

Clarification on work placement contact

August 23, 2018

Site visits are not mandatory for contact with students on work experience or work placement, it has been confirmed.

In 2017, Federation raised with the Department the information detailed in Safety Alert No 66 — the requirement that teachers were to make “at least one supervisory visit with the student during work placement”. Federation had previously been advised by the Department that a site visit was not mandatory and that a telephone call would suffice. In a letter from Sharon Ford, Director of Secondary Education, dated 30 April, 2014, the Department stated: “Teachers are required to make contact with each host employer and student. This can be done via a phone call or a site visit.”

At the 2017 meeting, the Department assured Federation that the matter would be followed up and distributed a proposal to replace the wording in the Department’s Workplace Learning Procedures and Standards.

The matter was resolved on 31 July, 2018, in an email from the Department stating: “The contact with students on work experience or work placement may be ‘either by phone or site visits’. Site visits are not mandatory.”



The content of the advice received from the Department is as follows:

“I am writing to confirm that the contact with students on work experience or work placement may be ‘either by phone or site visit’. Site visits, while beneficial, are not mandatory.

“The contact with the student supports the wellbeing of the student when they are participating in an unfamiliar adult working environment without the ongoing presence of a teacher they know.

“As discussed with Federation, the following wording tabled with Federation applies:

A duty of care to contact both the student and workplace supervisor/host employer during placement to ensure that the placement is progressing satisfactorily. Contact can be either by phone or if practical a site visit by the responsible teacher. Site visits have clear benefits for students, teachers and host employers but are not mandatory. These contacts and visits are to be documented.

“Where placements involve a greater potential for risk such as construction, involving livestock, involving machinery, or where students are staying overnight as part of the placement, this contact should be made on the first or second day.

“I trust this clarifies the Department’s requirements.”

Mary Fogarty, Research/Industrial Officer