



## Advice on work experience abroad

Working in another country helps students to obtain tangible work experience and an opportunity to explore the local culture and way of life.

We are committed to the care of the students. We only work with hosts that are very experienced and professional to provide students' accommodation.

However, even with very careful planning, some students may still encounter challenging situations in their workplace or with their host family.

Here are some tips to help students to get the most out of their time abroad.

### Accommodation:

#### Dos:

- Respect the hosts and their house rules such as schedules and curfews; be on time for meals and do not stay out too late in the evenings
- Keep bedroom and personal belongings tidy
- Clean and put away any dishes you use and tidy kitchen after use
- Tell your host if you are going to be late home and note that students should not be out late unless agreed with teachers first
- Keep noise level to a minimum in the evenings, especially if hosts have gone to bed
- Be on your best behaviour and always say please and thank you

#### Don'ts:

- Do not cook dinner without host's permission, especially late at night
- Do not smoke inside the house; you must ask the host first even if you smoke outside
- Do not drink alcohol; late trips for alcohol will result in Headmaster and parents being contacted
- Do not invite friends over without asking the host first

Listed here are a few examples of the most frequent complaints from students and what they can do if this happens to them.

#### **The house/room is too cold**

Students should speak to the hosts politely and ask if they can turn the heating up. It may be that the host has simply forgotten to turn the heating on in the spare room. If this still does not resolve the situation then a request for a portable heater can be made.

#### **Food (not enough / too spicy / do not like the taste)**

It is good to bear in mind that in different countries used different cooking methods and the time of day the eat may differ. For instance, In the UK people usually have a light breakfast, a light lunch and a big dinner. In Spain they eat much later and often don't have dinner until 21:00 or 22:00. Also, your host will prepare food that they would normally eat and a big part of this experience is for students to try foods from different cultures. If students are unhappy then we encourage them to speak to their hosts about what they may like to eat. On some occasions hosts will be happy to take students to the supermarket to shop for food.

**Our suggestion:**

Students can discuss culinary preferences or dietary restrictions with their host when they first arrive. If there is a major issue, students should try and talk to their host first. If that is not possible students can approach their contact person.

**Work Placements:****Dos:**

- Follow the company's health and safety rules ● Be punctual and turn up for work every day
- Dress appropriately for work
- Only speak English at work; even to fellow students
- Be proactive and offer to help or ask for more work or responsibilities
- Have a 'can do' attitude
- Ask questions and show enthusiasm; get involved as much as you can
- Be polite and respectful
- Be sociable and talk to your colleagues because this is a good way to practise your English and to find out more about the job and industry

**Don'ts:**

- Complain about work
- Smoke on the premises; smoking in the workplace is illegal unless in a designated area outside the building
- Use your mobile phone at work; if you really need to use the phone ask the manager first
- Refuse to carry out jobs/ tasks that are too small or too simple
- Take on too many tasks at once

Below, there are a few examples of the frequent complaints from students regarding work placements.

***My manager gave me very boring jobs to do***

Students need to show they are willing to carry out the tasks that they are asked to perform. They should complete the tasks that are given to them first and then discuss with their manager to find out if they can have something more advanced in the future

***It takes too long to travel to work from my accommodation***

Placements often take place in big cities and commutes times can be between 30 minutes to over an hour at peak times. We will always try our best to find host family that are close to students' work placements. If this is a big problem we can try to negotiate a slightly later start time at work. If any students feel that this is a major issue they should speak to their contact person.

***The bus is always late***

Public transport has been known to be somewhat unreliable. However, it is still the best and the cheapest way to travel in the city. If the problem persists, try to speak to the manager and see if he or she can offer some help or advice.

***I do not like the company that I work for***

Please remember that work placements are going out of their way to give you an opportunity. Owners of these companies give up their time and effort in order to provide students an insight, into their



chosen field. Try to keep an open mind and give it a couple of days to see if things improve before talking to the manager.

**Our suggestion:**

Communication between students and their managers is key to getting the most out of their experience. Nonetheless, if students have any difficulties with their placements that they cannot resolve with their managers, they should communicate this to their contact person.

In summary, students should remember their first point of contact, in any event, is their contact person. Our team may be reached in any event.

All students will be given a Welcome Pack when they arrive. The pack contains contact numbers and all the information they might need during their stay.

Before leaving for your destination, it will be advantageous if students can read up about the country and the city that they are visiting as well as the company they will be working with. Research everything from the kind of food you can expect to the customs, behaviour and beliefs.

Working abroad is exciting and full of adventures. We hope the students will have lots of fond memories and interesting stories to take home with them.