

HESTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Work Experience Handbook 2027

Year 10 & Year 12 · A guide for students and parents/carers

Welcome

We are delighted to announce the return of work experience for Year 10 at Heston Community School, now offered in addition to the established Year 12 programme.

All Year 10 students will take part in a two-day placement designed to give them a real insight into the world of work. Year 12 students will be on placement for five days.



Why is work experience valuable?

- It develops essential skills such as communication, teamwork and problem solving.
- It builds confidence and independence, preparing students for life beyond school.
- It provides real-world experience, helping students make informed decisions about future careers and study options.
- It strengthens CVs and applications for college, apprenticeships and jobs.

Our commitment to careers education

At Heston Community School, we believe work experience is more than just a placement. It is an opportunity to discover interests, explore career paths and learn what employers expect.

Students often return with a clearer sense of direction and improved motivation for their studies.

Key dates

	YEAR 10	YEAR 12
Placement length	2 days	5 days
Placement dates	Thursday 8 – Friday 9 July	Monday 12 – Friday 16 July
Unifrog form deadline	Friday 12 February	Friday 12 February

Government Guidance and Gatsby Benchmarks

The Department for Education strongly encourages schools to provide meaningful encounters with employers. Work experience supports **Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces**, which is a key part of high-quality careers education.

The Gatsby Benchmarks are a nationally recognised framework for excellent careers provision. As a school, we are fully committed to meeting all eight Gatsby Benchmarks to ensure every student receives outstanding careers education and guidance.

Work experience is how we meet **Benchmark 6** – giving every student first-hand experience of a real workplace.

The eight Gatsby Benchmarks

1 A stable careers programme	2 Learning from career and labour market information
3 Addressing the needs of each pupil	4 Linking curriculum learning to careers
5 Encounters with employers and employees	**6 Experiences of workplaces**
7 Encounters with further and higher education	8 Personal guidance

Frequently Asked Questions

01

Do I have to go on work experience?

Yes. All students are expected to take part in work experience. It is a valuable opportunity to develop workplace skills, gain insight into different careers and strengthen future applications for college, apprenticeships or employment.

02

Does my placement have to be in London?

No. Your placement can be anywhere in the UK. However, it must be somewhere you can travel to easily, or where you have someone trusted who can host you during the placement. Please note that we cannot authorise extra days off school for travel. Your parents/carers must also agree to and support the arrangements.

03

Do I have to spend all days at the same placement?

No. You may split your days across different placements. However, each placement must complete the same health and safety checks. Please keep in mind that finding one placement can be challenging, so arranging more than one may be even more difficult.

04

I have secured, or been offered, a placement outside the allocated days. Can I still go?

No. Unfortunately, we will only authorise work experience during the scheduled dates. This is to minimise disruption to learning and ensure that all students are out at the same time.

Frequently Asked Questions

05

Is there anywhere I am not allowed to go for a placement?

Your placement must meet the health and safety requirements. The employer must have employer's liability insurance and complete a risk assessment, and placements cannot be with sole traders. If these requirements are not met, the placement cannot be approved.

06

Can I do a virtual/online work experience placement?

We strongly recommend an in-person placement. However, we understand that some excellent online opportunities have emerged, so we will consider virtual placements on a case-by-case basis. Pre-recorded or self-paced programmes will not be approved because they do not provide live interaction.

07

Can I do my work experience where I already have a part-time job?

Yes, this is possible, although it is not recommended. Work experience is an opportunity to broaden your skills and try something new. If you choose a placement where you already work, you are less likely to gain new experiences. Please note that you must not be paid for your work experience.

08

What should I do if I have no idea what career I am interested in?

Do not worry, this is completely normal. Many people do not decide on a career until much later. Work experience is a great way to explore different options and learn more about the types of work that interest you. If you are looking for ideas, Unifrog is a great place to start.

Frequently Asked Questions

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What should I do if I am struggling to find a work experience placement?

Speak to your tutor, who may be able to help you come up with more ideas. Consider expanding your search to an area not of direct interest where work skills can still be learned. This might include volunteering for a charity.

10

What should I do if I am unable to secure a placement, or my placement is cancelled at the last minute?

You will be expected to come to school. We will provide alternative activities during this time, which are likely to include supporting Year 7/8 students in lessons, supporting admin in the school and completing online courses.

11

What hours should I work, will I get breaks and will I be paid?

Your working hours should be agreed with your employer before the placement begins. They must be no more than 8 hours per day and between 7.00am and 7.00pm. You must not work for more than 4.5 hours without a break of at least 30 minutes.

You will not be paid, as the purpose of work experience is to gain skills rather than to earn money.

Securing a Placement

At Heston Community School we are committed to helping every student access meaningful work experience. Here is what we are doing:



Securing guaranteed placements

We are actively working with our existing employer networks and seeking support from parents/carers and the local community to create a list of guaranteed placements for students.

Using this booklet as a support tool

This booklet is designed to help students take the lead in securing their own placements. It includes practical tips, example email templates, phone scripts and guidance on how to approach employers confidently.

Learning the skills involved in finding and securing your own placement is a great way to build independence, communication skills and resilience – qualities that employers value.

Health and Safety Requirements

Essential requirements

Before you begin searching for a placement, please read the following carefully. These requirements are in place to keep students safe and ensure employers are prepared.

- **Employer's liability insurance:** all placements must have valid employer's liability insurance.
- **Risk assessment:** employers must have an up-to-date risk assessment for hosting young people in the workplace.
- **No sole traders:** placements cannot be with sole traders (businesses with only one person and no employees).

If a placement involves additional risks, the employer will be asked to provide a copy of their risk assessment. We will review this and decide whether the placement is suitable.



Working with vulnerable groups

Some employers may require a DBS check (criminal records clearance) for roles involving vulnerable groups.

It is possible to work with vulnerable groups without a DBS check, but you must be supervised at all times. Some placements cannot manage this supervision and will require you to have DBS clearance.

Year 10: DBS checks can only be applied for by students aged 16 or over, so Year 10 placements with vulnerable groups must provide supervision at all times.

Important: DBS checks can take several weeks and may cost up to £49.50, depending on the level of clearance. This cost is usually paid by the student/family, and the school cannot contribute to it. Please consider this when contacting employers.

Before confirming a placement, make sure you have:

- [ ] Asked the employer whether they have employer's liability insurance
- [ ] Confirmed they have an up-to-date risk assessment for young people
- [ ] Checked the employer is not a sole trader
- [ ] Discussed any additional risks and whether a copy of the risk assessment is needed
- [ ] Asked whether a DBS check is required (if working with vulnerable groups) and understood the cost and time involved
- [ ] Considered whether the placement can provide supervision if DBS clearance is not possible

Looking for a Placement

Use your personal network

Start with family and friends. Ask whether they know anyone in the industry you are interested in – many opportunities come through word of mouth.

Many companies only offer work experience to children or close contacts of staff members, so it is a good idea to use your close family network. For example, you may have a family member who works as an engineer for Dyson or Airbus. Even if you do not want to be an engineer yourself, they might be able to help you secure work experience in other departments, such as IT, marketing or finance.



Search local employer websites and social media

- Look for a "Careers" or "Work Experience" section on company websites.
- Even if nothing is advertised, email them directly – many placements are arranged informally.
- Parents/carers who use LinkedIn can connect with staff at companies you are interested in and reach out to them on your behalf.

Contact local businesses directly

- Make a list of companies in your area related to your interests.
- AI tools can help you build a list. For example, ask an AI assistant: "Give me a list of manufacturing businesses in London."
- Call or email them using a professional script or template.
- Personalise your message – mention why you are interested in their company.

Supporting Students with SEND and Medical Needs

Work experience is an exciting opportunity for all students, and we want to ensure that those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or medical needs feel supported and safe throughout the process.

While we encourage all students to take ownership of contacting employers, some students with SEND may need extra help. Parents can support by making initial contact or accompanying the student during discussions.

Suitability

Consider placements that match the student's strengths and needs. For some, a familiar environment, such as working with a family member or close friend, may be more appropriate.

Clear communication

Before confirming a placement, ensure the employer understands the student's needs and can provide the necessary support.

Important steps for families

Forms

Students must answer questions about SEND and medical needs honestly and in detail on the Unifrog form. Parents should help complete these forms to ensure accuracy, so the placement can complete an appropriate risk assessment based on the needs of the individual student.

Reminders

On the day, students should remind staff at the placement about any needs, especially if new people are supervising.

Medication

Bring any required medication (e.g. inhalers) and keep it accessible.

Our role

We will liaise with the SENCo and support families to source suitable work experience placements where needed. If you require assistance, email **info@hestoncs.org**.

Where placements have been secured for students with significant needs, we will contact the employer directly to confirm they are prepared and have completed a suitable risk assessment.

Top tips for success

Talk through the placement details with your child so they feel confident. Encourage them to speak up if they feel worried or need help during the placement.

Let us know early if you anticipate any challenges – we are here to help.

Contacting Employers

When you contact an employer, whether by email or phone, you are representing yourself and your school.

A polite, professional approach shows that you are serious, reliable and enthusiastic about the opportunity. Employers are more likely to offer a placement to students who communicate clearly and respectfully. Taking the time to make a good impression can greatly increase your chances of securing work experience.

On the next page are an email template and a phone call script designed to help you make a positive first impression when contacting employers.

Make it personal

We strongly recommend that you personalise these as much as possible – adding your own details will help you stand out. Demonstrating knowledge of the company and explaining why you specifically want work experience with them can make a big difference.

It is also a good idea to find a specific contact person on the company's website and address them by name, rather than using a generic greeting like "Dear Sir/Madam".

Follow up

If you do not receive a response within five working days, send a polite follow-up email to check your original message was received.

If there is still no reply, follow up with a phone call. This demonstrates persistence and shows that you are taking the opportunity seriously.



Email Template

Subject: Work Experience Placement Request – [Your Name]

Dear [Recipient's Name, or "Sir/Madam" if you cannot find one],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a Year [10 or 12] student at Heston Community School. I am writing to ask whether you would consider offering me a work experience placement for [two days (Year 10) or five days (Year 12)] from [date] to [date].

I am very interested in learning more about [industry/role, e.g. law, healthcare, engineering] and gaining an understanding of what it is like to work in this field. I believe this experience would help me develop important skills such as communication, teamwork and time management.

If possible, I would be grateful for the opportunity to shadow your team and assist with any tasks that are suitable for someone of my age. Please let me know if you require any further information or documents from me.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Contact Details]
Heston Community School

Phone Call Script

BEFORE YOU CALL

- Have the company name, the person you want to speak to (if known) and your details ready.
- Be polite, clear and confident.
- Practise what you are going to say with a parent/carer.

OPENING

> *"Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I am a Year [10 or 12] student at Heston Community School. Could I please speak to the person who handles work experience or placements?"*

SPEAKING TO THE RIGHT PERSON

> *"Hi, my name is [Your Name], and I'm currently studying for my [GCSEs or A levels] at Heston Community School. I'm really interested in [industry/role] and was wondering whether your company would be able to offer me a work experience placement from [date] to [date]. I've read about your company, and I'm particularly interested in [specific aspect of their work]. I think it would be a great chance to learn more and develop my skills."*

CLOSE

> *"Thank you so much for your time. Could I take down your email address to follow up with more details?"*

Write down any instructions they give you, and thank them again.

Recording Your Placement

Every placement is recorded and approved on Unifrog in four steps.

1

Student initial form

Log in to your Unifrog account. If you have any problems logging in, please speak to your tutor or Mrs Chhibba. From the dashboard, click the purple "Placements" box, then select "Add New Placement" to enter the details. Complete all the questions on the form, including:

- employer details (name, address and contact information)
- your parent/carer's contact details
- the placement co-ordinator question: select "Y10 Work Experience – [Tutor's name]" or "Y12 Work Experience – [Tutor's name]".

2

Employer initial form

The employer will receive an email from Unifrog asking them to complete a short form. This asks them to confirm key details, including health and safety procedures, risk assessments and evidence of employer's liability insurance.

3

Parent/guardian agreement

Parents/guardians will receive an email from Unifrog asking them to review all the information provided by the student and the employer. They will then be asked to give permission for the placement to go ahead. Permission should only be given once they are fully satisfied with the details.

4

Approval from Heston Community School

Once the student, employer and parent/guardian have completed their sections, staff at Heston Community School will review the information. If we are satisfied that all requirements, including health and safety, are met, we will approve the placement. If any concerns arise, we will contact the employer or parent/guardian directly to discuss and resolve them.

Preparing for your Placement

Work experience is an exciting opportunity to learn about the world of work and develop skills that will help you in the future. To make the most of your placement, preparation is key. Here are some steps to help you get ready.

One week before: contact your employer

Confirm the details of your placement about a week before you start. Some of this information may be on the employer's form on Unifrog, but you should still call or email. Ask about:

- where to go on your first day
- start and finish times
- who to ask for when you arrive
- what you are expected to wear
- lunch arrangements – is there a canteen, or do you need to bring your own?

Research the organisation

- Find out what the company does, its values and the type of work you will be involved in.
- Look at its website or social media pages to understand its culture and recent projects.

Plan your journey

- Check the location and plan how you will get there. Practise the route if possible.
- Make sure you know the start and finish times, and allow extra time for travel.

> **Tip:** traffic in London can be very busy at peak times, so allow plenty of extra travel time. If you are travelling by bus, assume there may be delays or that some buses might not arrive. Know alternative routes and choose a departure time that gives you backup options, so even if one bus does not show, you can still arrive on time.

Dress appropriately

- Ask about the dress code in advance. If unsure, smart and tidy is always a safe choice.
- Make sure your clothes and shoes are comfortable for the tasks you will be doing.

Prepare the essentials

- Bring a notebook and pen for taking notes.
- Pack lunch and a drink unless you know food will be provided.
- Keep emergency contact details and any required documents (e.g. your placement letter) with you.

Understand expectations

- Be punctual, polite and enthusiastic.
- Listen carefully, ask questions and show interest in learning.
- Remember, this is a professional environment, so use appropriate language and behaviour.

Set personal goals

- Think about what you want to learn – new skills, understanding a career path or improving your confidence.
- Write down two or three goals and review them during your placement.
- Prepare some questions about the role, the organisation or career paths. This shows initiative and helps you learn more.

During your Placement

What to do if you cannot attend your placement

Sometimes unexpected things happen, and you may not be able to attend your work experience placement. If this occurs, it is important to act quickly and professionally.

1

Contact your employer immediately

Call them as soon as you know you cannot attend. Do not rely on email or text unless you have no other option. Do this as early as possible; unless the reason is unexpected, call at least an hour before your start time.

Explain the reason clearly and politely. If you know how long you expect to be off, let them know, and keep them updated if things change.

2

Inform the school

Contact the school office on **020 8572 1931** to tell them about your absence.

> Do not simply fail to turn up – this can damage your reputation and the school's relationship with the employer.

What to do if you are running late

1

Call your employer immediately

Let them know your estimated arrival time. Apologise for the delay and explain briefly (e.g. transport issues).

2

Do not panic

Arrive as soon as possible and stay calm. Being honest and polite goes a long way.

During your Placement

Your placement is a chance to learn, grow and experience the world of work. Here is how to stay safe, make a great impression and get the most out of it.

Induction checklist

When you arrive, your employer should give you an induction. Make sure it covers:

- [ ] who your point of contact is
- [ ] where the welfare facilities are (toilets, break areas)
- [ ] what to do if the fire alarm sounds
- [ ] where the first aid kit is and who the appointed first aider is
- [ ] any health and safety requirements you need to follow
- [ ] any tasks you are NOT allowed to do.

If anything is unclear, ask questions. Your safety and understanding are important.

Key points to follow

- Be polite, respectful, courteous, friendly and professional.
- Show interest, ask questions and challenge yourself. Complete as many different activities and tasks as possible.
- Aim to speak with employees in different roles to learn about varied careers.
- Avoid using your phone or social media during work hours.

Take notes effectively

Taking notes is essential for remembering what you have learned and reflecting later:

- Write down key tasks and skills you observe or practise.
- Record the names and job titles of people you meet.
- Note any advice or tips from your supervisor or colleagues.
- Use bullet points, and keep your notebook organised by date.
- Review your notes at the end of each day to reinforce learning.

Your Work Experience Journal

A few weeks before your placement, you will receive a printed copy of your Work Experience Journal. It will guide you through your placement by helping you record key information and reflect on your experiences. It also includes tasks and activities to complete at the workplace.

At the end of your placement

On your final day, thank the key people who have supported you and say goodbye to colleagues. A polite and positive farewell leaves a lasting impression.

If you would like to keep in touch with anyone for future advice or networking, ask whether they would be happy to share their work email address. Always be respectful – some workplaces have strict policies about sharing contact details.

During your Placement

Ask for feedback

It is a good idea to ask for feedback on your performance and what skills you could develop further. This shows initiative and a willingness to learn. Employers will provide written feedback through Unifrog, but it is always best to ask for face-to-face feedback as well. This gives you the chance to discuss their comments, ask questions and gain valuable advice for your future development.

What to do if you feel unsafe or unhappy

Your safety and wellbeing are the most important things during work experience. You may be asked to do something new or challenging – that is part of learning! But if at any point you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or unhappy, here is what to do:

1

Speak up immediately

If something feels wrong, tell your supervisor or the person responsible for you at the placement. Explain clearly what is making you feel unsafe or unhappy.

2

Contact your school

Call Heston Community School as soon as possible on **020 8572 1931**. If for any reason you are unable to use a phone, email **info@hestoncs.org**. We will support you and decide the best next steps.

3

Do not ignore the situation

If you feel unsafe, leave the situation and move to a safe space. Never stay silent – your concerns will be taken seriously.

Emergency situations

999 In the very unlikely event that you are in immediate danger, call 999 and then inform the school.

After your Placement

Send a thank-you email

After your placement, write a short thank-you email to your main contact or supervisor within 24–48 hours. Keep it professional and positive. For example:

> **Subject:** Thank you for my work experience
>
> Dear [Name],
>
> Thank you for giving me the opportunity to complete my work experience with [Company Name]. I really enjoyed learning about [specific task or area] and appreciated the support from you and the team.
>
> Best regards,
> [Your Name]

This simple gesture shows professionalism and helps maintain a positive connection for the future.

Employer review form

Once the placement has ended, your supervisor will be asked to give feedback through Unifrog. They will rate your performance in areas such as communication, teamwork, independence and overall attitude. You will be able to view this feedback in Unifrog.

Student review and reflection

You will then complete a short reflection on your work experience and give feedback to the employer through Unifrog.

There are also reflection questions in your printed Work Experience Journal. Use these to help you think about what you learned and how it will help you in the future.

Key Dates and Contacts

	YEAR 10	YEAR 12
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Placement dates	Thursday 8 – Friday 9 July	Monday 12 – Friday 16 July
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School office	020 8572 1931
Email	info@hestoncs.org
Unifrog help	Your tutor or Mrs Chhibba
Emergency	999

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