

DBS Checks for Work Experience Guidance

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DBS check requirements

The requirement for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check depends on:

- The age of the young person.
- The nature of the duties involved.
- Whether the placement constitutes regulated activity.

In regulated environments such as schools, colleges and universities, a DBS check may be necessary for both the supervising staff member and the student, particularly if the student is aged 16 or older, will be unsupervised, or will be involved in regulated activity.

Note anyone under the age of 16 is a 'child' and anyone aged 16-18 is a 'young person'.

Examples of higher risk placements:

- A university technician working alone with a 15-year-old student in a lab for four consecutive afternoons.
- A staff member mentoring a student under 16 in a private office setting for a week.

In such cases, where unsupervised or frequent one-to-one contact is likely, the University should not support the placement due to safeguarding risks. Staff however should work with the school to explore safer alternatives, such as:

- Suitable environments:
Open-plan offices, libraries or appropriate research environments where there is a high staff visibility and minimal direct contact between the student and any one individual.
- Hybrid placements:
Where the student attends the university for less than three days in a 30-day period, mitigating the need for DBS clearance for supervising staff.

Enhanced DBS checks – When are they required?

An Enhanced DBS check may be required for staff supervising a child under 16 during a work experience placement. This depends on:

- The nature and frequency of the supervision.
- Whether the supervision is regulated, i.e., the young person will come into contact with children under 18.

Key considerations include:

- Is the staff member unsupervised while supervising the child?
- Is the supervision frequent and one-to-one, such as providing instruction or guidance for more than three days within a 30-day period?

- A child under the age of 16 cannot be DBS checked.

Safeguarding responsibilities of schools

Schools must uphold their safeguarding responsibilities to ensure the welfare and safety of children and young people during placements. A child must not be placed in any role that could compromise their:

- Safety – e.g., working in isolated or hazardous environments.
- Health – e.g., exposure to chemicals or excessive physical demands.
- Development – e.g., tasks inappropriate for their age or maturity.
- School participation – e.g., placements that interfere with education or attendance.

If concerns arise during a placement, schools should raise them through established safeguarding channels. If the concern relates directly to the placement, the school must consider terminating the arrangement to protect the child.

Other policies

[Children on Campus Policy](#)

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