we do is driven by our core values:

- Child-centred
- Nurturing
- Fun
- Team work
- Inclusive
- Independence

Our Ethos

Castle Tower strives to create a caring community in which every member feels valued, supported and happy. All staff work to maintain an ethos in which fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness permeate all relationships within the school community. High standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and sensitivity are sought and everyone is encouraged to set and achieve the highest personal, academic and social goals. The safety, welfare and development of everyone in our school community is of paramount importance to all staff and Governors.

At Castle Tower, there is continued development of the quality of the teaching and learning environment. Resources are used efficiently. Opportunities are created for learning in co-operative and interactive settings. Pupils are presented with challenging as well as stimulating teaching and learning opportunities. Staff at Castle Tower seek close working relationships with other providers and services throughout each stage of our pupil's education and through the transition stage to further education and life after school.

Introduction

Castle Tower Post 16 department caters for our pupils aged 16–19. We are committed to providing meaningful work experience opportunities that prepare our pupils for life beyond school. These experiences are tailored to meet the diverse needs and abilities of our pupils and are delivered in accordance with the Education Authority's Work Experience Guidelines.

Vision and Commitment

Our goal is to offer a range of work experience opportunities that reflect the diverse needs and abilities of our pupils. These experiences are designed to build confidence, develop practical skills and support transitions into adulthood and employment.

We are committed to:

- Providing independent work experience placements within the local community.
- Offering supported work experience both within the school and in the wider community.
- Ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their level of need, from inhouse full supported work experiences to independent work experience within the community.
- Operating in full compliance with the Work Experience Guidelines of the Education Authority Northern Ireland.

Preparation and Readiness

Pupils are prepared for work experience through:

- Participation in enterprise projects within school and the wider community.
- Engagement in supported work opportunities facilitated by external agencies.
- Completion of any health and safety training or induction provided by the work experience provider.
- This preparation ensures pupils understand workplace expectations, safety procedures, and the skills required for their placements.

Types of Work Experience

Castle Tower Post 16 offers three main types of work experience:

- In-School Supported Work Experience: Pupils take on structured roles within the school environment, supported by staff.
- Community-Based Supported Work Experience: Pupils participate in placements within local businesses or organisations, with additional support.
- Independent Work Experience: Pupils who are ready for greater autonomy are placed in external settings with minimal support.

Inclusion and Accessibility

Each placement is tailored to the individual's abilities, interests, and support requirements. Pupils are encouraged to engage at their own level, with appropriate scaffolding and supervision provided to ensure success and safety.

Monitoring and Assessment

Pupil progress and placement suitability are assessed through:

- Regular contact between designated school staff and the work experience provider.
- Ongoing feedback from pupils, staff, and employers.
- Adjustments to placements as needed to ensure positive outcomes.

Employer Engagement and Partnership Development

We actively build and maintain relationships with local employers and community organisations.

These partnerships are essential for:

- Providing inclusive and meaningful placement opportunities.
- Ensuring a safe and supportive environment for pupils.
- Facilitating feedback and continuous improvement.

Health, Safety, and Compliance

Castle Tower Post 16 follows all relevant procedures and documentation required by the Education Authority Northern Ireland, including:

- Completion of risk assessments for all placements.
- Ensuring pupils complete any health and safety training provided by the placement provider.
- Appropriate vetting and safeguarding checks.
- Insurance and indemnity arrangements.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Staff: Coordinate placements, support pupils, liaise with employers, and ensure compliance.

Pupils: Engage responsibly in placements, complete required training, and reflect on their experiences.

Parents/Carers: Support pupil participation and provide feedback.

Employers/Community Partners: Offer safe, inclusive, and meaningful work experience opportunities.

Individualised Placement Planning

Before any placement is agreed, Castle Tower Post 16 undertakes a personalised planning process for each pupil. The Work Experience Coordinator consults with pupils, parents/carers, school staff, and potential placement providers to identify the most appropriate and beneficial placement.

This collaborative approach ensures that placements reflect the pupil's interests, strengths, and support needs. The Work Experience Coordinator maintains ongoing contact with the placement provider throughout the academic year to monitor progress, address any concerns, and ensure the placement continues to meet the pupil's needs.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Castle Tower Post 16 is committed to protecting the personal data of pupils involved in work experience. All information shared with employers or external agencies is handled in accordance

with GDPR and the school's Data Protection Policy. Employers are briefed on confidentiality expectations and safeguarding responsibilities. Pupil records, placement details, and feedback are stored securely and only accessible to authorised personnel.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

We actively promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work experience programme. Pupils of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities are supported to access placements that reflect their interests and aspirations. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure full participation. We celebrate diversity and ensure that cultural, linguistic, and individual differences are respected and valued throughout the work experience process.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains aligned with best practice and current guidance from the Education Authority.