



Middle School Careers  
&  
Work Experience

*A guide for pupils and parents*

2011-2012

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# 1 The Middle School Careers Programme

This booklet is designed to serve as a guide to the Middle School Careers Programme and Work Experience. The Programme starts with the Cambridge Profile taken in the summer term of Year 10 and finishes with a week of work experience after the GCSE exams at the end of the Year 11.

The Programme aims to help you think ahead. Although the world of work is some way off and nearly all of you will go on to study in the Sixth Form and then at a university, this is an **opportunity** to find out about certain career areas and **to think about your own aptitudes and interests.**

It is hoped that you will be able to make **informed choices** on Sixth Form subjects and perhaps recognise the implications of your choices when you apply to higher education and jobs. For example, if a job that you are interested in relies on completion of a subject that you do not enjoy, **it is time to do some careful thinking.**

## Who do I approach if I have questions?

The School offers personal help and supervision to Middle School pupils as they undertake the series of activities in this programme. All of the careers and higher education staff, based in the newly refurbished Aisher Hall, will be able to offer advice. The people most relevant to the Middle School are:

- **Mr James Tate (JLT)**, Head of Middle School Careers, oversees the programme and works alongside other members of the Higher Education & Careers department and tutors. His role is to guide and assist pupils throughout their time in the Middle School. He will also be obtaining feedback from your work experience employer to find out how you got on.
- **Mrs Julia Douglas (JD)**, HE & Careers Advisor, oversees the individual interviews in the Michaelmas Term with all Year 11 pupils.
- **Your Tutor** will also guide you through the programme. He/she will help you to develop your C.V. and lead you through some of the activities that take place during the programme.

**Summer Year 10**

Cambridge Profile Tests

**Michaelmas Year 11**Careers Interviews  
Obtaining Work Experience**Lent Year 11**Sixth Form Subject Choices  
Careers Fair**Summer Year 11**

Work Experience

# 3

## The Cambridge Profile

Cambridge Occupational Analysts

*opening doors of opportunity...*

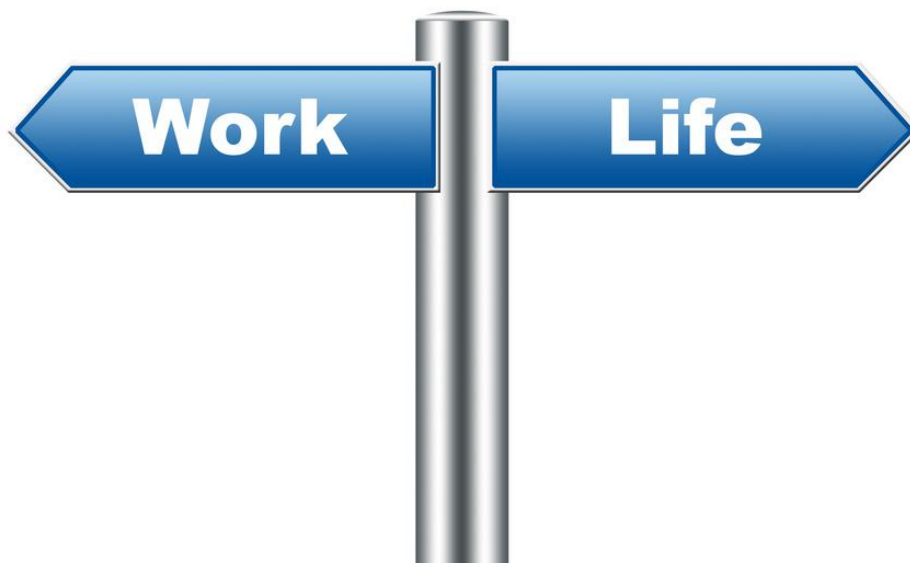


Employers and careers' advisers increasingly use aptitude tests as aids in assessing a candidate's potential for a particular job or career. In almost every careers field, one or more of the test scores may throw light on a person's suitability for aspects of the work. These tests are valuable for pupils, providing an objective assessment of their academic potential. Also, practice in tests of this kind can help pupils gain confidence and avoid stress when they are presented with similar tests by employers or academic institutions in the future.

The results show how the pupil has performed overall in comparison to other pupils of similar age and ability range. They also provide speed and accuracy bar graphs to throw greater light on each individual's performance.

The Cambridge Profile provides explanatory brochures for parents so that they can talk to their children about their results. If used in conjunction with other COA careers programmes, these results can help to inform pupils' work experience and careers choices.

The results of the Cambridge Profile are discussed with a professional careers advisor and the student's tutor during the Michaelmas Term.



## 4 The Michaelmas Term Programme

### Careers Interview



You will be informed of the date and time of your interview by your tutor and it will be published in the bulletin. All interviews last about 20 minutes.

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR REMEMBERING YOUR INTERVIEW AND ENSURING THAT YOU ARRIVE ON TIME!**

All pupils will have an interview in the Michaelmas Term with a COA careers adviser. They will explain the results of the COA test and discuss its implications for Sixth Form choices, work experience and future careers.

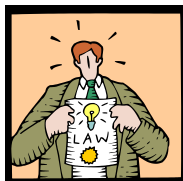
Within the Cambridge report there are sections for you to fill in regarding careers that you may be interested in. Typically, you will want to investigate what the job entails, personal qualities and skills needed and the entry requirements in terms of Sixth Form and degree level subjects.

These are completed after your interview with the careers advisor.

### Tutor Interview

During the Michaelmas Term, you need to be compiling a C.V. Your tutor can help you with this and you should ask them for advice.

See chapter 5 for more information about creating a suitable C.V.



The careers research that you will carry out after the meeting with the careers advisor will be the main focus of the interview with your tutor.

Remember that the careers library in the Aisher Hall is an excellent resource for information about the careers that you need to research.

After talking to your tutor, you should be in a position to make informed decisions about which Sixth Form subjects to choose and where to apply for work experience.

## 5 The Lent Term Programme

### The Careers Fair



### The highlight of the Lent Term!

We fill the Dining Hall with employers who want to talk to you about what they do. From bankers to barristers and doctors to diplomats, they will answer questions, dispel rumours and tell you the truth about their line of work.

Every year, our students come away with a fantastic insight into some of the more obscure jobs. Some even get offered extra work experience and gain valuable contacts for the future.

### Sixth Form Subject Choices

You should:

- Read the available booklets about what each IB course entails.
- Attend drop-in sessions to ask questions about the courses.
- Use the department portals to investigate IB syllabuses.
- Attend the Sixth Form information evening in November.

You should talk to your tutor, teachers and parents about the subjects that you are considering taking in the Sixth Form and remember that some subject choices will limit the range of degree courses and careers available to you.

The deadline for your choices will be advertised within school. Make sure that you meet this date!

Although these choices are not final, they are used to create the timetable. This means that certain changes will not be possible after this stage.

## 6 Your Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)

The widely-used Latin term 'Curriculum Vitae' literally means 'the course of your life'. It is a summary of your personal details, educational qualifications and interests. Typically, you enclose a copy of your C.V. in all job applications to show that you have useful (transferable) skills.

### Why create a C.V. in Year 11?

All pupils are required to compile a C.V. Help will be given by English teachers and tutors and time to complete it will be given in an English department homework.

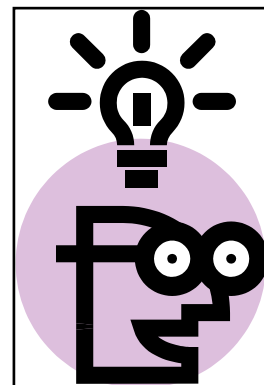
When applying for a job or work experience placement, you will usually have to attach a copy of your C.V. The aim is to be ready for when you start applying for work experience placements in November of Year 11. For some employments, you will be required include names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of two referees who will write a reference for you, however, this is not always necessary for work experience.

As time goes by and as you gain more qualifications, you will need to adjust your C.V. You will want to add GCSE results, Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and new hobbies/achievements.

There is an example C.V. on the next page. It should be word processed and on **one side** of A4. There should be sufficient detail for an employer to judge what you are like, but it must not be a page full of text. Good qualifications are important as well as saying something interesting about you as a person, possibly in terms of your hobbies and interests.

### Quick tips:

- Bullet points are a great way of packing lots of information onto a page without turning reading it into an arduous task.
- Use a large font/bold for important personal details.
- Make sure that your email address is professional, if you do not have an appropriate one, use your school address. i.e. not: *freaky\_heffalump@hotmail.com*.
- Take time to create a clear and attractive C.V. as it gives your employer a first impression of you. If your layout is confusing or crowded, it simply won't get read.



# Sample Curriculum Vitae

## Mary Jane Staples

1, Avenue Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN12 3AB

Home Telephone: 01732 987654

Email address: mary@staples.freeserve.co.uk

Date of Birth: 14<sup>th</sup> February 1995

Qualifications	Level	Grade	Date Taken
Maths	GCSE	A*	June 2011
French	GCSE	A	June 2011
Chemistry	GCSE		To take June 2012
Physics	GCSE		To take June 2012
Biology	GCSE		To take June 2012
Music	GCSE		To take June 2012
History	GCSE		To take June 2012
Art	GCSE		To take June 2012
English	GCSE		To take June 2012
French	Institute of Languages		To take June 2012

### **Other Awards**

UK Junior Maths challenge (2010) – Silver Award

Piano Grade 3 (2005), Violin Grade 5 (2009)

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award – (currently working towards Silver)

### **Likely Area of Study in the Sixth Form:**

IB Higher Level - Maths, French, English

Standard Level - History, Music, Physics

### **Positions of Responsibility:**

Third Year House Captain, U15 Netball Team Captain, Middle School Committee Member, Lance Corporal in Army Section CCF. Head of Junior School Orchestra (Laverock Prep School)

### **Career Interests**

Journalism, advertising or anything which involves writing skills. I have good communication skills and would enjoy working with people.

### **Hobbies and Interests**

I greatly enjoy the challenges involved in the Silver Duke of Edinburgh's award. The team activities have taught me a great deal about how I interact with and help others. I am in the netball and hockey teams and enjoy yoga and horse riding in my spare time. As writing is a passion of mine, I regularly contribute articles to the school magazine, all of which have been published.

### **School Contact:**

Mr James Tate, Head of Middle School Careers,

Sevenoaks School, Kent, TN13 1HU

Telephone/Fax: 01732 455133

e-mail: jlt@sevenoaksschool.org

## 7 Work Experience

Work experience is considered an essential part of education. Both the government's and the School's opinion is that **work placements are invaluable** in helping students develop an insight into the skills, attitudes and responsibilities required by business and in **raising their awareness** of career opportunities within the organisations visited.

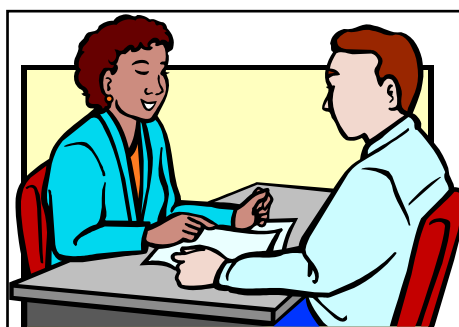
Each year, pupils in Year 11 must arrange a minimum of one week's work experience for themselves after the GCSE exams. 90% of students in England undertake work experience whilst at school and, when applying to most university courses, use their experience as a key factor in demonstrating a commitment to a particular study area.

We are very proud of our work experience records and take great care in advising students on work experience and ensuring that they understand the implications of spending a week in the working world. Although our contact list is very limited, we can help to find placements for some students or advise them on how to obtain appropriate placements for themselves. Contact us for more information about this.

### Dates for 2012:

Work Experience can be taken from the end of the GCSE exams until the start of the Michaelmas term **Approximately Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August**, obviously this depends on exactly when your exams finish and whether you have other commitments, like the Silver DofE expedition. If you find an employer who is willing to give you a placement but cannot do it during the Summer holidays, don't worry. Several students each year use the February half term, October half-term and sometimes even the Christmas holiday.

When you have secured a placement, please ask your employer to visit [www.sevenoaksschoolcareers.org](http://www.sevenoaksschoolcareers.org) and fill in our short form. This ensures that we have all the details of your arrangements.



## 7a Work Experience Issues

Work experience arrangements have had to become more formalised in recent years. The main issues and procedures to be considered are outlined here:

### A. Insurance

The School holds a Public Liability Insurance which covers pupils during work experience, but parents are advised to check that placement providers hold employers' liability insurance (this protects work experience students in a similar way to the firm's employees against personal injury, as long as the firm's insurers have been notified that students are present.) For this insurance to be valid, it is vital that pupils are not paid in any way for work experience.

Often, self-employed people, sole-traders, overseas institutions and government funded institutions do not have Employers' or Public Liability Insurance. These companies may have no means to meet claims for damages in cases of negligence. Thus parents may wish to take out additional cover or use their discretion in deciding whether their son/daughter should take up the placement. In such cases parents will be required to state, in writing, they are aware of this situation.

### B. Health and Safety

The health and safety record of students on work experience is excellent, but there cannot be room for complacency. The Health and Safety Regulations 1990, state that employers have a general duty to provide a safe environment for school students. However, it is important for each individual on work experience to make sure that he/she is briefed on safety considerations, provided with appropriate safety equipment and made aware of the tasks he/she should not do due to his/her age, inexperience or health. In the latter case, employers must be informed of health constraints, e.g. colour-blindness, asthma, hearing impairments etc. This may require them to reconsider the areas of work which are suitable for a particular student.

### C. Travel Arrangements

Coping with the logistics of getting to and from work can develop the student's confidence enormously, but parents need to consider carefully the means of transport, commuting time and areas through which their child travels carefully. For example, walking alone in some areas of London can be daunting, and asking a colleague to accompany them may be better.

If a student is involved with the public or travelling between offices during the day, a supervisor should be informed of where they will be, and their departure and expected arrival times.

Below is a checklist for pupils and parents to help them judge whether a placement is appropriate for a young person. The questions should be directed at the employer to identify areas of their business that are unsuitable for students.

- ❑ Does your firm have Employers' Liability and/or Public Liability insurance? Have the insurers been informed about the presence of students?
- ❑ What processes are carried out at your premises?
- ❑ Are there any particular hazards? e.g. dangerous substances, high voltages.
- ❑ Have you any machines or processes which young people are prohibited from using? If so, please state which.
- ❑ Which areas or processes would you consider unsuitable for a work experience student?
- ❑ Are the premises registered with any relevant enforcing agency? (Factories are registered with the factories inspectorate, and offices, shops and railway premises with the local authority.)
- ❑ Which set of health and safety regulations apply to the premises? (All premises operate within the Health and Safety Act, but firms using chemicals, high voltages and abrasive wheels register with specialist bodies.)
- ❑ Is there a fire certificate in force? (Firms with more than twenty employees in one building or more than ten not on the ground floor must have a fire certificate.)
- ❑ Have you a written safety policy? (Essential if there are five or more employees.)
- ❑ Who is responsible for health and safety arrangements? (Name and position.)
- ❑ Who is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of students while they are with you? (Name and position.)
- ❑ What arrangements are there for protective clothing?
- ❑ What arrangements are there for first aid?
- ❑ Are there any factors which might affect the health and safety of work experience students?



### **Important**

Sevenoaks School will request a health & safety check to be carried out on every company that offers one of our students work experience. This involves an inspector assessing the premises and checking the provisions for young people. In some cases, (e.g. overseas placements) this check cannot be completed, in which case we need confirmation from a parent to say that they are happy for the placement to go ahead nonetheless. This information will be sent to parents with more detail at a later date.

## 7b Work Experience Process

Remember that 90% of students in England undertake work experience; many of these students are applying for the same jobs at the same time. This is especially true if you are looking for opportunities in medicine, law, accountancy, marketing and banking. Certain areas such as veterinary medicine and broadcasting are also very heavily oversubscribed.

The only solution is to get there first!

### Getting a Placement

1. Think about areas in which you are interested. Talk to parents, relatives, friends of parents and parents of your friends - a personal contact is by far the best way to get a placement.
2. Once you have a contact, you must write to them or email them. Include an introductory letter and your C.V. Give as many details as you can about the dates that you are available.

3. If the employer says yes, you must thank them and ask them to fill in the form at:  
[www.sevenoaksschoolcareers.org](http://www.sevenoaksschoolcareers.org). This must be done by Lent half-term.

You can also download a letter to send you're your employer from [www.sevenoaksschoolcareers.org/letter.php](http://www.sevenoaksschoolcareers.org/letter.php). This letter provides them with important information about work experience and directs them to the online form mentioned above.

### Preparing Yourself

1. A few weeks before your placement, make contact with your employer. It could be to confirm what you should wear or the exact meeting place/time on your first day.
2. Revisit the company's website and make sure you know about the products or services that they offer. You will impress people by having a good understanding of the business.

3. Remember:
  - Always be punctual. If you are relying on public transport, leave plenty of time.
  - Be smart. Even if the dress code is casual, don't turn up in ripped jeans.
  - Be friendly. The employees will no doubt be interested to talk to you.
  - Don't rush in. Make sure you know exactly what you are expected to do before you start a task.
  - Use your common sense.
  - Be grateful. Your employer is doing you a huge favour.

## 7c Sample Work Experience Letter

1, Brighthouse Lane  
Sevenoaks  
Kent  
TN14 3TY  
01732 987 654

Email: mary@staples.freeserve.co.uk

Mr W.A.Ventnor  
Editor  
Kentish Chronicle  
Maidstone  
Kent  
M34 9RS

*Try to find out the proper title of the person  
to whom you are writing*

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2012

Dear Mr Ventnor

*Try to find the name of your contact, if not use  
Dear Sir/Madam*

I am a Year 11 pupil at Sevenoaks School and will be taking my GCSEs and IGCSEs next Summer. I would like to gain some work experience with your newspaper, because I am considering a future career in journalism. Writing is something that I really enjoy and I am lucky to have been able to contribute articles regularly to the school magazine. My availability over the Summer is either the 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> June, or 6<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> August.

I have enclosed my Curriculum Vitae, I do hope that you may be able to consider my request and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

*If you don't know their name, sign 'Yours faithfully'*

Mary Staples  
Sevenoaks School