

Guidance on choosing and planning an activity

When thinking about engaging with young people with SEND it's important that you choose the right activity for their needs. This can vary hugely but the school/college will be able to support you as to what works best for their young people. The following information gives you more detail on what this could look like and what to think about before embarking on any activity.



What to Consider

Key Considerations When Choosing an Activity

There really is something for all employers, when it comes to choosing an activity that you can deliver for SEND students. Be guided by the school/college who will know the types of activities that will suit their students best, but don't be afraid to share your thoughts and ideas on the types of activities you believe best suit your employees and your organisation. Here's a [case study](#) from Greater Anglia Train Station and Parkside School, demonstrating how students' interests were met via an industry visit.

When discussing with the school/college the types of activities you may engage in, it's a good idea to first consider the following points and how these apply to you.

The school/college will appreciate the fact that you've already considered the level of commitment and support you can offer and some thoughts around the type of activity:

- As an organisation, are you considering a one-off activity or something you can build on or develop over time as a regular occurrence? To really maximise the benefits that you and your employees will get, consider activities that can be repeated or developed. For example, offering a project-based activity where employees will work with students over a period of time, will have a greater benefit on the employee's personal development than a one-off activity. Similarly, the students will benefit hugely from the greater level of support they will receive, building on their skills and abilities.
- Employee availability:
 - Does your organisation already support employee volunteering, or will you need to obtain line manager approval?
 - What's the minimum and maximum amount of time employees have available?
 - What skillsets do your employees already possess that could be of benefit to the students? These may be skills they use outside of their job, for example, if they're a keen artist, so talk to your employees and find out.
- Does the nature of your business lend itself to certain types of activities? For example, if you are in the financial sector, you may consider mentoring and career support as activities you could provide. Whereas, if you are a micro-bakery, hosting a visit to your premises where you can provide a more hands-on activity may be a good fit.

The school/college will appreciate the fact that you've already considered the level of commitment and support you can offer and some thoughts around the type of activity (continued):

- What resources will be needed? If you're considering an activity that needs resources or materials, will you be able to source and pay for these and will you need approval? Ask the school/college if they have resources that can be used, for example, arts and crafts type materials.
- Will you need senior leadership approval? Your internal approval processes may influence the type of activity and commitment you decide upon.
- Is your preference to deliver an activity virtually? This will by no means limit the activities you could support with and will help the school/college work with you to decide those that will work best for their students with the technology and facilities available.



Types of Work Encounters and Experiences of the Workplace

There's a whole host of activities that you can engage in and the following information provides an overview of each one. More detail around some examples can be found in the appendix.

There's also an indication of the level of commitment and resource required, and this includes preparation, planning and evaluation time.

The majority of these activities can be delivered virtually via video/audio conferencing, sharing of materials and using pre-recorded videos that can be produced using smartphones/tablets.

Opportunity	What it involves	Level of commitment
Visit/virtual visit to employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inviting a group of students and teachers to visit your organisation. Sharing information about your business, what you do and the types of jobs you have. Usually includes a tour/virtual tour of your site. 	LOW
Visit/virtual visit to school/college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees visiting the school/college. Sharing information about your business, what you do and the types of jobs you have. Usually includes a tour/virtual tour of the school/college site. 	LOW
Sharing your career/employability resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may already have resources that you use to engage with schools/colleges that you can share. Consideration should be given to the content and whether this is suitable for SEND students and the school/college can advise you. 	LOW
A Day in the Life of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing information on the day in the life of one of the types of jobs your business offers. Where possible, this should be aligned to the types of skills and abilities the students have or could develop. The school/college will support you with this. 	LOW
Work-related project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting a project for a group of students to work on, supported by employees. Ideally the project should align to the work you do and where possible, be a real activity/problem to solve. Students can be assigned various roles to encourage them working together as a team. 	MEDIUM

Opportunity	What it involves	Level of commitment
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees mentoring individual students. • This can be an arrangement that discusses work-related topics such as employability skills such as communication and problem-solving, or it could discuss other areas such as wellbeing. This will be dependent upon the employee's background/skill-set and the school's/college's advice. • The school/college will be able to match employees to the students. • Typically low resource requirement, for example, 30mins-1hr per month during the academic year. 	LOW
Business enterprise day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees working with a group of students to improve their employability skills by creating a product/service to sell. An example would be making a craft item such as Christmas cards to sell at the school's/college's Christmas fair. Or inviting them to your office/site to sell. 	MEDIUM
Setting up a business enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A longer term commitment where employees with the relevant skills, work with the students and their school/college, to set-up and run a business enterprise. An example would be a coffee shop on the school premises, or an allotment where they can grow produce to sell. 	HIGH
Deliver a lesson/ assembly that links your job tasks to the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a core requirement that schools/colleges must try to achieve so they rely on businesses to get involved. Depending on the nature of your business, there will be a link to a school subject, for example, you may travel to a variety of countries and be able to talk about different cultures in a geography lesson. • Employability skills is another subject you could deliver a lesson on, covering areas such as communication and problem solving. 	LOW

Opportunity	What it involves	Level of commitment
Work experience (block or extended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined as a placement with an employer in which a young person in either year 10, 11, 12 or 13 carries out a range of tasks in much the same way as an employee with the emphasis on learning from the experience. Typically there are two types, block or extended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Block work experience placements are usually 3-5 days long. – Extended placements are usually 1-2 days per week for up to a year and are aimed at students studying vocational courses that require a longer period of work experience. 	MEDIUM - HIGH
Work shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This involves a student shadowing an employee, to give them an insight into the job role without being hands-on. 	LOW
Design a competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting students to work within a team to solve a business challenge that is either real or similar to a real work scenario. You can set a task, then provide support throughout, providing feedback and advice. If there are several teams involved, you can award a winner and hold a celebration. 	MEDIUM
Job seeking support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can include advising on interview skills, including how to prepare for an interview and you could run a mock interview or assessment style centre for students. • Dependent upon the age of the students and their likely career path, you could advise and support with job hunting and applying for jobs. 	LOW - MEDIUM
Careers event/fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend a careers fair with a stand and be able to provide information and advice on your business and the types of jobs you employ, along with the skills needed. Share what career opportunities and pathways you have for young people into your organisation. 	MEDIUM
Careers speed networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking to students for approximately five minutes on your job role in a carousel style format, answering any questions the students may have. 	LOW

Opportunity	What it involves	Level of commitment
Supported Internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are structured study programmes based primarily at the employer's office/site. They enable young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. Supported internships are unpaid, and last for a minimum of six months, but usually last an academic year. 	HIGH
Teacher/career advisor experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome a teacher/career advisor to your workplace for a day or more of work experience to provide them with an insight into your sector and how they can link it to their teaching. 	LOW
Becoming an Enterprise Advisor - Careers programme development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an Enterprise Adviser you'll work directly with a school or college's senior leadership team to develop their careers programme. Suitable for individuals who have a passion for raising the aspirations of young people and the strategic skills to help put opportunities with local employers at the heart of a young person's education. 	MEDIUM
Attend a parents evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some schools/colleges will welcome employers coming to talk about their business and employment opportunities at parent's evenings, as it helps to raise aspirations of the young person and their families/carers. 	LOW



Planning your activity

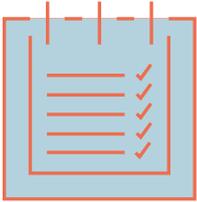
A simple, structured approach to planning is all that you'll need to plan and deliver a great activity and benefit from the experience – the effort required will be proportionate to the type of activity you're planning. Whilst it's likely you'll involve a number of employees in this activity, ensure you've allocated a lead, who has the drive and enthusiasm to see it through to completion.

It's likely you will already have templates and plan formats you use but keeping it simple and straightforward is ideal. Check out the following template example which you may like to use:

Overview	Provide an overview of the activity to be delivered. For example: to offer monthly 30 minute mentoring sessions with students over an academic term, either face to face, via video conferencing or telephone.		
Lead	Name of the employee leading/ organising the activity	School/ College	Name of the school/college and your main point of contact
Benefits & Measures	<p>List the benefits you as the employer aim to receive as part of this activity & how you will measure these. For example:</p> <p>Employee development in their mentoring skills which will be measured via their performance reviews with their line manager.</p> <p>Recognition of supporting the local community & aligning to the organisation's social responsibility values. Measured by positive feedback received from senior leadership.</p>	Stakeholders	<p>List any key stakeholders who have a role to play in delivering the activity. For example:</p> <p>Names of colleagues who are helping you to deliver the activity.</p> <p>Communications team who will help you share what you're doing both within the business & externally.</p> <p>A third party organisation who may be helping you with an enterprise activity, such as making Christmas decorations to sell at a market.</p>
Resource/ Cost to deliver	<p>List what resources are required to deliver this activity, such as employee's time, catering, materials & associated costs. For example:</p> <p>Each employee wishing to act as a mentor will be required to commit approximately 6 hours over a 12 week period plus any travelling time.</p>	Key Dates & Milestones	<p>List any key dates and/or milestones that will ensure you stay on track to deliver a successful activity.</p> <p>For example: Equipment for garden activity to arrive by 12 May.</p>
Support required	List any support you may need from other colleagues teams. For example if you need colleagues to arrange any special equipment, order resources or book meeting rooms.	Timescales	Use this section to show the duration from planning through to delivery & review.
Challenges & Risks	List any challenges/risks that have been identified & how you will mitigate them. For example: Lack of disability awareness causes concerns with team members. Action to mitigate: School to deliver a short disability awareness session to team members.		

The areas you need to consider during the planning stage will depend upon whether the activity is going to be at your premises, the school/college site, another external site or delivered virtually. This next section takes you through a checklist for these different locations and also the health and safety considerations you need to be aware of.





Health and Safety Considerations

Employers often assume that supporting and working with SEND students will mean lots of time-consuming health and safety paperwork. Along with the health and safety steps the school/college will take, there are of course things you need to put in place, but these shouldn't be complex or time-consuming, and you should engage with the school/college as you work through these. The steps taken will be in proportion to the risk, and a common-sense approach

should be taken. If you will be inviting students into your organisation's premises, engaging your safety colleagues and facilities management team is a good idea, as they will be able to advise and provide support.

An important point to note, is that if you are offering work experience for a student, under health and safety law, for the duration of this work experience, these students are your employees. This [link](#) will take you to a short guidance document from the Health and Safety Executive, called 'Young people and work experience - A brief guide to health and safety for employers.'

The areas that need consideration are:

Risk Assessments: just as you look after the health and safety of your employees and visitors, the same applies to SEND students and their teachers who will be on your premises. You will need to assess any additional risks that having the students on-site may pose, to ensure these risks are removed, or minimised as much as possible. This will be done by completing a risk assessment prior to the date of the activity. If you have a health and safety team or representative, they will be able to support you in completing this. Once complete, share with employees supporting the activity and the school/college, so that they are aware of any hazards and the actions needed to keep themselves and others safe. Teachers will be able to advise on the best method of communicating this to students, for example, they may suggest including photos of office equipment in the risk assessment, as visuals will aid understanding for some students. Keep the risk assessment on file, as you can review, update and use again for future activities.

Both the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and the [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents \(RoSPA\)](#) have useful guidance on completing risk assessments. In essence, you will be risk assessing your premises, the activities you'll be undertaking, what could go wrong and the control measures you need to put in place to prevent harm to anyone.

You can access the Health and Safety Executive's risk assessment template [here](#).

Health and Safety Induction: just as you would with other visitors, explain the fire evacuation instructions and whether a fire alarm test is going to happen whilst the students are on-site; first aid facilities and arrangements; where the toilet facilities are; where students and their teachers can get a drink and/or food from; if there is any other activity happening on site that day that the teachers and students should know about, (that may be a distraction to the students or cause them anxiety, for example, a film crew on-site filming a company video). The teachers will be able to advise on any special measures that may need to be taken and if you do need to make adjustments, the chances are these will improve the accessibility of your working environment for all current and future employees and visitors.

The areas that need consideration are (continued):

Insurance: the two areas of insurance you need to consider in relation to working with SEND students are public liability and employers' liability.

Public liability is the insurance you should have in place for the majority of activities you may be providing, as this will cover you for any incidents that occur to people other than your employees, in connection with your business activities.

Employers' liability insurance will cover students when you are offering work experience, as under health and safety law, they are regarded as employees.

If you have organised an activity at a third party's premises, you should ensure they have public liability insurance in place.

Safeguarding: this is a term you may come across as you start to work with a school/college and their students. It simply means keeping young people safe from harm, including protecting their rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. The school/college will have a designated safeguarding officer and they will most likely brief your employees prior to any activity. This is likely to be a short briefing, where they will provide an overview of what safeguarding covers and what you need to be aware of.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS): these were previously called Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. DBS checks are needed for some volunteering roles, but for most work encounters and experiences of the workplace, will not be needed for your employees. This is because for the majority of activities, a member of teaching staff will be present, and employees will not be left unsupervised with the young person(s). If in doubt, check with the school/college, as it's their responsibility to ensure DBS checks are carried out for volunteers when appropriate. As part of your activity preparation, always ask the school/college what teaching staff will be present.



STEM Ambassador feedback about their experience working with SEND schools



It was very strange doing mock interviews through an interpreter, but I hope my lack of experience in this area would help prepare the students for this real-world scenario. I found it very rewarding and the pupils were very engaged. I like to think bringing STEM Ambassadors into the activity benefited the students and prepared them for life outside of school.

Talking about what he'd say to other STEM Ambassadors thinking about volunteering in a SEND setting, Ian said "Do it, it is worth your time and the pupils have a lot to gain from your involvement. There is a much higher bar post school for SEND pupils to gain employment and any help and support can only help to reduce that barrier.

Ian Robinson,
Bombardier

BOMBARDIER



Employer Insight Visit



It was our absolute pleasure. The (hotel) team really enjoyed the interaction with the students and seeing them smile and be so enthusiastic about being in the hotel really was fantastic to see. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to host such a unique day

Carrie-Louise Holleran
Holiday Inn Derby Riverlights

The visit took place after an in-school introductory session with the employer. This expanded into further work with the school).



Appendix

Examples of Work Encounters and Experiences of the workplace - useful links

Supported Internship:

[Guide from National Grid – Fuelling Futures Toolkit](#)

[National Grid video - Maxine Long](#)

[De Vere Latimer Bucks video](#)

Mentoring:

[MOD Kineton Barracks – Mentoring Programme](#)

[Enterprise Adviser Case study](#)

Work/school related project:

[Engie Case study](#)

[Dog Friendly Cornwall Case Study](#)

Visit to employer:

[Intu shopping centre and Norfolk County Council case study.](#)

[Greater Anglia train station and Norfolk County Council case study.](#)

Careers Event:

[The Slice is Right – Pendle Community College Case study](#)

Competition:

[Abbots Lea School Case study](#)

Work experience:

[Bucks CEC case study Sainsbury's Merson video \(extended placement over academic year\).](#)

[Forest way special school Case study](#)

[NDTi Preparing for Adulthood Work Experience that Works Guide](#)

Business Enterprise:

[Warren School Case study](#)