



Scottish
Parent Teacher
Council
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CONSULTATION ON WORK EXPERIENCE

The Present System : All pupils in S4 have an “entitlement” to one week’s work experience. Whilst this is not compulsory, many parents and pupils think it is. The school’s guidance staff work hard at organising the necessary placements. They have to liaise with the work places, prepare the youngsters and try, as far as possible, to match youngsters’ interests to the work available; they are limited by the work available within a short travelling distance (most youngsters get no help with the cost of travel). Inevitably, work experience is generally in work places that find it the easiest to accommodate young people e.g. the hospitality industry, shops and large offices. For many youngsters, “work experience” means doing very routine tasks and making lots of cups of tea.

The argument in favour of work experience is that, regardless of the actual work, it teaches important skills such as punctuality, taking instructions, working independently. However, many youngsters will have part-time jobs which deliver these skills - along with pay - and an increasing number of youngsters stay on to S5 or S6 before going to college/university, so that work experience is only a distant memory by the time they actually start work.

An alternative proposal: With an ageing work-force and shrinking cohort of school leavers, many industries are very keen to attract youngsters to their area of work. One possible proposal is to combine this “recruitment” need with the wish to give all youngsters a meaningful taste of work. The features of the scheme could be that industries would set up taster weeks that would run throughout the year, including the school holidays. It would be up to the youngsters to apply to go on an appropriate “taster” week. They could do this from S4 on; some might do it in S6 whilst others might do more than one course in different years. Youngsters would be expected to provide evidence of their work experience on their CVs. Because older pupils were involved, the range of experiences could be widened and professional activities - the law, medicine, finance - could also have taster courses. Even long distant lorry-driving (an industry desperate for recruits) could put on weeks for older pupils.

We would like to know what you think. We would be grateful if you would discuss this with parents at your school - either your committee or a wider group - and ask each person to vote for **one** of the following options. **There is no need to try to reach an agreement.** Put the total for each option in the appropriate box and return the survey to us by 31st March. Please add any comments - including your own proposals - overleaf.

Proposal	Votes
Option 1: The current system of work experience works well: it should stay.	
Option 2: The current system of work experience does not work well: it should be changed, but not to the alternative scheme outlined above.	
Option 3: I support the alternative system outlined above.	

Please give name of school _____

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN, BY 31st March 2005 to
Scottish Parent Teacher Council, Freepost, STA 32, Edinburgh EH2 2BR
(no stamp required)