



Strengthening the Youth Sector Youth Employment Guidelines

These are guidelines to support young people in their positive development towards independence in the work place. These guidelines aim to support both the employer and the young person for successful engagement and employment relationship.

The Guidelines

Getting to work – working through potential barriers

The workplace should be accessible to young people. In an employment context accessibility is not so much based around services providing hours that are convenient for young people, but more so about making sure that young people are able to work while not sacrificing other parts of their life.

- Are you aware of other pre-existing commitments that may impact on their work hours? Do they have exams/ education, cultural requirements, sporting, family, wellbeing?
- Are you approachable for young people to renegotiate hours or work agreements if something comes up beyond their control? For example a change in living arrangements or a situation that significantly affects them.
- Are you aware of your obligations to the Employment Contracts Act and do you practice these?
- Do you and the young person work out how they safely get to work?

Environment

The workplace provides a safe and youth friendly environment. This is a fundamental aspect of successfully employing young people, particularly first time employees. Young people should never feel employers require them to place themselves in unsafe situations.

- Do you have robust work-place health and safety training relevant to the young person's employment?
- Do you practice robust health and safety procedures in the work place that is relevant to a young person's developmental awareness? (physically, emotionally, psychologically, or spiritually).
- Are your break areas appropriate for young people?
- Do you provide supervision for young people if they are around or in contact with potential hazards?

Youth Engagement

A young person's early experiences of the workplace and their development of a strong work ethic can strongly influence their future employment. Employers recognize that supporting young employees in the workplace not only benefits young people but also the organization/business itself (e.g. positive impact on organisations public persona, less employee turnover).

- Do you genuinely value participation and opinions of young people in the workplace – and clearly articulate this.
- Is communication between young people and employers/senior staff is encouraged (i.e. young people feel at ease approaching their employers/senior staff members)?
- Do you offer development pathways for young people (e.g. training, upskilling, mentoring, and performance assessments)?
- Do you work with young people to identify how you can support them to reach goals that benefit both the young employee and the employer?
- Do you actively seek to communicate and build a dialogue with young employees?
- Do you ensure there are clear expectations for young employees with regard to them being job ready?
- What transferable skills will aid young employees in future employment and support development of these skills – do you give feedback on these?

Equitable and Inclusive

Equitable and inclusive treatment for young people in the workplace needs to be addressed on multiple levels to ensure a developmentally friendly workplace for young people.

- Zero tolerance for bullying and discrimination in the workplace (policy is put in place to support this and best practice efforts to recognize and respond to bullying/discrimination).
How do you recognise an abusive power? How do you address this?
- There is a non-judgmental approach to working with young people.
How do you deal with stereotypical attitudes in the work place? How do you create an atmosphere of mutual respect?
- Employers are culturally responsive and competent to the diversity of employees.
Do you know or are you open to the beliefs of all employees?
- Diversity in all forms is welcomed, valued and respected in the workplace.
How is this implemented within the workplace culture?