



Inspiring young people together



# INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

## For schools and colleges

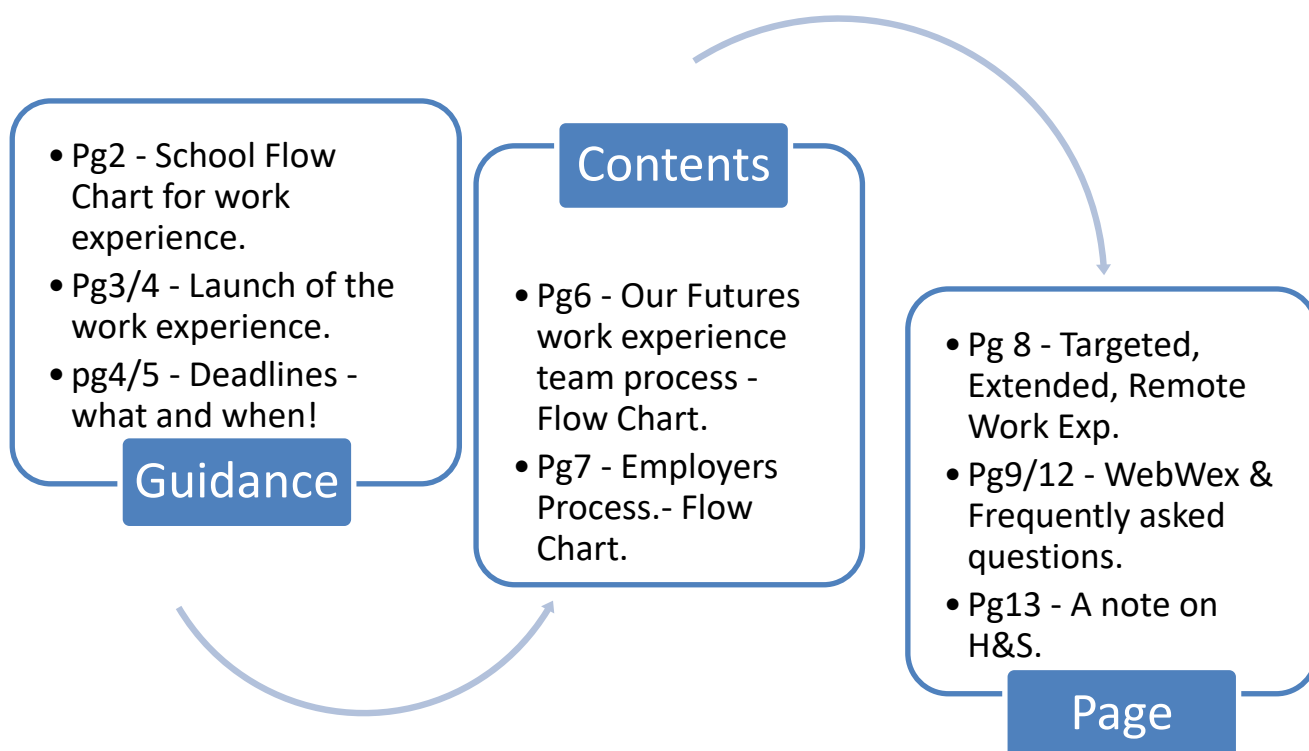
Revised September 2021 Version 8

Our Futures is a business which prides itself on developing sustainable relationships between business and education. Our work experience team have over 33 years' combined experience coordinating Work Experience programmes with employers and schools, and also in welcoming employers into schools for Practice Interview days, Careers Fairs, Enterprise Challenges and other activities we deliver.

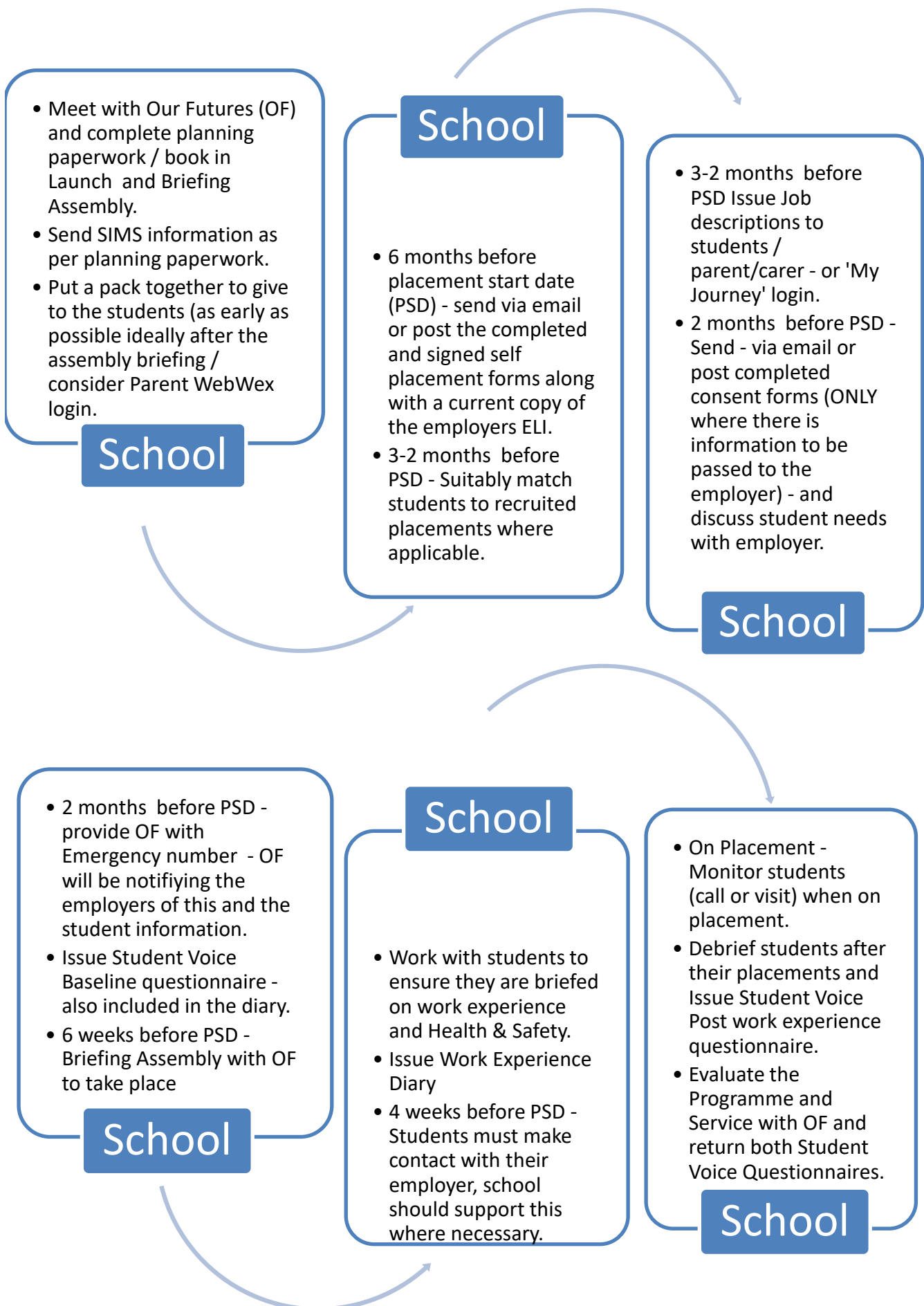
Work placements provide an invaluable opportunity for students to work alongside and observe experienced, skilled and qualified staff who can give them a better understanding of the world of work and in turn for the students to further develop their own employability skills.

This guidance has been designed to give you an overview of the work experience from a schools' perspective and to outline our procedures to give you a better understanding of how our whole process works. This guide is for our Block, Targeted, Extended and Remote programmes, timescales will differ for Targeted, Extended and Remote and are discussed on individual basis but the process remains the same.

Work Experience is a school programme and our aim to make the process as smooth as possible by offering our knowledge, experience and resources; it is also important to realise a successful programme can take 9 months of planning.



## The School Work Experience Process – Flow Chart



This is the basic flow chart of the school work experience process and more detailed information is in your planning paperwork that an Our Futures representative will have gone through with you and signed off.

You will also be given access to your own work experience database where you can keep track of placements / Medical information we have received (recruited placements if applicable) and access our resources page.

From experience, best practice is to have a pack ready to issue to students after the work experience launch assembly. We provide the following paperwork templates and suggested time lines:

Paperwork	Detail	Issue	Return date to Our Futures (OF)
Example letter to parents	This is an editable letter that you should personalise and print off to include in the pack to parents – this explains that their son / daughter is taking part in work experience.	Issue after the launch assembly	N/A
Consent form	This is an important document that includes medical / behavioural information and consent the student can take part in the work experience programme and specifically the chosen placement when the job description is issued. Also includes consent for photos.	Include in the pack	Copy to be emailed / posted to OF 2 months before the Placement Start Date (PSD) – only where there is information to be passed on to the employer
Information sheet for parents	This details work experience in depth and how the parent/carer can help and support their son/daughter.	Include in the pack	N/A
Information sheet for students	Information about things the student should consider prior to work experience and during the work experience.	Include in the pack	N/A
Guide to finding a self-placement	Information booklet for students to aid them in finding a placement and examples of job descriptions in different sector areas.	Include in the pack	N/A
Self-Placement form	Students who find their own placement must get the employer to complete this in full and return it to them by the agreed deadline with a copy of their ELI	Include in the pack	To be emailed / posted to OF by our agreed deadline – approx. 6 months before PSD.
Example Letter for Employers	Should be attached to the Self placement form and this is an editable letter that you personalise with relevant dates and contact name in school – this can be left with the employer	Include in the pack	N/A
Selection Form	Optional use for school – can be issued to all students or to those who are not finding their own placement.	Optional	N/A
Student Voice	A questionnaire to be issued to students	6 weeks	As soon as possible

Baseline	prior to work experience to enable you to gauge the students current work related level of knowledge and skills needed in the workplace.	prior to placement	after work experience has taken place.
Student Voice Post Work Experience Evaluation	This evaluates the student's level of knowledge and skills post work experience to enable a report of distance travelled to be provided by OF. Only on receipt both Student Voice Questionnaires can a report be produced - we would require the whole cohort or a good percentage.	As soon as possible following work experience	As soon as possible after work experience has taken place.

## Consent forms

Signed consent forms must be obtained prior to a student taking part in work experience. OF need copies of the forms where there is Medical / Behavioural or photographic consent information to be passed to the employer, school have a duty of care to discuss the student's medical information with the employer. Please do not send in those where there is no information about student specific needs / no objection to photographic consent.

## Self Placements

After the launch of the work experience you will begin to receive self-placement forms from the students, please start to send these to OF so we can begin to process them.

Because you are required to keep the original Self placement forms and consent forms for 7 years – if you scan them to us **one at a time and name it with the students name** it will be easier for several reasons:

1. You can store them on your computer instead of having stacks of boxes in an archive room – easy safe storage.
2. If you have any queries you can search for the SP form using the student name and retrieve it instantly.

## Recruited Placements (if applicable)

Our Futures start the recruitment of employers from July / August onwards and as employers offer placements we will allocate them to your database, we aim to have this done by your 2 month deadline so where possible please aim to have your students booked in prior to this this date and issue the Job Description.

## By the 2 month PSD

Our Futures will have processed all the Self placement and Consent forms. Please note that students should be placed in to the recruited placements and no swaps should be allowed. Our Futures also requires an emergency number to be passed to the employer for the duration of the students placements.

## 6 Weeks before PSD

School should have a Briefing Assembly booked in with OF where we will discuss Health & Safety / contacting the employer / appropriate behaviour etc. You need to issue the Student Voice Baseline questionnaire for completion and you could issue the work

experience diaries at this time, please note the diary does contain the Student voice questionnaire.

## Between 6 and 4 weeks

School need to encourage and work with students to enable them to contact their employer regardless of whether this is a self or recruited placement – **failure to do so may result in the placement not going ahead and the student remaining in school.**

N/B some schools we work with contact all the employers in the first instance and then this is followed up by the student if the employer asks – from experience this does raise any potential issues early on and eliminates many of the issues experienced on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of placement that schools are then faced with.

## Monitoring

When all the students who are going out on work experience are placed you can then print off the Teacher visit list (there is also a Monitoring sheet you can print off from the resources page) – Monitoring students on placement is the schools duty of care and this can be done by phone call or visit by prior arrangement. A visit would give you the opportunity to see firsthand how your students are getting on, taking pictures for a school display, building relations with the employers (encourages placement offers the following year). At the very least we would recommend your most vulnerable students are visited.

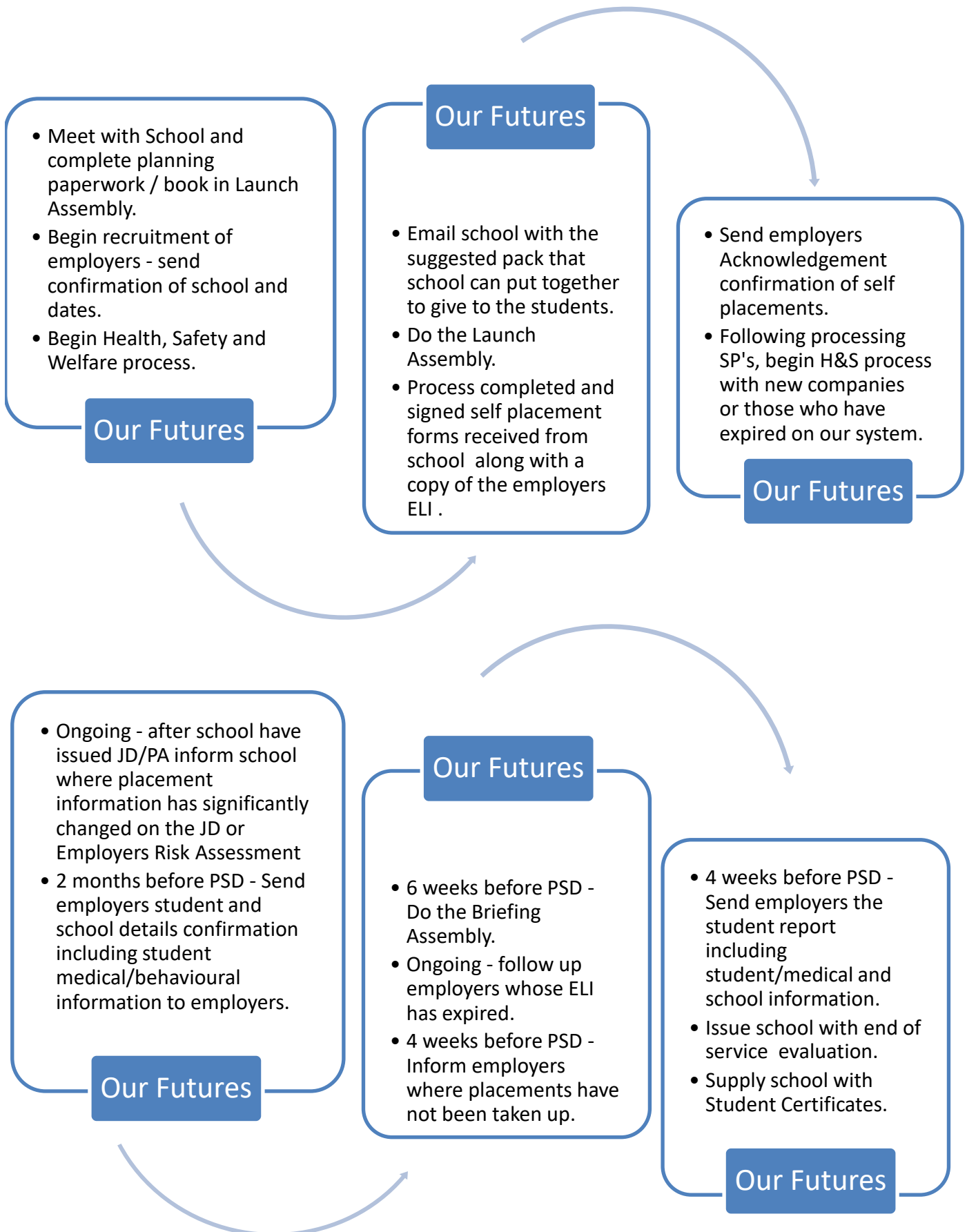
## Debriefing

It is always recommended that students receive a minimum of ½ day debriefing following their work experience. Please issue the Student Voice Post work experience questionnaire, this can form part of your debrief, please note this is also included in the diary.

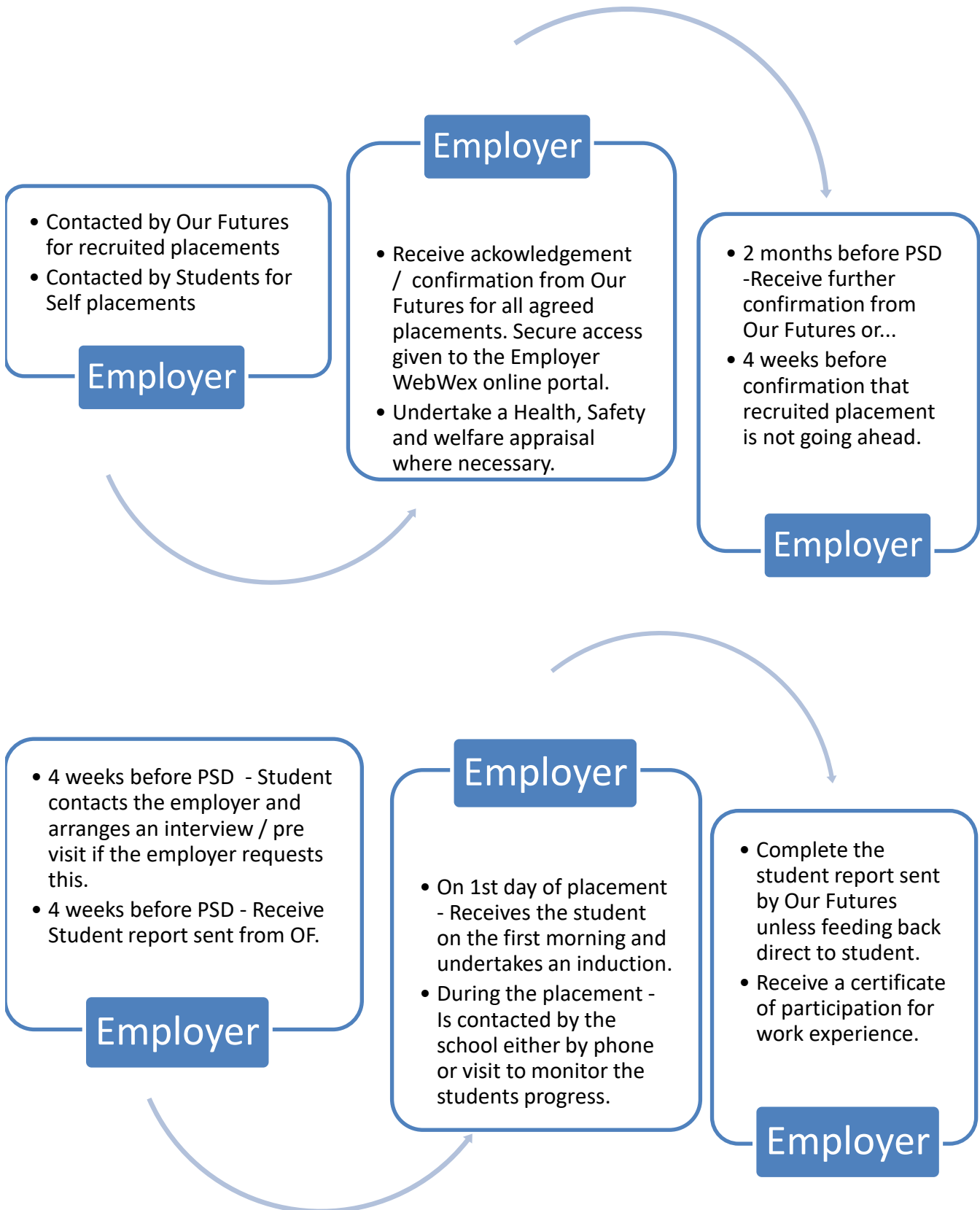
## Evaluation

OF will liaise with you over student placements, provide you with an end of service questionnaire and student certificates for successful placements.

## The Our Futures Work Experience Team Process – Flow Chart



## The Employers Process – Flow Chart



## Targeted Work Experience

Targeted work experience is where a student is placed on employer premises for 1 or 2 weeks (or 1 day a week for up to 10 weeks), carrying out tasks or duties in the role of an employee and learning valuable work skills such as punctuality, communication, commitment and team work.

Targeted work experience is utilised for young people who are disengaging from school and where school are looking for a short term placement, with this in mind we ask that the student is ready for a work placement and is aware of the expectations of an employer and will be able to attend the work placement.

This is an application form process and it is designed to give Our Futures enough information to find the student a suitable work experience placement, taking into account their individual needs. Placements can be self placement or recruited.

## Extended Work Experience

Extended work experience is where a student is placed on employer premises for 1 or 2 days a week on a long term placement, carrying out tasks or duties in the role of an employee and learning valuable work skills such as punctuality, communication, commitment and team work.

Extended Work Experience, is in the most part utilised for young people who are currently disengaged from school, with this in mind we ask that the student is ready for a work placement and is aware of the expectations of an employer and will be able to attend the work placement.

This is an application form process is designed to give Our Futures enough information to find the student a suitable work experience placement, taking into account their individual needs. Placements can be self-placement or recruited.

If a recruited placement is needed then Our Futures will arrange to interview the student at School.

## Remote Work Experience

Due to Covid 19, some work experience placements may not be able to take place on an employer's premises, if this is the case employers where possible will provide students with tasks to complete either at home or school for the duration of the placement. Unlike workplace work experience where the student would be talking with their employer on a daily basis, their liaison with the employer may be via telephone / video call, students should be aware of the school online safety policy. Students would need access to a computer / internet / phone.

For Remote Group Work Experience, students will work in groups of 6-10 with a designated employer sourced by Our Futures with a structured timetable for the week, students could work from School or at home and School will be involved in student/employer communication.

## WebWex Portals

There is a WebWex portal for Schools / Employers / Students and Parents:

**Schools** - to access and manage their work experience process.

**Employers** - for the employer, where they can access the placements agreed, the job description, school contact information and any medical / behavioral information about students.

**Parent / Carer** - to save on printing costs for schools, parents can log in to view: Work experience brief and access to / print off the Guide to finding a Self-Placement and Information for Parents sheet. Login details are the schools ID (provided by our futures at the start of the process) and the school post code.

**Looking for a placement** - students can view the Recruited vacant list with their parents to make choices of where they would like to be placed – please note that students would still need to see the school co-ordinator in order to be booked into a placement. Login details are the schools ID (provided by our futures at the start of the process) and the school post code.

**My Journey** – once a student has been placed they can log in and view their job description, student information / parent information and complete an online diary of their tasks and activities during their work experience (if a hardcopy has not been issued to the student) – Schools can view which students are actively completing diaries online. Login details are the students ID (this is generated once a student is booked to a placement and can be found on the School WebWex portal) and the student's date of birth.

## Frequently Asked questions

**If school does not get signed consent from the parent, can the placement still go ahead.**

If the student is pre 16 and / or year 10 or 11 then parental consent is needed. If the student is 16 and over, year 12 or above then it is considered more of a matter of courtesy to inform the parent / carer of the programme.

**A student has submitted an incomplete Self placement form / Employers Liability Insurance (ELI) missing.**

When you receive a self-placement form please ensure the fields have been completed and that the employer has signed this. The reason for this is to save time further down the line and eliminate any potential problems, Our Futures are handling thousands of work placements and if we receive forms with little or no information on we will be unable to process the placement and you will be notified if this is the case by email.

If ELI is missing you can contact OF to see if we hold a current copy of the ELI before passing this back to the student to obtain a copy. Please be aware that there are other kinds of insurance: **Professional Indemnity and Public Liability – these are not sufficient for a student on work experience.**

## **When is an Employer exempt from Employers Liability Insurance (ELI)**

Family businesses, i.e. if all of the employees are closely related e.g. (as husband, wife, civil partner, father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, stepfather, stepmother, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, stepson, stepdaughter, brother, sister, half-brother or half-sister).

However, this exemption does not apply to family businesses which are incorporated as limited companies. (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hse40.PDF>)

## **What if the self placement is outside of the Greater Manchester Area.**

Where possible we will still try to arrange a Health & Safety Appraisal, but where this is not possible we will liaise with the company that delivers work experience in that area to see if they have the employer/placement on their database and if not see if they will arrange a Health & Safety Appraisal.

In some circumstances there may be an additional charge for these placements to cover the costs of the external company or Our Futures. You will be advised of these before we proceed with the process.

## **What if the self placement submitted is already on my database as a recruited placement?**

If an employer has offered Our Futures a placement for your school and then they complete a self-placement – we will check with the employer if this is in addition to the recruited placement. If the employer cannot take the self-placement in addition you will be asked to book the student into the place on the recruited list.

## **What is an unauthorised placement?**

Part of Our Futures role is to satisfy requirements needed that employers do have suitable health, safety and welfare arrangements in place when agreeing to take students on placement.

If these requirements are not satisfied we will not be able to process the placement as a suitable environment for a student and we will let you know as soon as possible, in this instance it is a school decision as to whether the placement should still go ahead. However, school still has the duty of care and a parent letter saying they will take responsibility is not sufficient and school is still accountable.

Some schools will mark the student as an unauthorised absence if parent insists the placement should still go ahead (where this is the case a work experience diary should not be issued and monitoring calls should not be made by school and a certificate will not be provided by OF). Otherwise the student should be expected in school.

Examples of unauthorised placements could be if:

- The employer does not have ELI or does not practice safe working practices.
- It is out of area and the Health & Safety appraisal can't be obtained.
- The self-placement has been received after the deadline date and can't be processed without having a knock on effect to those received by the agreed deadline – again bearing in mind that Our Futures are working with a number of schools and dealing with over 3000 placements.

## Can I submit a self-placement after the deadline has passed?

Deadlines are in place to ensure there is sufficient time to process the large volumes of placements Our Futures handle (both self-placements and recruited placements). Our aim is to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to take part in the work experience programme and we understand that in some instances, through no fault of the student, the placements may fall through, where the deadline has passed we will still undertake a database check to see if the employer is already on our system and in date for the Health & Safety appraisal. If the employer is new to us we will advise whether the self-placement can be accepted but this would be on an individual basis.

## Why do students have to contact the employer 4 weeks before the PSD?

The majority of employers would like to speak to or meet the student before they start the work experience, this is so they can see what they are interested in and why they would like to go to them (please work with students to enable them to do this and raise the point that you would not turn up to a new job on the first day without going for an interview!). This contact by the student will also raise any unexpected problems for example:

- The main contact has left and no one else knew about the placement.
- The employer has oversubscribed and can no longer offer the placement / or they have forgotten about the placement.
- The student can't get hold of the employer (in some instances a business can close down and we are not informed).

To try and reduce the number of issues like those stated, Our Futures liaise with all employers more than once where the deadline has not passed.

1. On receipt of a self-placement form we will send out an Acknowledgement to the main contact.
2. Where a company requires a Health & Safety Appraisal (because they are new to our database or the information we hold has expired) we will contact the employer with the necessary arrangements.
3. 2 months before PSD we send out student confirmation / Job description / employer agreement and school contact details (and medical information where necessary).
4. 4 weeks before the PSD we send out the same information as we do at the 2 months but the Job Description is replaced with a student report for the employer to feedback on the student once the placement has taken place – if not feeding back directly to the student.

## Will I have to re issue a Job Description?

On some occasions a health, safety and welfare appraisal may take place after you have issued the initial job description. Were there have been significant changes to the duties, welfare arrangements or employers health & safety risk assessment we will notify you at the earliest opportunity and this does need to be passed on to Parent / Carer to ensure they are happy for the placement still to go ahead in light of the changes.

## What Student information is passed to the employer?

Our Futures only provide the employer with the student name, gender, school and medical information where necessary – no personal traceable information is disclosed to the employers and students should be encouraged not to disclose personal information.

On some occasions employers may ask for an Application form to be completed with such details on there, this should be sent home for parent / carer to see and agree to.

### **Can I use a recruited placement after the 4 weeks confirmation has been sent to the employer advising them the placement has not been taken up?**

When we inform an employer that a placement has not been used we say - 'unfortunately the school have advised that they do not have any suitable students to take up your offer of a placement at this moment in time. However, if the situation changes we will ask the school to contact you to see if you are still in a position to accept a student'. An employer is more likely to take a student at short notice if the school does call them – please inform Our Futures if this is the case so we can send employer confirmation.

### **Do we have to visit and monitor students on placement?**

School has the duty of care for all students whilst on placement and while it is not always possible to visit all students you need to at least have called and spoken to the employer and the student. If you are not visiting all students you should prioritise your vulnerable students and those in a higher risk environment, for example, Garage or Warehouse.

Visits can:

- Clarify whether specific student outcomes (if set by school) are being followed.
- Check the supervision/welfare arrangements and overall quality of experience.
- Check the students' wellbeing.
- Provide support for the student and the employer.

As previously mentioned there must be an emergency number for a member of staff at your school for the duration of your students' placements – this is to cover out of school hours.

Whilst employers are briefed to inform schools or Our Futures of any non-attendance, on some occasions this does not happen so you should also brief students that if they are unable to attend on any day, they must inform their employer and school as soon as possible giving the reason why. Please also ensure that students are aware that if the placement has broken down they must inform school immediately.

Employers have been advised to notify school and/or Our Futures of any accidents which occur while a student is on placement and complete a full report in line with HSE requirements.

Please make sure that Our Futures is aware of any significant incidents that have been reported to you as soon as possible so that we can investigate and cancel any other placements where necessary.

### **What do we do with students who have been sent back to school?**

Arrangements should be planned in for those students who do not complete their work experience or are sent back to school from the employer.

There are numerous reasons why a placement may break down:

- It may be that there has been a clash of personalities between the employer and student.

- Staff sickness resulting in insufficient supervision of the student
- The student has shown no interest and the employer cannot engage them.
- They did not make contact with the employer beforehand.

In some instances you may not be told the full story so you should contact the employer to discuss the reason why the student has returned to school. The employer will thank you for showing an interest and is likely to continue to offer placements in future years to your school.

## A note on Health Safety & Welfare

Our Futures is committed to the high standards of work experience health and safety.

We use advice and guidance from the Health & Safety Executive and adhere to standards that were originally put in place by the LSC, the employers we place students with are assessed under these standards.

Whilst employers have a duty of care for their H&S arrangements and managing any significant risks, schools need to take reasonable steps to check the employers are doing this, by using Our Futures this is all covered and included in our service.

Our health, safety and welfare appraisal process: When we receive a self-placement form it is processed on our system and if an appraisal is needed it goes on to our schedule.

For appraisals where the premises require a visit, these are organised into geographical area and then by the date they need to be completed by, so it is not uncommon to receive a self-placement at the 6 month deadline but not arrange the appraisal until weeks before the student is due out, by having self-placements in on time this allows us to manage this process more effectively.

Any late self-placements have a knock on effect and push appraisals closer to the start date so we have to be stringent – your support with this is greatly appreciated.

We keep up to date with the latest information and guidance around safeguarding and health and safety to give you peace of mind.

Students are likely to spend more time online and on various devices and it is important to follow some basic guidelines to ensure that they use their devices safely and navigate the online world appropriately. Please ensure the students are aware of the schools online safety policy.

### OURFUTURES

[www.ourfutures.co.uk](http://www.ourfutures.co.uk)

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