Careers programme policy for 14 – 16 years of age. Review Sept 2027

1. Introduction and purpose

Bespoke Training & Education is an alternative provision supporting young people aged 14 to 16 in Years 10 and 11, many of whom have experienced disrupted education, exclusion or the risk of exclusion, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or other barriers to learning.

We believe every young person deserves high-quality, impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) that raises aspirations, builds confidence and helps them make a successful move into post-16 education, employment or training. For our pupils, a well-planned and personalised transition is one of the most important protective factors against becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

This policy sets out:

- how we plan, deliver and evaluate our careers programme for Years 10 and 11;
- our commitment to ensuring pupils hear about the full range of post-16 options, including apprenticeships, T Levels, technical and vocational qualifications, sixth form, further education and supported pathways;
- our provider access policy statement, explaining how education and training providers can access our pupils.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

As a proposed independent school, we will meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards and follow national careers guidance as good practice. This policy has been written with regard to:

- **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** – Part 1 (Quality of Education), which requires independent schools to provide pupils receiving secondary education with access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented impartially, enables pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, and helps encourage them to fulfil their potential. Compliance with this standard will be checked as part of our registration and subsequent inspections.
- **Careers guidance and access for education and training providers** (Department for Education statutory guidance, updated June 2026). While this guidance is statutory for maintained schools, academies, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units, we adopt it in full as a statement of best practice.
- **Provider access legislation (Section 42B of the Education Act 1997, the "Baker Clause")**. Although this duty does not legally apply to independent schools, we voluntarily meet its expectations so that our pupils receive the same entitlement as their peers in mainstream and state-funded settings.

- **The Gatsby Benchmarks** (updated version, "Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years", implemented from September 2025).
- **Education and Skills Act 2008** – the duty for young people to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday, and the September Guarantee of an offer of a suitable post-16 place.
- **Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years** and the **Equality Act 2010**.
- **Keeping children safe in education** (current version) and our safeguarding procedures for visitors and off-site activities.
- The requirements of commissioning schools and local authorities that place pupils with us.

3. Scope and context

This policy applies to all pupils on roll in Years 10 and 11, whether single-registered with us or dual-registered with a commissioning school, and to all staff, the proprietor, visiting providers, employers, parents and carers.

We recognise that our context differs from mainstream schools. Pupils may join us at any point in Year 10 or Year 11, cohorts are small, attendance may be variable, and many pupils need additional support to engage with group activities or unfamiliar adults. Our careers programme is therefore flexible, personalised and delivered through small-group and one-to-one work, with reasonable adjustments made for each young person.

4. Aims

Our careers programme aims to ensure that every pupil:

- develops self-awareness of their strengths, interests, values and aspirations;
- understands the full range of post-16 pathways and the local and national labour market;
- has meaningful encounters with employers, employees and education and training providers;
- gains at least one meaningful experience of a workplace;
- receives impartial personal guidance from a qualified careers adviser;
- develops employability skills such as communication, teamwork, resilience, punctuality and problem solving;
- leaves us with a secured, suitable post-16 destination and a planned, supported transition;
- is supported, together with their parents and carers, to make informed and realistic decisions.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Proprietor / proprietorial board

- Ensures the school meets the Independent School Standards for careers guidance.
- Appoints a named member of the board with responsibility for careers and meets with the Careers Leader at least termly.
- Approves and reviews this policy annually and ensures the careers programme is resourced, including access to a qualified careers adviser.
- Ensures the careers programme is reflected in the school's vision and development plan.

5.2 Headteacher and senior leadership team

- Provides strategic leadership and ensures careers is a whole-school priority.
- Ensures the Careers Leader has the time, training and authority to lead the programme.
- Ensures this policy and the provider access policy statement are published on the school website.

5.3 Careers Leader

- Plans, coordinates, delivers and evaluates the careers programme against the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Acts as the named contact for all provider access requests.
- Maintains records of careers activities, encounters and personal guidance for each pupil.
- Tracks intended and actual destinations and liaises with the local authority, commissioning schools and post-16 providers.
- Supports staff to link curriculum learning to careers.
- Completes, or works towards, recognised Careers Leader training.

5.4 Careers adviser

- Holds a relevant qualification at Level 6 or above and is registered with the Career Development Institute (CDI), or works under appropriate supervision.
- Provides impartial, one-to-one personal guidance to every pupil and contributes to action plans and transition planning.

5.5 All staff

- Promote positive aspirations and make links between their subject or intervention and careers.
- Support pupils to attend and engage with careers activities and encounters.
- Share relevant information with the Careers Leader and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

5.6 Pupils, parents and carers

- Pupils are encouraged to take part fully and to take ownership of their career plans.
- Parents and carers are invited to careers events, guidance reviews and transition meetings, and are kept informed of post-16 options and deadlines.

5.7 Commissioning schools and local authorities

For dual-registered or commissioned pupils, we agree at the point of placement which setting leads on careers guidance, personal guidance and post-16 applications, so that no pupil misses out and work is not duplicated.

6. Our careers programme and the Gatsby Benchmarks

Our programme is built around the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and adapted to the needs of pupils in alternative provision. We use the Careers & Enterprise Company's Compass+ tool (or equivalent) to audit our provision termly and to record pupil-level activity.

Gatsby Benchmark	How we meet it in our setting
1. A stable careers programme	A written, published programme led by a trained Careers Leader, backed by the proprietor and senior leaders, and reviewed annually using pupil, parent, staff and employer feedback.
2. Learning from career and labour market information	Pupils explore local and regional labour market information (e.g. growth sectors in [local area/region]) using accessible, visual resources and online tools. Parents and carers receive information on local opportunities.
3. Addressing the needs of each young person	Every pupil has an individual careers and transition plan, informed by their EHCP or SEND support plan where relevant. Records of activities are kept for each pupil, and those at risk of becoming NEET are identified early and receive enhanced support.
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	English, maths, science, PSHE and vocational subjects highlight the relevance of learning to careers. Functional skills and vocational qualifications are linked to real job roles.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	Every pupil has at least one meaningful encounter with an employer each year through visiting speakers, workplace visits, mock interviews, mentoring and enterprise activities.
6. Experiences of workplaces	Every pupil has meaningful experiences of the workplace, working towards the national ambition of two weeks' worth of work experience by the end of Key Stage 4, with placements in Years 10–11 risk assessed and tailored to the young person.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	Every pupil has meaningful encounters with the full range of post-16 providers, including FE colleges, sixth forms, apprenticeship and training providers, and specialist provision, including at least two provider encounters in Years 10–11.
8. Personal guidance	Every pupil receives at least one impartial one-to-one guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser in Year 10 and at least one in Year 11, with

	additional sessions as needed and an agreed action plan shared with the pupil and their parents or carers.

6.1 Year 10 and Year 11 programme overview

Term	Year 10	Year 11
Autumn	Induction careers interview and starting point assessment; self-awareness and strengths work; introduction to labour market information; employer speaker sessions.	Personal guidance interview and action plan; provider encounter (college / apprenticeship / training provider); open events; support with post-16 applications; parents' information session.
Spring	Provider encounter (technical education or apprenticeships); workplace visits; enterprise or employability project; CV writing.	Provider encounter (contrasting route); application and interview preparation; mock interviews with employers; follow-up guidance for pupils without an offer.
Summer	Work experience placement or supported workplace experience; personal guidance interview; review of careers plan with parents or carers.	Transition visits and taster days; enhanced transition support for vulnerable pupils; confirmation of September Guarantee offer; handover information to post-16 provider (with consent).
Ongoing	Careers-linked curriculum learning; PSHE careers units; individual records updated after every activity; mid-year joiners receive a careers interview within their first four weeks.	

7. Provider access policy statement

7.1 Introduction

This statement sets out our arrangements for managing the access of education and training providers to pupils for the purpose of giving them information about technical education qualifications, apprenticeships and other post-16 options. Although the provider access legislation does not apply to independent schools, we have chosen to meet its requirements in full.

7.2 Pupil entitlement

All pupils in Years 10 and 11 at [School name] are entitled to:

- find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeship opportunities as part of our careers programme, which provides information on the full range of education and training options available at each transition point;
- hear from a range of local providers about the opportunities they offer, including technical education and apprenticeships, through options events, assemblies, group discussions, taster events and visits;

- understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses.

We will provide at least **two meaningful provider encounters** during Years 10 and 11 that all pupils are expected to attend, with one encounter taking place in each year where possible. Pupils who join us part-way through Year 11 will be prioritised for an encounter as soon as practicable after arrival. Where a pupil cannot attend a group encounter for health, SEND, attendance or wellbeing reasons, we will arrange an alternative, such as a one-to-one or virtual meeting with a provider.

Each encounter will meet the definition of "meaningful" in national guidance. It will:

- share information about the provider and the approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships it offers;
- explain what career routes those options could lead to;
- explain what learning or training with the provider is like;
- answer pupils' questions and allow genuine interaction.

7.3 Management of provider access requests

A provider wishing to request access should contact:

Name: [Careers Leader name]
Role: Careers Leader
Telephone: [Number]
Email: [Email address]
Address: [School address]

Requests should be made at least four weeks in advance, giving the purpose of the visit, the proposed content, the staff attending and the preferred dates. We will respond within ten school days.

7.4 Opportunities for access

A few events, integrated into our careers programme, offer providers an opportunity to come into school to speak to pupils and/or their parents and carers:

Term	Year 10	Year 11
Autumn	Small-group provider talk: introduction to post-16 routes	Provider encounter 1: college, apprenticeship and training provider sessions; parents' and carers' post-16 information evening
Spring	Provider encounter: technical education and apprenticeships (e.g. T Levels, vocational pathways)	Provider encounter 2: contrasting route; application and interview support from providers
Summer	Visits and taster days at local colleges and training providers	Transition visits, enrolment support and induction days

Because of our small cohorts, we welcome flexible approaches, such as small-group workshops, one-to-one conversations and virtual sessions. Please speak to our Careers Leader to identify the most suitable opportunity.

7.5 Premises and facilities

We will make a suitable room available for discussions between the provider and pupils, as appropriate to the activity. We will also provide AV and other specialist equipment to support provider presentations, which will be discussed and agreed in advance with the Careers Leader or a member of their team.

Providers are welcome to leave a copy of their prospectus or other relevant course literature in our careers resource area, which is available to all pupils.

7.6 Safeguarding

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and visitor procedures apply to all providers. In line with Keeping children safe in education:

- all visitors must sign in, show photo identification and wear a visitor badge;
- visitors will be accompanied or supervised by a member of staff at all times while working with pupils;
- where appropriate checks are needed, the provider will be asked to confirm in writing that its staff have the relevant DBS checks;
- content will be checked in advance to make sure it is suitable, impartial and appropriate for our pupils;
- providers will be briefed on relevant pupil needs, behaviour and de-escalation approaches, while respecting confidentiality.

7.7 Approval and refusal of requests

We aim to agree to all reasonable requests. A request may be refused, or alternative arrangements offered, where:

- the proposed date clashes with examinations, other planned activities or staffing pressures;
- the content is not impartial, not age-appropriate or does not meet the definition of a meaningful encounter;
- the visit would raise safeguarding, behaviour or wellbeing concerns for pupils;
- the provider is unable to meet our visitor and safeguarding requirements.

Any refusal will be made by the Careers Leader in consultation with the Headteacher, and the reasons will be given in writing. Providers who are dissatisfied may raise this through our complaints procedure.

8. Work experience

We are working towards the national ambition for every young person to have two weeks' worth of meaningful work experience by the end of Key Stage 4, including a placement or placements

in Years 10 and 11. For our pupils, this may include supported placements, shorter or phased placements, job shadowing, supported work tasters, or employer-led projects.

- Every placement is prepared with the pupil beforehand and reviewed afterwards, so the pupil can reflect on what they learned.
- All placements are subject to a health and safety and safeguarding risk assessment, a check that the employer has employers' liability insurance, and agreement from parents or carers.
- Pupils with SEND or additional needs may be accompanied by a member of staff or job coach where needed.

9. Supporting pupils with additional needs and those at risk of becoming NEET

- Careers guidance is tailored to each pupil, using information from EHCPs, SEND support plans, personal education plans (for looked-after children) and pastoral records.
- For pupils with an EHCP, the Careers Leader contributes to annual reviews, which from Year 9 onwards must focus on preparing for adulthood.
- Pupils at risk of becoming NEET are identified early using attendance, engagement and destination intention data, and receive additional personal guidance, mentoring, supported visits and enhanced transition.
- We work with the local authority, the Virtual School, youth services and post-16 providers to secure an offer under the September Guarantee for every Year 11 pupil.
- With consent, we share relevant information with the local authority and post-16 providers to support tracking of participation and a safe transition.

10. Engaging parents and carers

Parents and carers play a key role in pupils' decisions. We will:

- share information about post-16 options, application deadlines and local labour market information;
- invite parents and carers to guidance meetings, reviews and careers events;
- provide accessible information and, where helpful, support at open events and applications.

11. Measuring and evaluating impact

We measure the impact of our careers programme through:

- termly Compass+ (or equivalent) audits against the Gatsby Benchmarks;
- individual records of every pupil's careers activities, encounters and guidance interviews;
- pupil, parent and carer, staff, employer and provider feedback after activities;
- post-16 offers secured and actual destinations in the autumn after pupils leave, including sustained destinations where data is available;
- NEET figures and the number of pupils whose destination is not known.

Findings are reported to the proprietor at least annually and are used to plan improvements.

12. Publishing information

We will publish the following on our school website and update it annually:

- a summary of our careers programme, including details of how pupils, parents and carers, teachers and employers can access information about it;
- the name, email address and telephone number of our Careers Leader;
- how we measure and assess the impact of the careers programme on pupils;
- the date of our next review of the published information;
- this provider access policy statement.

13. Complaints

Any complaint about the careers programme or the provider access arrangements should first be raised with the Careers Leader. If it cannot be resolved informally, it will be dealt with under our complaints policy, which meets Part 7 of the Independent School Standards.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Careers Leader and the Headteacher and approved by the proprietor. It will also be reviewed sooner if relevant legislation, statutory guidance or the Independent School Standards change.

15. Links to other policies

- Curriculum policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Visitors policy
- Work experience and off-site activities policy
- Health and safety policy
- SEND policy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- PSHE and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) policy
- Data protection policy
- Complaints policy