

**Submission
No 13**

VOLUNTEERING AND UNPAID WORK PLACEMENTS AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Inquiry into volunteering and unpaid work placements among children and young people in NSW

That the Committee on Children and Young People inquire into, and report on, volunteering and unpaid work placements among children and young people in NSW, and in particular:

- Existing policies relating to volunteering and unpaid work placements among children and young people in NSW;
- Measures to encourage volunteering and foster opportunities for volunteering among children and young people in NSW, including possible incentives to volunteer;
- Best practice in supporting and promoting safe opportunities for volunteering and unpaid work placements among children and young people in other jurisdictions, both in Australia and overseas;
- The role of the Commission for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian in supporting and promoting safe volunteering and unpaid work placement opportunities among children and young people in NSW;
- Providing the NSW Government with advice on how it can better engage with and support children and young people in volunteering and unpaid work placements; and
- Any other related matter.

NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES

**Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into
Volunteering and Unpaid Work Placement**

January 2014

EXISTING POLICIES RELATING TO VOLUNTEERING AND UNPAID WORK PLACEMENTS AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW

NSW Volunteering Strategy

In May 2012, the Minister for Citizenship and Communities launched the first *NSW Volunteering Strategy* (Office of Communities 2012). The strategy includes initiatives that will be delivered over the four years to 2015/16. The strategy focuses on:

- making it easier to volunteer
- broadening the volunteer base
- volunteering as a pathway to employment
- improving recognition and support for workplace volunteering
- valuing volunteers and celebrating their contributions.

The Volunteering Strategy supports meeting NSW 2021 Goal 24 of increasing the proportion of the NSW population involved in volunteering.

The Strategy defines volunteering as offering time, service and/or skill without payment. It recognises volunteering is an activity that can occur in any setting that has a direct benefit to the community and the volunteer, is undertaken by choice, and is unpaid. Volunteering is situated in a continuum of participation in community life – for example playing sport might not in itself be volunteering, but when an individual referees a game, coaches a team or prepares the morning tea for a team they are volunteering. Volunteering is conceptually distinct from unpaid work placements which are more likely to have an explicit learning and skills development component – for example work placements associated with vocational education.

There is no Australian Bureau of Statistics data collection for volunteering among children and young people. However, the volunteering rate in NSW for those aged 18-24 is consistently one third of the population, and among those people, the largest proportion is involved in sport and recreation volunteering. In other research, the volunteering rate of young people has been found to be 58% (Mission Australia 2013).

There is evidence (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010) that family and childhood experiences affect later volunteering in adulthood. 66% of adult volunteers reported that their parents had done some voluntary work. 43% of adult volunteers had undertaken some voluntary work as a child. 60% of adult volunteers had been part of a youth group as a child, and 83% of adult volunteers had participated in youth sport as a child. A further fact is that more than 40% of parents of school aged children volunteer, principally through sport and recreation. Hence, active parents that volunteer and participate in their communities are likely to engender active participating lives for their children.

Volunteering and giving to others delivers significant personal benefits (Post 2011). It is now clear that those who give to others get more personal benefit from the gift of giving than the value of that gift. In other words, giving is its own reward – and these personal benefits can include better health, longer life and vibrant wellbeing. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010) reported that volunteers were much more likely than non-volunteers to have attended a community event in the last 6 months. Of people who volunteered, 62% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that most people could be trusted. Further, 82% of volunteers reported that they were delighted, pleased or mostly satisfied with their lives.

The volunteering of children and young people is principally supported through the modelling and actual volunteering and participation of their parents, particularly through participation in sport and recreation. The second influence on the volunteering of children and young people is through support for volunteering in schools and by school students. In

public health terms, and in terms of building the social capital and wellbeing of society, participation and volunteering are essential elements in building intergenerational and family health and wellbeing. Therefore, it is essential to promote volunteering and participation to children and young people.

Volunteering (in schools)

Student Volunteering programs operate in a number of public schools in NSW and contribute to building harmonious communities, broadening the volunteering base and providing further opportunities to engage students with 'real-life' applications for their learning.

A Student Volunteering and Service Learning web portal has been established. Materials include downloadable tools to assist students and school coordinators recording volunteering activities and obtaining supervisor verification (Log Book, individual Verification Page), PowerPoint presentations and brochures (for promotion and marketing activities with students, parents, community members and school staff) as well as a variety of tools to stimulate ideas and discussion for student volunteering.

The last recorded data (2012) indicates that some 6,258 students from across 301 participating schools were actively logging their volunteering activities.

Workplace learning programs

Workplace learning programs are part of the NSW secondary curriculum. They enable students to spend a planned period of time in a host workplace gaining practical experience, informing their career choices and building general employability and specific industry skills. Work experience and structured workplace learning make up workplace learning programs. There is a significant difference between the program classified as work experience and programs called structured workplace learning.

The Department's Workplace Learning Policy for Secondary Students in Government Schools and TAFE NSW Institutes identifies the responsibilities of key parties:

- the Department's non-delegable duty of care;
- the critical importance of preparing students for workplace learning to optimise their safety and achievement;
- the importance of monitoring and reviewing workplace learning programs; and
- the procedures for reporting incidents.

Work experience describes the more generalist programs usually conducted in Years 9 and 10 where students spend time with an employer to explore the world of work. Structured work placement programs are usually associated with Years 11 and 12, and are specifically connected to the Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses in which the student is enrolled to ensure specific vocational skills are practiced and enhanced while on a work placement.

In the 2013 school year, 467 NSW public schools completed reporting online about their School to Work activities for the previous year. Those schools comprised 360 secondary schools, 59 central schools and 48 Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs). Of the 467 reporting schools, 460 (98.5%) indicated they provide work experience as part of their provision of authentic learning opportunities.

Structured work placement students are enrolled in a VET course and ensure specific vocational skills are practiced and enhanced while on a work placement. Work Placement Service Providers (WPSPs) are not-for-profit and non-government agencies which hold a contract with the Department to broker work placements with employers and act as a co-ordinating agent between schools and employers. The funding contracts or agreements are managed on behalf of the other two education sectors: the Catholic Education Commission

(CEC) and the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) as well as TAFE NSW. The WPSP organisations have an obligation to take reasonable steps to minimise risk to students in recruiting employers to the coordination program. Work Placement Service Providers discuss with employers their responsibilities in this regard which are detailed on both the Student Placement Record and in The Employers Guide to Work Place Learning. These two resources are used to support the safety and welfare of students undertaking workplace learning and are listed in the “Further Information and Policies Link” attached.

In 2013, approximately 60,000 Year 11 and 12 students from across the education sectors were enrolled in VET in Schools courses that required a mandatory work placement. This equates to 2.2 million student hours of structured work placement involving approximately 30,000 employers.

Transition to community participation and transition to work programs for students with a disability

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education (2005) require that education providers take reasonable steps to provide, through reasonable adjustments, students with a disability with access to the curriculum, including workplace learning and volunteering programs, on the same basis as students without a disability.

It is important that all young people, including those who have disability or additional learning and support needs, are encouraged while still at school to plan for participation in the paid workforce, and that they are given opportunities to take part in vocational education, work experience placements, and make contact with employers. Strong linkages between schools, employers and employment agencies facilitate avenues for developing the skills of students with disability.

To maximise post school opportunities for students with disability, including intellectual disability, focus on collaborative personalised learning and support planning with students and their families as early as possible. This supports the building of expectations and skills to promote entry into employment and engagement in the community. This also includes access for students with moderate to severe disability to specialist programs such as *Community Participation* and *Transition to Work* provided by Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

When schools are deciding what will be taught, they must also take into account:

- the individual needs of a student with disability when deciding what will be in a course and how they will teach it;
- what adjustments or steps should be taken to support a student with disability to access and participate in the course on the same basis as all other students; and
- how they will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to provide support to students with disability participating in a course.

Work experience is an option for all students including students with disability. Planning with the student, parents and carers and school learning and support team helps to identify skills that may be enhanced by work experience and any adjustments needed to participate in work experience.

Case Study

Joshua, a student in Year 10 with Autism, attends his local high school. Joshua expressed a desire to work in a café. When he was in Year 9 the school learning and support team worked with Joshua and his family to select subjects and identify skills that would assist him to meet his goal. They identified that travel training and participation in the school's barista training program would build his skills in preparation for work experience. The careers adviser and the school learning and support teacher supported Joshua in these learning activities.

The careers teacher assisted Joshua and his parents organise work experience at a local café. Through discussion with the employer adjustments were identified and made to enable Joshua to work in the café.

Joshua's successful work experience helped his future planning including his subject selection for Years 11 and 12.

Existing policies

See the Further Information and Policy Links section of the submission.

MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERING AND FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW, INCLUDING POSSIBLE INCENTIVES TO VOLUNTEER

Volunteering in early life, including while at school and university, creates long term commitment and delivers many personal benefits. In a 14-nation study on service-learning (an approach to education that involves students in meaningful, real-world activities that can advance social, emotional, career and academic curricula goals while benefitting communities), both mandatory and optional service-learning at high school and university led to higher participation in general volunteering through adulthood (Haski-Leventhal et al. 2010).

Student volunteering is already widespread in NSW. In 2012, almost 7,000 NSW public school students contributed 245,000 volunteering hours in the NSW Premier's Student Volunteering Awards program. This volunteering builds wellbeing and health, and adds to later employability through additions to a student's resume.

In 2013, the *up2now* pilot initiative of the NSW Record of School Achievement was available to 50,000 students in Years 10 and 11. This allowed students to record their volunteering time and will enable them to use this evidence in the search for employment. The International Baccalaureate is also offered in NSW, and it too includes a component of community service.

The key message to schools about volunteering is that implementing a student volunteering program does not have to be difficult and schools can and should build on existing school and community activities to further encourage student volunteering.

Activities such as charity fundraising, peer tutoring, library and canteen assistance are all common in schools and often form the basis of an effective volunteering program. Schools then select other volunteering opportunities to include local charities and organisations.

BEST PRACTICE IN SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING SAFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING AND UNPAID WORK PLACEMENTS AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS, BOTH IN AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS

In the UK, the official body for inspecting schools reported that in most schools they visited, some students were involved in learning through participation and responsible action (Ofsted 2010). This service-learning helps participants develop a range of capabilities and positive outcomes, including teamwork, the ability to stick to a task, empathy, time-keeping, confidence and mixing with people from different backgrounds (Birdwell, Scott & Horley 2013). In Germany, and in many other EU countries, compulsory military service has been replaced with voluntary community action.

In the USA, service-learning is a mandatory curriculum element in schools in many states, and is widely utilised in schools across the whole country. Service-learning yields significant positive impacts on students' academic engagement, civic engagement and social-emotional development. Service-learning is strongly associated with academic engagement, increased interest in specific content, such as mathematics or science, associated with students' willingness to attend school and persist with challenging content. Students also develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy for learning. In a few quasi-experimental studies, service-learning was associated with increases in academic performance (Birdwell, Scott & Horley 2013).

In a sample of US high school seniors, up to 80% engaged in community affairs or volunteering work in 2011, 21% once or twice a month and 41% a few times a year.

Students with college plans were twice as likely to participate or volunteer as those with no college plans (Johnston, Bachman & O'Malley 2011).

Engaging parents with service-learning and volunteering contributes to student learning through development of schools and learning environments, and as bridge-builders to civic engagement in the broader community (Kielsmeier 2010).

In schools, the practice of service-learning is promising, primarily because it is based on so many of the factors shown in the research to be associated with academic and civic engagement and performance. The hands-on nature of the approach and the strong emphasis on transfer of knowledge are both factors associated with increased achievement. The focus on collaboration, goal attainment, constructive feedback, and autonomy, which are features of service-learning, are similarly correlated with positive youth development outcomes.

Recent British research also confirms the importance of providing young people with opportunities which give them contact with employers. The evidence shows that where there are statistically significant positive relationships between young people and employers, more long term employment outcomes will develop. The research identified that the 7% of young adults surveyed who recalled four or more employer connected activities while at school were five times less likely to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and earned, on average, 16% more than peers who recalled no such activities. The findings were not linked to highest level of qualification.

Child protection is vitally important in all workplace learning programs conducted off the school site in partnership with a range of organisations and individuals. The Department consults with the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and more recently the Office of the Children's Guardian to ensure that the Department's workplace learning procedures meet legislative requirements and improve practice to support the ongoing safety and protection of students. All host employers, including the majority who do not fall under the New Working with Children Check requirements, must sign the employer declaration on the Department's Student Placement Record to indicate their understanding and acceptance of their responsibilities.

PROVIDING THE NSW GOVERNMENT WITH ADVICE ON HOW IT CAN BETTER ENGAGE WITH AND SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN VOLUNTEERING AND UNPAID WORK PLACEMENTS

The Office of Communities is responsible for leading policy on volunteering in NSW, including development and implementation of the NSW Volunteering Strategy. More detail can be found at www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au with additional detail on the major initiative, Timebanking at www.timebanking.com.au.

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND POLICY LINKS

Student Volunteering

Quality practice in schools is supported through the provision of resources and professional learning including:

- Guidelines and online resources to support school programs
http://cllc.det.nsw.edu.au/student_volunteering/index.htm
- Online data management tool to collate student volunteering hours
<https://products.schools.nsw.edu.au/psv/home.html>
- NSW Institute of Teachers registered professional learning delivered by regional consultants (delivered 2010- 2012).

Schools are supported to implement quality student volunteering programs informed by current mandatory policies including the *Workplace Learning Policy for Secondary Students in Government Schools and TAFE NSW Institutes* policy mandates the same requirements for volunteering as those identified in both the Work Experience and the Structured Work Place learning material following and are at:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/workplace_learn/wrkplc_lern/PD20050016.shtml?query=workplace+learning

Workplace learning programs

Workplace learning programs include work experience, work placement for HSC vocational education and training (VET) courses, career and enterprise education programs, community learning and student mentoring programs conducted by employers in the workplace. Students are not paid as part of any of these placements and no payment is made to host organisations or employers.

In NSW public schools, work experience is available to students aged 14 years and over and is usually undertaken in Years 9-12.

Work experience is also an optional component of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Work Education syllabus for students in Years 7-10 who are aged 14 or more and in BOSTES Work Studies Syllabus for students in Years 11-12.

Innovation, flexibility and new models of work experience are valued. Examples include the Foundation for Young Australians' WOW (Worlds of Work) one week program which asks the question, *What does it take to be successful in life and work?* See <http://www.fya.org.au/initiatives/worlds-of-work/>

The Work Inspiration program which is employer driven may become more prominent as a number of community organisations are engaging with this program to determine its benefits. See <http://www.workinspiration.com.au/>

A brief profile of work experience in NSW public schools

In 2013, 467 NSW public schools completed the non-mandatory reporting online about their School to Work activities for the previous year. Those schools comprised 360 Secondary Schools, 59 Central Schools and 48 Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs). Of the 467 reporting schools, 460 (98.5%) indicated they provide work experience as part of their provision of authentic learning opportunities. In this reporting process 457 of the 467 (98%) schools indicated they provide formal work experience programs to support their students' career and transition planning. Schools also indicate that a range of work experience models are used to suit host employer, schools and individual student needs. The two most

common models involve students attending a block release (usually 5 school days) or continuous release (one day per week over 5 weeks or longer as student needs indicate)..

Some 26% of schools offer continuous work experience on an individual student/host employer needs basis. Occasionally, schools support individual work experience for senior students in the school holidays with the exception of the Christmas holidays.

Workplace learning policy support for students, schools and host employers

The Department's *Workplace Learning Policy for Secondary Students in Government Schools and TAFE NSW Institutes* identifies the responsibilities of key parties (Sections 1.3- 1.4 and 1.6); the Department's non-delegable duty of care (Section 4.2); the critical importance of preparing students for workplace learning to optimise their safety and achievement (Section 4.2); the importance of monitoring and reviewing workplace learning programs (Section 5.1); and the procedures for reporting incidents (Section 5.4).

The Workplace Learning Policy is available at:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/workplace_learn/wrkplc_lern/PD20050016.shtml?query=workplace+learning

The related *Workplace Learning Procedures and Standards* expands on the Workplace Learning Policy. This document provides the detailed operational requirements to be implemented by schools and TAFE NSW institutes and include roles and responsibilities of key parties (Section 1.3.6-1.3.11); duty of care (1.4.5-1.4.7); and emergency contacts for students during normal business hours and after hours (1.4.8).

The Procedures and Standards are currently being reviewed for the 2014 school year. They are available at:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/documents/work_learn/Procedures-Standards.pdf

Policy on child protection

Child Protection is vitally important in workplace learning conducted off site and with a range of organisations and individuals. The Department consults with the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and more recently the Office of the Children's Guardian to ensure that the Department's workplace learning procedures meet legislative requirements and improve practice to support the ongoing safety and protection of students.

All host employers, including the majority who do not fall under the New Working With Children Check requirements, must sign the employer declaration on the Department's Student Placement Record to indicate that, among other things:

- I have read and understood the special responsibilities associated with working with children and young people as detailed in the section related to child protection in *The Workplace Learning Guide for Employers*.
- I understand students must report incidents to their school. [The last sentence was added following 2013 NSW OCG workshop on the New Working With Children Check]
- I am not aware of anything in the background of any staff member or other person who will have close contact with the student that would preclude that staff member or person from working with children.
- I have informed employees of their responsibilities when working with children and young people.

It is a mandatory requirement to provide a copy of the Department's *Workplace Learning Guide for Employers* to prospective host employers for any type of workplace learning prior to them agreeing to host a student by way of the Student Placement Record.

Policy on work health and safety

The Department's Work Health and Safety Directorate directly informs workplace learning policy (as mentioned above - see Sections 1.3 and 1.4), procedures, practice and advice to support the ongoing safety of students in the workplace to meet WHS legislation and reporting requirements.

An example of the Department's Work Health and Safety Directorate input that adds precision to the revised Student Placement Record for 2014 is where students will sign, among other things, that:

- I understand my responsibilities during the placement to support work health and safety in the host workplace. I understand that if I feel unsafe during the placement I have the right to not undertake the task and report the issue.
- I understand my safety is of paramount importance during the placement and there are no negative consequences to me in reporting health and safety issues to my school, the host employer or to my parent(s)/guardian.
- I know I must contact my school if I have any concerns about my placement.

Before placement, students are provided with a small Student Contact Card listing who they should contact if they have any concerns during their placement. Post placement follow up with the student is also mandatory.

Policy on injury and accidents

To support students and their families in the rare event that a student is injured during workplace learning, including during travelling to and from the workplace, the Department has specific insurance and indemnity arrangements in place through the Treasury Managed Funds Scheme. Parents and carers need to first finalise any medical accounts and then claim from their Medicare and private health funds before a request can be made to the Department to cover any outstanding *out of pocket* expenses.

If a student has a significant injury as a result of participating in an approved workplace learning program, the Department ensures the student will not be worse off than someone undertaking paid employment who sustains the same injury and who is covered by the Workers Compensation Act. For that reason, the Department uses the NSW Workers Compensation Act as a benchmark to compensate students for medical treatment and rehabilitation costs. More details are available under the heading, *What insurance and indemnity provisions are in place for approved workplace learning programs?* at:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/worklearn/additional_information_PandC.html#3

Other related policies are:

Incident Reporting Policy (intranet only)

https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/administrative/reporting/incident_reporting/PD20070362_i.shtml?query=Incident+Policy

Reporting School Accidents

https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/general/accidrpt/PD20020064_i.shtml?level=Schools&categories=Schools%7Cwellbeing%7Caccidents

Resources to support the safety and welfare of students undertaking workplace learning

Supporting documents to ensure the ongoing safety and welfare of students undertaking unpaid workplace learning are available on the Department's website at:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/worklearn/worklearnpolicy.html>

Apart from the Workplace Learning Policy, the Procedures and Standards, Student Placement Records, other key resources include:

- *The Workplace Learning Guide for Employers*
- *Additional Information for Employers*
- *The Workplace Learning Guide for Parents and Carers*
- *The Workplace Learning Guide for Parents and Carers (translations in 35 languages)*
- *Additional Information for Parents and Carers*
- *Prohibited Activities and Activities That Need Special Consideration*
- *The Student Guide to Workplace Learning*
- *DRAFT Schools Support Package for Private or Community RTOs Delivering HSC Courses*
- *DRAFT Support Package for Private or Community RTOs Delivering HSC Courses.*

Work Placement

Work placement is a mandatory Higher School Certificate (HSC) requirement for a range of HSC VET courses including the 13 Industry Curriculum Framework courses: Automotive, Business Services, Construction, Electro-technology, Entertainment Industry, Financial Services, Hospitality, Human Services, Information Technology, Metal and Engineering, Primary Industries, Retail Services, Tourism and Events. These ICF VET courses are available to students in years 11 and 12 and also to students in years 9 and 10 in appropriate circumstances through the early commencement pathway for Stage 5 VET courses. Guidelines for access to VET courses by students in Years 9 and 10 are available at: http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed/stage-5.html

In addition to enrolment in the HSC ICF VET courses, in 2013 nearly 15,000 students were enrolled in Board Endorsed VET Courses which had a mandatory work placement component. Schools and TAFE NSW Institutes are responsible for organising work placements for students enrolled in these courses which include Animal Studies, Beauty, Aviation, Early Childhood Education and Care, Fitness and Sports Coaching.

In 2013, approximately 60,000 Year 11 and 12 students from across the three education sectors were enrolled in these courses. Currently 24 Work Placement Service Providers undertake work placement coordination on behalf of all NSW schools with secondary enrolments, TAFE NSW and participating employers for students who are enrolled in HSC ICF VET Courses. This key function establishes for employers one point of contact. This is important because employer goodwill is essential to the successful provision of work placements.

Resources to support student participation in workplace learning

1. Go2workplacement go2workplacement.com

Go2workplacement is an online program which assists students enrolled in HSC VET courses to get the most out of their work placement by identifying the skills and competencies they want to focus on during their time in the workplace. Comprising 4 online modules, Work Health and Safety, Personal Attributes, Employment Related Skills and Competencies related to the course. Students work through a series of scenarios to identify

activities they want to explore further during their work placement. On completion of the modules students are awarded a Work Placement Ready Certificate which informs host employer that they have prepared for work placement.

Go2workplacement complements existing school based, work ready activities so that students get the maximum benefit from their time in the workplace. The program also assists teachers and work placement service providers to identify which students are ready for their work placement. Work Place Service Providers work with schools and TAFE NSW to implement the resource and also promote it to participating employers who host students for work placements.

2. Students undertaking work placement on construction sites

Work placements on construction sites have additional risks for students and reinforcing messages about safety is implicit in both course delivery and preparation for work placement. All students undertaking work placement on construction sites must have completed Work Cover recognised [General Construction Induction training](#) and hold a White Card.

To assist teachers in the implementation of specific, work placement readiness activities reinforcing messages about safety, the following resources have been developed:

- Work Placements in Construction Safety and Emergency Procedures Student Contact Cards;
- Posters promoting important safety messages for display in both classrooms and workplaces; and
- Go2construction The video presents a number of scenarios which students could encounter when on work placement. To assist teachers use the video as a classroom resource, prompts to facilitate discussion have been integrated throughout.

3. Work placements involving accommodation from home

On occasion, for an exceptional opportunity, a student may propose to undertake workplace learning that requires accommodation away from home. These placements require the special approval of the school Principal or the relevant TAFE NSW Institute Manager because of additional duty of care responsibilities.

To assist schools make informed decisions, a suite of resources has been developed to identify key issues.

Hyperlinks to these resources include:

- [Key Questions Card](#) (includes issues for consideration by schools, parents and students; safety and emergency procedures and nominated contact information for students)
- [Workplace learning involving accommodation away from home –classroom poster](#)
- [Workplace learning involving accommodation away from home – Duty of care considerations for Principals/relevant TAFE NSW Institute managers](#)
- [Accommodation away from home – onsite accommodation assessment control form \(key points for discussion by school /TAFE with the host employer\)](#)

Protection of children

Work Placement Service Providers must comply with the provisions of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 and all related legislation (Child Protection Legislation) including without limitation:

- ensuring that personnel, and volunteers performing work or persons undertaking practical training who are or will be assigned to work on the program comply with the Child Protection Legislation
- carrying out employment screening of each worker who is or will be assigned to work on the program, provided that any worker who declines being screened does not work on the program
- notifying the Department of any relevant disciplinary proceedings in relation to the Child Protection Legislation against any worker who is or will be assigned to work on the program or of any applicant in relation to the program is rejected for child-related employment
- not assigning, or continuing the assignment of, a prohibited person in relation to the program or allow such prohibited person to undertake work in relation to the program.

Work Place Service Providers have an obligation to take reasonable steps to minimise risk to students. In recruiting employers to the coordination program Work Place Service Providers discuss with employers their responsibilities in this regard which are detailed on both the Student Placement Record and in the Employers Guide to Work Place Learning.

Employer participation in workplace learning programs

Participation by employers in the NSW Work Placement Program is voluntary.

Employers do not receive any remuneration and their continued participation is dependent on support from schools in maintaining effective communication and supervision.

Each year approximately 30,000 employers demonstrate their goodwill in providing young people enrolled in HSC ICF VET courses the opportunity to contextualise their classroom learning in a workplace. Many of these employers provide multiple placements throughout the year. These employers provided approximately 2.2 million hours of work placement in 2013

When hours of student participation in work experience and work placements for Board Endorsed VET courses are additionally considered, the contribution by employers to workplace learning programs for students in NSW schools is extremely significant.