



CareerWise Colorado
Tomorrow's Talent Today

GUIDANCE ON POTENTIAL ISSUES

Youth apprentices can add energy and innovation to your organization. The hunger for learning and fresh perspective will bring future vision to your talent pipeline. With this system in nascent form, we want everyone to be prepared for “what if” scenarios.

The best way to start is with communication. An all-company or “town hall” meeting announcing apprentices to your business is a great way to build excitement before apprentices arrive. It is also an opportunity to set expectations so that everyone involved has a good experience.

You’ll notice that most of our recommendations include “Contact your Relationship Manager”. We are here to support you and ensure that both your business and the apprentice are successful.

Events with alcohol

If you have an employee handbook or guidance around company sponsored events with alcohol, review that information. Is there language around underage drinking? If so, specifically review this with the apprentice, the supervisor, and other team members.

If you do not have guidance or a policy in place, you might consider creating one (there is good advice [here](#)). If policies in general are not a part of your culture, a friendly reminder email before the event will suffice.

IF IT HAPPENS: Notify your Relationship Manager, we will work through your existing policy together and determine the best course of action.

--require reporting?

Alcohol onsite

Many of these students likely live in a home with alcohol present. Hopefully, their parents have rules about drinking. You certainly have no responsibility to add parenting to your duties. But there is rule-of-law: A 17-year-old apprentice who flunks a breathalyzer after a company-kegerated wind-down from a hard day’s work in your offices could be your problem.

That doesn’t mean you have to get rid of the office kegerator. While you are not the apprentice’s parent, you are also not their pal: you’re the boss. So, laying out rules and consequences is fair and expected.

IF IT HAPPENS: Notify your Relationship Manager, we will work through your existing policy together and determine the best course of action.

Dating each other or other employers

If you have existing company guidance about inter-company dating, specifically review the information with all apprentices.

If you do not have guidance or a policy in place, you could create one (there is good advice [here](#)). While policies can dissuade the behavior, it may not stop it entirely.

IF IT HAPPENS: If you have a policy or written guidance in place, refer to that. If you do not, focus on the behaviors that are work distractions or are affecting work performance. You can always contact your Relationship Manager for counsel.

Socializing outside of work (non-company event)

Controlling employee behavior outside of the workplace is nearly impossible. Setting expectations for youth development with your adult employees will help guide decision-making and ensure all involved understand “best practice”.

IF IT HAPPENS: Discuss with the adult employee the importance of maintaining business relationships with the apprentice as they are learning how to be a working professional.

You are considering firing the apprentice

The situation may occur where the apprentice is not learning as quickly as you would like, not performing up to standard, has attendance issues, or other work challenges. Follow your standard disciplinary procedures or performance management process, keeping in mind the apprentice is new to this work.

IF IT HAPPENS: Notify your Relationship Manager, we will work through your existing policy together and determine the best course of action.

Apprentice wants to quit

The situation may occur where the apprentice is not enjoying the work, not . Follow your standard disciplinary procedures or performance management process, keeping in mind the apprentice is new to this work.

IF IT HAPPENS: Notify your Relationship Manager, we will work through your existing policy together and determine the best course of action.

Social media misuse

This is an area where setting early expectations and being specific can prevent potential issues. The apprentice wants to learn and wants to be treated like an adult. Model good behavior and provide course correction early rather than waiting for a 1-on-1 or a performance conversation.

IF IT HAPPENS: is the apprentice on their phone too much or have they shared company information on social media? Make sure “the punishment fits the crime”. If you are considering termination, please contact your Relationship Manager.

Staff connecting with apprentice on social media

Following the company on Twitter or Facebook, connecting on LinkedIn – these are appropriate and professional ways of interacting with social media. We do not recommend that staff members and apprentices interact personally on social media.

Apprentice parent interference

There are no laws requiring you to disclose performance information or workplace actions to the parent of a teen apprentice. There could be instances where a conversation is appropriate. Did the minor ask their parent to call because they are confused by your action? Is the minor afraid to ask the question him/herself? Asking thoughtful questions could get to the bottom of the inquiry. It is entirely your call whether you engage with the parent.

IF IT HAPPENS: If the parent persists and demands to know why you took the action you did, please feel free to refer them to the CareerWise HR Strategist.

Apprentice is late

It is important to set early expectations for attendance during orientation and onboarding for when and how the apprentice contacts you. They should know what form of communication is best (call or text) and what timeframe is acceptable.

IF IT HAPPENS: follow your standard protocol. If you are considering terminating employment, contact your Relationship Manager. If the behavior is caused by a transportation issue, contact your Relationship Manager and we will work with the school for a solution.

Apprentice with serious home issue (abuse, eviction, divorce, death)

Just as adults have lives and family, so does the apprentice. The apprentice will hopefully consider you a trusted adult in their life and as such, they may share things with you that they have not shared with others. Never try to solve these issues yourself or insert yourself in a home issue.

IF IT HAPPENS: In the case of a death of a family member, be supportive and offer any bereavement leave your company offers. If your company has an EAP and the apprentice qualifies for that benefit, provide the information. With other issues of abuse or housing, please contact your Relationship Manager. (***this is an area of required reporting – as soon as you suspect, please contact us*)

Apprentice fails a reasonable suspicion or post-accident drug test

Follow your own protocol and offer EAP information if your company provides it and the apprentice qualified for the benefit.

IF IT HAPPENS: Contact your Relationship Manager (***this is an area of required reporting – as soon as you suspect, please contact us*)

Breach of confidentiality

This is another area where setting early expectations and communicating clear consequences will help avoid confusion. Be specific about what information is confidential or data that is considered intellectual property.

IF IT HAPPENS: Think about the seriousness of the infraction. Is a conversation or documented warning appropriate? If you are considering termination, contact your Relationship Manager.

Apprentice has general employment issues (attitude, policy adherence)

For many students this will be their first work experience. Starting off on the right foot, being clear about policies (safety procedures, how to contact you if sick, etc), showing empathy; all will result in a more positive employment relationship. If you see a change in attitude or disregard for policy / process – assume good intent. Often times the apprentice may have forgotten or simply did not know what they simply don't know. Refer to your supervisor training. Ask good questions to discover root cause.

IF IT HAPPENS: The apprentice agreement is a good baseline for how you and the apprentice agreed to work together. Your Relationship Manager is here to support your success and is great for brainstorming ideas and actions.

Apprentice is missing a meal(s)

Apprentices will come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Availability of food for some families is a reality that most of us have never experienced. If you notice a habitual “forgetting” of lunch, do not call attention to it as it may embarrass the apprentice. It is also not your job to feed them daily or try to fix it.

IF IT HAPPENS: Contact your Relationship Manager. We can communicate with the school and engage wrap-around services.

Apprentice is injured on the job

Whether it's a cracked shin on a file drawer or a more serious injury, apprentices should understand your reporting expectations and procedures. Ensure you have collected emergency contact information for the apprentice and follow your protocol.

IF IT HAPPENS: Take care of the apprentices medical needs and contact your Relationship Manager.

Apprentice doesn't have appropriate clothing

This could be a socio-economic issue, or simply not understanding the rules. Have a conversation about dress code and reset expectations. If there is documentation in a handbook or other written guidance, use that information during your discussion.

IF IT HAPPENS: If the issue continues, or the apprentice tells you they cannot afford new or different clothes, contact your Relationship Manager.

Suspected substance abuse

“Reasonable suspicion” is the observation of behaviors which could indicate a person being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you have an HR professional onsite, they – or another trusted peer manager, should validate your suspicions by chatting with the apprentice about anything (weather, sports, school, work). If you both agree something is amiss, follow your protocol.

IF IT HAPPENS: Contact your Relationship Manager (***this is an area of required reporting – as soon as you suspect, please contact us*)

Apprentice alleges harassment / discrimination

Share your policies during orientation and onboarding. Ensure the apprentice understand what harassment and discrimination looks like and sounds like. Let them know they can trust you so that they will come forward as soon as they are uncomfortable. Enlist your local HR or other leadership.

IF IT HAPPENS: Contact the CareerWise HR Strategist

Apprentice is accused of harassment / discrimination

Ensure the apprentice understand what harassment and discrimination looks like and sounds like. Enlist your local HR. Follow your company's protocol for investigation and follow-up.

IF IT HAPPENS: Contact the CareerWise HR Strategist.

Student schedule changes

As apprentices work toward graduation, their school schedule could shift over the life of the apprenticeship. It is everyone's intention to satisfy the needs of our business partners. If you experience scheduling struggles or feel you may not be able to accommodate a scheduling change, we can work together to resolve.

IF IT HAPPENS: Contact your Relationship Manager. We will work directly with the school and student for the best outcome.

School closes permanently

While rare, sometimes due to budget issues schools close. There is typically ample notice and plans set in motion for student placement.

IF IT HAPPENS: We will notify you as soon as possible and will begin working with the new school administration to ensure that student schedules will see as little disruption as possible so the apprenticeship can continue.

Business closes or is planning a reduction in force

It is our belief that apprentices will bring great talent and value to your organization. However, we understand that business must sometimes make very difficult decisions about staff reductions.

IF IT HAPPENS: Consider the contribution and pay level of an apprentice along with other staff. If you must include apprentices in a staff reduction or layoff, please contact us so we can communicate with the school and parent. The student may not understand what is happening or why. Use plain language and be honest. Offer a reference for his / her next job is helpful.

Snow days / school holidays

Weather in Denver is unpredictable. In addition, school districts are geographically large and your apprentices may come from more than one school district. If the apprentice's school is closed, he / she may not be able to safely get to work. As with general attendance, educate the apprentice early on the best way to contact you.

IF IT HAPPENS: CareerWise feels it is best to have the apprentice excused from work in the case of a snow day. For school holidays, many will match up with your business holidays. In other cases, it may be an opportunity for the student to work more hours if you and he / she would like.

Apprentice interpersonal issues

Everyone has bad days, pet peeves, irritations. We will cover the role of the coach / mentor, supervisor, and HR during bootcamp. If an apprentice has a personality conflict with a co-worker, encourage them to practice their conflict resolutions skills. The coach / mentor can play a key role in developing this skill

IF IT HAPPENS: As with any other potential issue, do not hesitate to contact your Relationship Manager for counsel.

Known sex offender onsite / violent crime

The safety of the apprentice is everyone's primary concern. If you are aware of a known sex offender or past violent criminal on your staff or are considering hiring a person with this background, please notify your Relationship Manager immediately. In compliance with the FCRA, we do not need to know the individual's name.

IF IT HAPPENS: We will need to inform the school and parent in order for an informed decision to be made about the student's apprenticeship work.

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