

## **Employer engagement ideas for Primary Schools**

### **Employer Engagement**

Developing the Young Workforce has put a greater than ever emphasis on employer engagement in schools, with both schools and employers expected to work together to ensure pupils have the necessary skills, attributes and knowledge required for the World of Work.

The Career Education Standard, published in September 2015, places certain demands on teachers. These include:

- work with a range of partners including parents/carers, employers and other practitioners to design and deliver an appropriate personalised curriculum that takes account of: the individual needs of children and young people; and genuinely equips them for learning, life and work in all settings including colleges and other learning providers.
- engage children and young people in meaningful discussion about their skills for learning, life and work
- through professional learning and having access to up-to-date resources, develop and maintain an awareness of the opportunities in the labour market and the attributes and skills needed to take advantage of these;
- relate relevant learning experiences and skills development to the labour market and employment opportunities including entrepreneurship and self-employment;
- develop children and young people's understanding of the responsibilities and duties placed on employees and employers;
- make use of relevant digital and online resources, in particular My World of Work (supported by training);
- encourage diverse thinking in children and young people to consider a broader view of subject choices, career options and job opportunities;
- facilitate young people's learning and their ability to engage with a rapidly developing landscape of work/career and learning opportunities;

### **How teachers may benefit from employer engagement**

Employer engagement gives teachers the opportunity

- to engage with employers to find out about the relevance of learning and teaching to different careers;
- to consider how the methodology used in subjects lends itself to developing the skills employers are looking for;
- to learn about the changing labour market, growth job sectors and the new opportunities available for young people, often relatively unfamiliar topics to primary teachers
- It is also an opportunity to make contact with parents/local employers to see if any activities could be set up to support the wider life of the school:

### **How pupils may benefit from employer engagement**

Pupils will have opportunities to speak to employers to

- Find out information about job sectors, growth areas and jobs they know nothing about
- They will have chances to hear from employers what they are looking for from young people and how that relates to teacher's expectations of them
- They will hear up to date information about the World of Work beyond school
- Employers can add relevance to curriculum work by giving it a real life context

### **How parents may benefit from employer engagement**

Parents will be more informed about

- The changing face of the job market locally including growth sectors and their requirements of young people
- Different routes to employment...its not university or bust!
- The emphasis and importance of skills development which will be reinforced by employers

### **How employers may benefit from employer engagement**

- They can engage with young people who have not yet decided on subject choices or careers
- They are engaging with the next generation of employees
- They can debunk myths about particular jobs/sectors
- They can get innovative and creative ideas from young people which can be used in their business/sector

There is already an extensive guide on how to run a Career Fair in your school. However you may wish to consider other ways to engage employers.

- **Tap in to your parent body.**

- 1) Create a survey monkey /questionnaire for your parents to find out what job they do and when and how they would be willing to work with you on employer engagement.
- 2) Create a database of parents and their jobs which can be used throughout the year
- 3) Organise an event where parents can share with pupils what they do as a job. This could be a class event or a whole school Exploring the World of Work event where pupils visit at a set time and rotate round tables with speakers or speakers visit different classes throughout a day
- 4) Consider displaying this information somewhere in your school and encourage parents and pupils to read and comment on it
- 5) Share the language of skills for work with parents. Encourage them through homework tasks to discuss and identify where and when their children are demonstrating these skills

Resources/links

- **Find out about your local employers**

- 1) Where are your local employers and what do they do? Use Google maps or go on a community walk. Different classes could then research different employers.
- 2) Make contact with these employers and explain that you would like to find out more about what they do
- 3) Invite them to visit you and try to arrange a visit to their workplace
- 4) Engage employers in discussions with pupils about what work is like and the expectations employers may have. There are sample questions to support this in the Career Fair Guide for Primaries
- 5) Invite employers to speak to classes and talk about their work
- 6) Share your school improvement plan with employers. What could you work on together?
- 7) Be prepared to reciprocate – what can you do to support them? Can your young people offer creative ideas or solutions, digital support or advice on pedagogical approaches such as co-operative learning.

**Then ....once you know more about your local employers**

- 1) Invite employers to support curriculum project
- 2) Engage your local employers in skills for work discussions. Are these the skills they are looking for? If not get them to help you create a very local version
- 3) Run a business breakfast or career fair and invite local employers to take part
- 4) Invite employers to be vocational ambassadors – to inspire youngsters about particular industries/sectors/careers
- 5) Form an employer engagement working group with employers, pupils and staff to work on continued employer engagement in your community
- 6) Develop collaborative competition ideas developing knowledge and skills relevant to a sector/industry/career
- 7) Ask for support for school projects – eg providing technical/specialised advice
- 8) Create a formal partnership agreement where you and an employer identify a small number of objectives to work on in an agreed timescale. Both parties can then have a copy of the agreement

(It is not advisable to ask employers for money to support your school. Whilst a business may have a Corporate Social Responsibility fund employers are much more keen to offer time. Furthermore the benefits from planned and considered time with employers will, over time, far outweigh a small cash donation.)

- **Start to share the language of Job Sectors and Labour Market Information with Pupils and Parents**
  - 1) Research different job sectors to find out the kind of jobs in each sector. The Skills Development Scotland resource *My World of Work* may be useful for this
  - 2) Asking parents and family members what job sector they work in
  - 3) Finding out about the jobs in different sectors
  - 4) In a larger primary school different classes from P4-7 could do research in different sectors and share this with P1-3 classes. In a smaller school a P4-7 composite could work in teams to find out about sectors and share this with younger pupils at assemblies/in class
  - 5) You may wish to focus on one or more of the local growth sectors in *Opportunity North East* – ie Food and Drink, Tourism, Life Sciences and Oil and Gas.
  - 6) Look at your local employers – which sector are they in?
  - 6) For upper stages pupils you can introduce the term Labour Market Information and explain it to pupils using the simple Labour Market Information powerpoint created for use with pupils and parents
  
- **Be aware of Gender Bias**  
**....in the curriculum, in your interactions with your pupils, in the books you read with them, in the employers you engage with**
  - 1) Encourage diverse thinking in children and young people to consider a broader view of subject choices, career options and job opportunities
  - 2) Question gender stereotypes
  - 3) Use the Education Scotland 3-18 improving Gender Balance resources in your school  
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sci38-improving-gender-balance.aspx>