

# Workplace Learning Guide for Parents & Carers

2025





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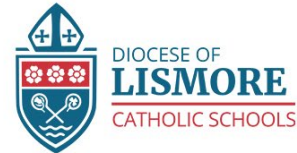
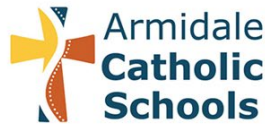
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This document is for use in both Diocesan and RI/MPJP Catholic schools in NSW and ACT.



## About workplace learning

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*Workplace Learning (WPL) programs form part of the NSW secondary school curriculum. They allow students to develop vocational skills, knowledge and attitudes in a real work environment.*

Two types of WPL programs are organised and approved for students in Catholic schools.

**Work Experience** provides students aged 14 and over the opportunity to learn more about career options in a chosen workplace. Host employers for work experience are usually sourced by students themselves, their families or the school. Work experience builds on career planning and transition activities and can assist with course and subject selection.

**Work Placement** is a compulsory part of HSC Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses which lead to nationally recognised VET qualifications. Host employers supervise students in the workplace, complementing the training at school or with an external Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Skills and knowledge acquired are used for work-based assessment of specific course competencies. Host employers for work placement programs are usually sourced through Work Placement Service Providers (WPSPs).

## The Role of Parents/Carers

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### BEFORE Placement

- Discuss with the student/your child their aims and objectives in undertaking the WPL.
- For **work experience placements**, encourage your child to:
  - a. select occupations/industries in which they are interested
  - b. investigate the occupations and lifestyles available in those industries
  - c. consider possible host employers available locally or through family connections.
- Encourage and assist your child to find out about:
  - a. clothing and personal and protective equipment (PPE) requirements
  - b. start and finish times, as your child will be working the normal hours for the position
  - c. first day arrangements such as time, place, contact person
  - d. meal facilities and transport.
- Discuss the expectations for the WPL by encouraging your child to:
  - a. read the *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guide for Students*
  - b. read and sign the *Student Placement Record (SPR)*
  - c. complete [my work experience](#) or [go2workplacement](#) as appropriate
  - d. contact the employer at least one week prior to the WPL start date to confirm details
  - e. check travel details, these are best done independently but a dry run might be a good idea.

### DURING Placement

- Encourage your child to:
  - a. discuss each day's activities, experiences, the organisation (but encourage confidentiality)
  - b. complete journals and activities supplied by the school
  - c. attend the workplace every day of the program (usually 1 week)
  - d. investigate training and education requirements for jobs in the organisation
  - e. consider working conditions, the role of unions, safety and employees' responsibilities and rights.

### AFTER Placement

- Discuss with the student/your child the host employer's report and their options for education, training and career decisions.

### When can students undertake WPL?

Young people can participate in WPL programs from the age of 14. WPL programs for Year 10 students can only operate during term time. Students under 15 years cannot work before 7am or after 6pm.

WPL may be extended into the weekend with special approval from the principal, but only if weekend work is an essential requirement of the industry. In exceptional circumstances, the principal may approve WPL by individual Year 11 and 12 students during school holidays. This does not include the Christmas holidays.

### Will your child be paid?

No. Students are classified as '**voluntary workers**' and host employers are **not** to make any payment to them under the Federal or State award covering their industry, the *NSW Annual Holidays Act* or the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

The exception is where your child seeks recognition of their part-time employment as part of their mandatory HSC VET work placement requirement. In this case, the student is a paid worker and the insurance arrangements of the employer apply. Students wishing to apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for part-time work must complete a *Recognition of part-time paid work for HSC VET work placement* form. This arrangement must be negotiated with the employer and approved by the school.

### How far will students need to travel?

Most placements will be within commuting distance of home.

To receive approval for a placement away from home, there must be exceptional educational value and the proposed transport, accommodation and overnight supervision arrangements must be suitable and have specific written approval of the principal as well as the parent/carer. If accommodation away from home is requested, a *WPL Accommodation Away from Home* form must be completed.

### What about travel arrangements?

All travel is at the student's expense. You will be expected to help your child with their travel arrangements and support their travel costs for the duration of the placement. The student's Child/Youth Opal card and Transport Concession Entitlement card can be used for travel on public trains, buses, ferries and some private buses.

As a parent or carer, you must be satisfied that the travelling arrangements can be safely managed by your child. If you have concerns, you should discuss them directly and with the school's WPL program organiser.

Students are not permitted to drive their own vehicles whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the host employer. Approval must be sought from both you and the school if they are required to travel in a vehicle with the host employer or supervisor; documentation must accompany the SPR.

### What if my child has a disability or medical condition?

You will need to advise the school, private or community registered training organisation of any disability, learning and support needs, medical condition, (e.g. diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis) or restriction affecting your child that may affect the safety, wellbeing and supervision of your child in the workplace. This important information should be included or attached to your child's *Student Placement Record (SPR)*. Health Care Plans may need to be made available to host employers. If you are not sure, speak with your child's General Practitioner.

If your child needs any adjustments in the workplace to accommodate their additional support needs or disability, you must discuss this with the school's Learning Support Team during the planning process.

### Your child's safety

*Student safety and child protection are first priorities.*

Host employers must notify the school immediately of any health and safety incidents, including near misses involving a student while on placement.

All host employers receive the *CSNSW Workplace Learning Guide for Employers* to help them provide safe and effective learning opportunities for students attending their workplace.

Your child should feel safe in the workplace. The employer is required to ensure that all staff are aware of child protection issues and of their special responsibilities when working with school students. Staff will follow clear

procedures in response to any reasonable suspicion or allegation of misconduct by employers or their employees against students.

Your child has the right to refuse to undertake tasks that involve one-on-one contact with employees or clients, particularly if this is to be done in confined spaces.

Your child's employer must avoid conduct that could be interpreted as inappropriate, offensive or unlawful. This could include initiation activities, inappropriate conversations, remarks or jokes of a sexual nature; the showing of sexually suggestive publications, electronic media or illustrations of any unwarranted and/or inappropriate touching or personal communication with students regarding their sexual feelings.

If for any reason your child feels threatened, harassed or unsafe in any way, they should talk to you, their workplace supervisor and/or nominated contact person at school as soon as possible. If the problem continues your child **should** tell the nominated contact person at school. In an emergency, call the police.

If your child is considering a placement in a child related industry (e.g. childcare centre, school etc):

- they will need to complete a *Volunteer Declaration* form. This form is obtained through the centre or school.
- students must not be requested to undertake unsupervised tasks with children under the age of 18 years (Note: students involved in childcare placements are to be supervised at all times)
- persons **over** 18 working in paid or unpaid occupations classed as *child-related employment*, must complete a *Working with Children (NSW) / Vulnerable People Check (ACT)*. This includes WPL in schools, early childhood education and care settings, child welfare services, youth clubs, etc.

### In emergencies

Provisions are in place to support students in the rare event of an accident or emergency during their time in the workplace.

Your child will carry a small *Safety and Emergency Procedures Student Contact Card* listing important information and nominated contacts both during and outside normal business hours. This lets them know who to contact should they sustain an injury or feel at risk and unable to raise the matter with their host employer.

**During normal business hours** the nominated contact will be provided by their school.

**Outside normal business hours** the student must contact you, their parent/carer. You are NOT required to investigate or resolve the issue: simply remove your child from risk of harm and notify the school as soon as possible (e.g. the next day). The school will follow up the issue with the workplace and advise you of the outcome.

If your child has ANY concerns, they must call the school immediately.

### Your child's Student Placement Record (SPR)

All contacts, arrangements and approvals relating to your child's placement will be recorded on their SPR. This enables important information to be shared, signed and approved by all parties.

Please make sure you locate the SPR in your child's information package and provide the information as required by your school. Once the form has been completed and signed by all parties, you will receive a copy for your records.

The SPR also lists your child's individual work arrangements (start and finish times, lunch breaks, clothing requirements etc), the tasks they'll be undertaking, any pre-training or vaccinations they may need, emergency contacts and additional support arrangements for students with special needs.

The SPR will be stored by the school, in accordance with the school's record retention policies.

### Insurance

From 31st March 2025, each RI/MPJP school and diocese will maintain public liability insurance to cover injury to students, loss or damage occasioned by students, and indemnity cover for host employers (subject to individual policy, terms, conditions, limits and exclusions). These policies are updated and issued annually.

Students are not classified as paid workers, so injuries sustained during workplace learning or while travelling to or from the workplace are generally covered by Medicare and other insurance policies taken out by the school, excluding workers' compensation. Generally, claims arising from motor vehicle accidents are covered by compulsory third-party insurance.

Your child's school's public liability insurance provides coverage for enrolled students to participate in school-approved workplace learning programs (subject to the individual policy terms and conditions). This underscores the



importance of a completed and signed SPR. The school's insurance policy may also cover certain medical services not eligible for a Medicare benefit, such as dental and physiotherapy treatment, but it does **not** cover the Medicare 'gap' between the medical practitioner's fee charge and the Medicare rebate.

Students are required to adhere to all workplace health and safety procedures outlined by their employer and work under the close supervision of a qualified individual. Additionally, students must refrain from participating in any excluded activities listed below. Potentially high-risk activities may only be undertaken in the circumstances identified below.

## Excluded and High-Risk Activities

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As in all educational activities, the welfare of students participating in WPL programs is paramount.

Some activities are completely excluded for workplace learning while other high-risk activities may have conditions attached before they may be undertaken

### 1. Excluded WPL Activities

*Students cannot undertake the following activities in WPL:*

- 1.1. any work of a sexual or explicit nature
- 1.2. travel by helicopter and/or private charter aircraft other than those providing a regular paid public transport service, except as part of an approved and supervised Australian Defence Force activity
- 1.3. travel outside twelve (12) nautical mile limit at sea
- 1.4. ownership, maintenance, use or operation of watercraft exceeding 10 metres in length
- 1.5. scuba and/or deep-sea diving
- 1.6. excavation work at a depth in excess of one (1) metre or near utilities
- 1.7. excavation work at a depth of less than one (1) metre without direct supervision of a competent person
- 1.8. any work at an elevated level higher than two (2) metres
- 1.9. work on a roof, roof trusses, or roof cavity
- 1.10. work where asbestos is present
- 1.11. any activities involving or adjacent to the repair, removal or demolition of any construction work containing asbestos or in the clean-up process following the activity
- 1.12. activities involving the manufacture, supply and installation of engineered stone benchtops, panels and slabs
- 1.13. construction work in tunnels, confined spaces or involving the use of explosives. Students are permitted to work above-ground at mine sites provided express permission has been given by the school/diocesan representative who has ensured appropriate risk mitigation has been undertaken
- 1.14. work on permanent or temporary structures used to enable construction work in marine environments (caissons or coffer dams)
- 1.15. work in and around pressurised gas distribution mains or piping and energised electrical installations or services
- 1.16. be in close proximity to traffic or mobile plant operating on a worksite. Students are to attend onsite induction and traffic management meetings. Host employers are to closely supervise students, especially when plant is operating, and question students to ensure understanding of no-go areas and related safety procedures
- 1.17. high-risk construction work, as defined in [Schedule 3, NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation \(2017\)](#), or ACT equivalent, [Appendix C, Licensing and registration - WorkSafe ACT \(2018\)](#), ie work involving:
  - risk of a person falling more than 2 metres
  - construction work involving the use of explosives
  - work near traffic or mobile plant
  - work around major gas and electrical installations
- 1.18. demolition work other than simple stripping of walls
- 1.19. attendance at a site while chimney stacks or buildings are being demolished
- 1.20. driving: (except as identified in 2.5 below) students are NOT permitted to:
  - drive their own vehicles while undertaking activities on behalf of the host employer

- be asked/directed to drive employer's or any client vehicles while they are on WPL
  - drive any old or unregistered vehicles commonly known as 'bush bashers'
- 1.21. riding horses
- 1.22. attendance at abattoir killing areas (due to Q Fever exposure). Work is permitted at an abattoir or meat processing plant, other than killing areas with appropriate school/diocesan approval
- 1.23. activities involving guns or firearms except as part of an approved and supervised Australian Defence Force activity.

*This is not an exhaustive list. Your child's school should check their insurance policies carefully for a full list of exclusions*

## 2. Potentially high-risk workplace activities

Some work-place activities are potentially high-risk.

*Students can only undertake the following high-risk activities in the identified circumstances:*

- 2.1 use of machinery or equipment which may be dangerous for new or young workers to operate is prohibited unless the activity is first risk-assessed as suitable and safe for student operation by the host employer and each of the following occurs:
- 2.1.1 the student is given appropriate information, instruction and training and a checklist for the safe operation and handling of the equipment
  - 2.1.2 the equipment is in safe working order, complete with required safety devices or guards
  - 2.1.3 a suitably qualified or experienced person in the workplace who has good communication skills and the ability to give clear instructions provides ongoing close supervision.
- 2.2 **welding/hotwork** is prohibited - unless such welding or cutting was done in compliance with Australian [NSW Code of Practice: Welding Processes 2022](#) or [ACT Work Health and Safety \(Welding Processes Code of Practice\) Approval 2022](#)
- 2.3 **service of alcohol** is prohibited - unless the student is aged over eighteen (18) and the activity is essential to the placement, has been agreed by all stakeholders and the student has successfully completed the Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) training course
- 2.4 **construction work** is prohibited - unless the student has:
- 2.4.1 completed WHS training and has obtained a general construction induction (white card), noting:
    - the construction training package mandates delivery and assessment via face-to-face or real-time audio and visual media. Both forms of delivery and assessment are valid. Schools are in the best position to understand the learning style of their students when determining the mode of delivery of the white card, ensuring student safety is paramount
    - where a student has obtained a white card issued by another state, the school must undertake additional actions to meet its duty of care obligations
    - a white card is only valid if the student has undertaken work in the construction industry, such as WPL, in the 2 years since the white card was issued
  - 2.4.2 demonstrated the ability to manage their own safety and the safety of others on a construction site; the school principal should not approve the activity where there is any concern
  - 2.4.3 been provided an induction by the workplace supervisor, including training in procedures and how to manage site-specific risks. Handling and operating of all tools and equipment must be explained, along with associated risk management.
- 2.5 **driving of any vehicle** is prohibited - except as part of the NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) *HSC Primary Industries Curriculum Framework course*, and **then only where the student is over 16 and under instruction and supervision by the employer**. In addition:
- 2.5.1 any activity requiring a licence, permit, or certificate of competence is prohibited unless:
    - the student already has the relevant current licence, permit or certificate; and
    - the activity is directly related to the learning outcomes of the placement; and
    - the activity is included in the SPR prior to approval.
  - 2.5.2 students must successfully complete the appropriately accredited training course for the operation and maintenance of the machinery and equipment. This includes tractors, implements, equipment attached to a tractor power take-off and side-by-side utility vehicles



- 2.5.3 students with a long record of safe use of quad bikes or motorbikes on farms might not need to complete accredited training. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis. Regardless,
- host employers complete a risk assessment to ensure the activity is safe for students. These are submitted to the school or EVET manager before WPL approval; and
  - students must be closely supervised when using any vehicles, machinery or equipment; and
  - when riding quad bikes and motorbikes, students must be at least 16 and wear:
    - an approved helmet with strap fastened; and
    - eye protection such as goggles; and
    - hand protection such as gloves; and
    - a long-sleeved shirt and full-length pants; and
    - sturdy footwear such as boots.
- 2.5.4 students with little or no experience **must not** operate vehicles, machinery or equipment unless the host employer has demonstrated **substantial experience in providing quality training** to manage the student under close supervision. See [SafeWork Farm machinery: Fact sheet](#).

### 3. Special Approvals

Special approval from the school or diocese is required if students wish to undertake certain high-risk activities.

Students wishing to undertake such activities must complete the relevant *WPL Special Approval Self-Assessment Application* form, available from the [CSNSW WPL webpage](#) for use by diocesan and RI/MPJP schools and follow the school's approval procedures.

Special approval is required for the following high-risk activities:

- 3.1 **working with animals** - this can be dangerous, no matter how experienced the student. Any WPL involving animals, especially horses or livestock, needs extreme caution and special approval from the diocese (or RI/MPJP) school. Therefore, schools must comply with the following additional precautions for students working with animals, including horses or livestock during WPL.
- 3.1.1 students are to complete a *self-assessment* to demonstrate their experiences and capacity to work with animals, other than exempted sites (Taronga, including Western Plains Zoo) and/or participation in NESA Stage 6 Primary Industries course
- 3.1.2 activities involving horse handling: host employers must follow the [SafeWork NSW code of practice Managing risks when new or inexperienced riders or handlers interact with horses in the workplace](#). Schools should keep records in accordance with the factors described in the code of practice:
- Appendix B – assessing a horse
  - Appendix C – assessing a new or inexperienced rider or handler who will interact with horses in the workplace.
- 3.1.3 activities involving livestock: see [SafeWork Working with Livestock Fact Sheet](#) and [Working with livestock on farms](#). Additionally, students must learn how to reduce the risk of Q fever infection and receive [NSW Health – Q fever fact sheet](#) before attending. Additionally, students **must not** be exposed to Q fever bacteria through:
- observing or assisting with animal birthing
  - handling birth products
  - cleaning up birth products and animal excreta
  - handling an animal's carcass.
- 3.2 **working above ground at a mine site** providing students do **not** undertake any underground activities nor use explosives in connection with mining/ quarrying/tunnelling
- 3.3 **working at an abattoir or meat processing plant** providing students do not attend killing areas because of the risk of Q-fever, as outlined above
- 3.4 **accommodation away from home**, including placements outside the territory of the Commonwealth of Australia. Overseas placements are not advised. Placements in the USA or Canada and countries subject to their jurisdiction are generally not permitted. Any considerations of overseas placements should take into account the federal government website [www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au) and also consider the insurance regulations of the proposed country. Any proposed non-local placement must be referred to the school's insurer prior to approval.

## Requirements for all WPL programs

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The following requirements must be observed:

- students must be at least 14 years of age and participating in a school approved activity/ placement, demonstrated through the signed Student Placement Record (SPR). Students under 15 years of age must not undertake WPL before 7:00am or after 6:00pm
- WPL during school holiday periods must be arranged and supervised by the school. Year 12 students cease to be insured by their school once they complete their last HSC examination and/or have withdrawn from enrolment as a student of the school
- interstate placements are permitted, if approved and supervised by the school
- where possible, students are not to undertake unsupervised tasks with just one employee
- if travel with the host employer is identified as a requirement of a specific placement, the vehicle is properly registered, insured and maintained; good practice for child protection is for the student to travel in the back seat of the vehicle where possible (see SPR)
- serious and wilful misconduct by a student during WPL may void (cancel) insurance cover
- the employer must, in all cases, provide appropriate and reasonable instruction and/or supervision with respect to each Work Experience/Placement student
- the employer and school must comply with all Department of Industrial Relations and SafeWork NSW or WorkSafe ACT requirements (including reporting requirements) for Work Experience/Placement Programs and observe any prohibited activities and SafeWork NSW or WorkSafe ACT regulations (including any age restrictions and requirements for safety equipment / personal protective equipment e.g. helmets and harnesses).

### Working with Children/Vulnerable People: Child Protection Issues

- students must not be requested to undertake unsupervised tasks with children under the age of 18 years (Note: students involved in childcare placements are to be supervised at all times)
- persons **over** 18 working in paid or unpaid occupations classed as *child-related employment*, must complete a *Working with Children (NSW) / Vulnerable People Check (ACT)*. This includes WPL in schools, early childhood education and care settings, child welfare services, youth clubs, etc.

## How can you best help your child?

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*The role of parents and carers is vital to the success of any WPL program. By taking steps to understand what is involved and by providing the necessary support at home, you can help your child get the most out of their placement and make important decisions about their future.*

### A checklist for parents and carers

#### **BEFORE the placement is arranged**

- Become familiar with WPL by reading the information provided and attending information sessions.
- Encourage your child to discuss their developing career interests and work preferences.
- Discuss what your child hopes to learn from the placement and any questions they might want to ask their host employer or supervisor.
- Encourage your child to complete all pre-placement activities arranged by their school.
- Advise the school of any suitable placements you know about or could offer.
- Tell those arranging your child's placement of any disability, learning and support needs or medical history e.g. anaphylaxis, that may require adjustment in the workplace.
- Ask your child for their SPR in their information package and complete the relevant part. When completed, this form will include vital information relating to your child's placement arrangements.
- Check your child has completed the [myworkexperience](#) or [go2workplacement](#) as appropriate WHEN a position is confirmed.
- Make sure your child reschedules other activities to give priority to their WPL.

- Help your child prepare their clothing (e.g. enclosed footwear, business attire) and other requirements for the placement.
- Help your child find out more about Work, Health and Safety (WHS) legislation and make sure they know and understand what it means for them while they are at work.
- Make sure your child has safe travel arrangement to and from work.
- Check that your child have the information they will need on the first day (starting time, address and contact person) including their completed Safety and Emergency Procedures Student Contact Card.
- Confirm your child's meal arrangements. They may need to bring food with them.
- Explain that your child's safety and wellbeing is of the highest importance during the placement.

#### **DURING the placement**

- If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, ensure they carry appropriate medication. If your child is at risk of an anaphylactic reaction, they must carry an adrenalin auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen) within easy reach each day of WPL.
- Encourage your child to complete any assignments or journals.
- Have a conversation about their day in the workplace (while maintaining confidentiality) e.g.
  - ➡ tell me about the things you do during the day at work.
  - ➡ have you learned anything unexpected and especially interesting?
  - ➡ what are the education and training requirements of the job(s)?
  - ➡ what are the working conditions like? Is there a union?
  - ➡ have you been told about health and safety procedures in the workplace?
  - ➡ do you think this might be the right industry for you?

#### **DIRECTLY after the placement**

- Encourage your child to discuss their employer's report with you.
- Review and discuss your child's career and work aspirations and options for education and training.
- Encourage your child to value the networks they are making and to maintain a record of workplace contacts for advice, assistance and opportunities in the future.

For assistance or further information  
please contact your child's school.