

Careers & Futures

POLICY STATEMENT

- At Oakwood Specialist College, we place significant importance on ensuring that all Learners are fully supported to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes in adulthood. Careers education, information, advice and guidance is a core component of this, enabling Learners to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to make informed decisions about their futures.
- We recognise that Learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers to progression. Our careers provision is therefore designed to be ambitious, highly personalised and aligned to each Learner's individual needs, ensuring equitable access to opportunities and supporting aspiration, independence and long-term wellbeing.
- This policy sets out our commitment to delivering a high quality, structured careers programme, informed by the Gatsby Benchmarks and aligned to current statutory guidance. Our approach ensures that all Learners are supported to progress into appropriate and sustained destinations, including paid employment where suitable, alongside further learning, community participation and independent or supported living.
- This policy provides a clear framework for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance, ensuring the college meets its statutory responsibilities and delivers a careers programme that is inclusive, impactful and continuously improving.

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1. Scope

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This policy covers Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance given to all Learners on roll at Oakwood Specialist College. The policy has been reviewed in line with the DfE guidance document 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers – Statutory guidance (DfE, June 2026).
- 1.1.2 This policy accepts the 8 Gatsby Charitable Foundation's benchmarks as set out in the DfE guidance. <https://cdn.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/11/gatsby-summary-for-leaders-colleges.pdf>
- 1.1.3 This policy covers the legal duty of college to ensure that a range of education and training providers can access Learners for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications, apprenticeships and further relevant progression pathways (the Baker clause).
- 1.1.4 All Team Members at Oakwood Specialist College are expected to be aware of this policy and the importance of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in the education of Learners.
- 1.1.5 It is important that Learners leave college aware of themselves as individuals, aware of the opportunities available to them and can make decisions about their own lives. They should be prepared for the transition from education to the world beyond. It is to these aspects of personal and social development that this policy will contribute.
- 1.1.6 The college's Careers Programme overview is published on the college website, alongside this policy, ensuring it is accessible to Learners, Parents and Carers, Team Members and external partners.

1.2 Aims

- 1.2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that all Learners are supported to achieve their potential through:
- Empowering them to make informed and confident choices about their futures.
 - Providing access to accurate, relevant and up to date information on the full range of opportunities available.
 - Raising their aspirations and challenging stereotypes through exposure to diverse opportunities and role models.
 - Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for future pathways.
 - Supporting progression into sustained and meaningful destinations, including paid employment.
 - Supporting personal, social and economic wellbeing throughout their lives after college

- Providing opportunities to link learning to real life contexts and future pathways.

- 1.2.2 The college fully subscribes to the 'Department for Education's statutory guidance Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (2026)', ensuring that careers provision is delivered in line with current national expectations and legislative requirements.
- 1.2.3 The college is committed to delivering a careers programme that is personalised, progressive and responsive, ensuring that all Learners are supported to achieve outcomes that are meaningful and sustainable.
- 1.2.4 Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is a central component of the college's provision and is essential in supporting Learners to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for their future pathways.
- 1.2.5 The college is committed to ensuring that careers information, advice and guidance is delivered in an accessible and inclusive way, enabling all Learners and their families to understand and engage with information effectively.
- 1.2.6 Our careers programme is underpinned by the Gatsby Benchmarks, which provide the framework for high-quality careers provision, and is informed by best practice guidance from the Careers & Enterprise Company. This ensures a coherent, progressive and impactful approach that supports Learners to make informed decisions and achieve positive and sustained outcomes.
- 1.2.7 The Governance and Oversight Team, Senior Leaders and Team Members recognise that career development is an ongoing process rather than a single event. The Careers programme is therefore designed to support Learners to develop career and life management skills over time, enabling them to make informed decisions at different stages of their lives. The programme is regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure it remains effective, relevant and responsive to the needs of Learners.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 College

- 2.1.1 The college fulfils its statutory responsibilities relating to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), ensuring that Learners have access to independent and impartial careers advice and guidance delivered in a way that reflects individual needs, aspirations and future pathways.
- 2.1.2 The college ensures that careers advice and guidance is presented without bias towards any particular institution, education provider, training route or employment option.
- 2.1.3 Careers advice and guidance is presented without bias towards any particular institution, education or work option.
- 2.1.4 Opportunities are provided for education and training providers to access Learners to inform them about approved technical qualifications, apprenticeships and other relevant pathways
- 2.1.5 The college maintains a clear and published policy outlining how providers can access Learners, including the arrangements set out within this policy.
- 2.1.6 The college delivers a careers programme that is underpinned by the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- 2.1.7 Oakwood Specialist College believes that good CEIAG connects learning to the future. It motivates young people by giving them a clearer idea of the routes to jobs and careers that they will find engaging and rewarding. Good CEIAG widens Learners' horizons, challenges stereotypes, and raises aspirations. It provides Learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to make successful transitions to the next stage of their life. This supports social mobility by improving opportunities for all young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 2.1.8 The college is committed to ensuring that careers information, advice and guidance is delivered in an accessible and inclusive way, enabling all Learners and their families to understand and engage with information effectively.
- 2.1.9 The college has a named Careers Leader (Head of Careers and Futures) with responsibility for the strategic leadership, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of the careers programme.
- 2.1.10 Careers education is a whole-college responsibility, with all Team Members contributing to the development of Learners' skills, knowledge and understanding of future pathways through curriculum delivery and wider support.
- 2.1.11 The college ensures its careers programme is coherent, progressive and embedded across the Learner journey, supporting Learners to develop over time and make informed decisions at key transition points.

- 2.1.12 Oakwood Specialist College recognises that high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance supports Learners to understand the relevance of their learning and how this connects to their future pathways. Effective CEIAG helps Learners to develop a clearer understanding of the opportunities available to them and supports them to explore options that are engaging, meaningful and appropriate to their individual aspirations and needs.
- 2.1.13 Through a structured and progressive careers programme, Learners are supported to broaden their horizons, challenge assumptions and develop confidence in considering their future. CEIAG equips Learners with the knowledge, skills and understanding required to make informed decisions and to successfully transition into the next stage of their lives. This contributes to improved outcomes and supports social mobility by increasing access to opportunities, particularly for Learners with special educational needs and disabilities and those who may face additional barriers to progression.
- 2.1.14 The college is committed to the continuous development of its careers provision. The careers programme is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure it remains effective, relevant and responsive to the needs of Learners. This includes review by Team Members involved in delivery, alongside feedback from Learners, families, employers and external stakeholders, as well as external review and quality assurance processes.

2.2 Governance and Oversight

- 2.2.1 The Governance and Oversight Team has a strategic responsibility to ensure that the college fulfils its statutory duties in relation to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) and that a high-quality careers programme is in place.
- 2.2.2 The Governance and Oversight Team will ensure that:
- A clear and compliant careers policy is in place, reviewed regularly and communicated effectively to all stakeholders
 - The careers programme is aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks and current statutory guidance
 - The college ensures that Learners have access to planned and meaningful encounters with a wide range of education and training providers, in line with statutory requirements
 - The college provides impartial and independent careers guidance that supports Learners to understand the full range of available pathways
 - The impact of the careers programme is monitored, including Learner progression and destination outcomes
- 2.2.3 The Governance and Oversight Team receives regular updates on the effectiveness of the careers programme, including progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks, Learner outcomes and destination data, enabling informed oversight and continuous improvement.

2.3 Monitoring and Review

- 2.3.1 The Principal will ensure that careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is effectively led, supported and monitored across the college and remains a key priority within the organisation.
- 2.3.2 This includes ensuring that:
- The work of the Careers Leader, careers advisers and wider CEIAG provision is supported and monitored.
 - A member of the Senior Leadership Team holds strategic responsibility for CEIAG and reports regularly on its effectiveness
 - The careers programme is delivered effectively and in line with statutory guidance and the Gatsby Benchmarks
 - The careers programme is subject to ongoing review and continuous improvement
- 2.3.3 The college is committed to the continuous development of its careers provision, ensuring that it remains inclusive, effective and focused on supporting Learners to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes.
- 2.3.4 This information is used to evaluate the impact of the careers programme and to inform targeted improvements, ensuring that provision continues to develop in response to Learner need and outcomes.
- 2.3.5 The effectiveness of the careers programme is evaluated through a range of measures, including:
- Feedback from stakeholders through mechanisms such as Learner, Parent/Carer, and employer surveys
 - Feedback from external visitors to the college and/or Ofsted
 - Review activities through the governance and oversight structure.
 - Monitoring Learner progression and post-college destinations, using this information to evaluate impact, inform planning and support the continuous development of careers provision

3. Provider Access

- 3.1.1 This section sets out the college's arrangements for managing provider engagement with Learners as part of a structured and progressive careers programme. This ensures compliance with statutory requirements under Section 42B of the Education Act 1997 and supports Learners to understand the full range of education, training and employment pathways available to them.
- 3.1.2 The college is committed to ensuring that engagement with providers is purposeful, inclusive and aligned to Learner needs, enabling all Learners to make informed decisions about their future.

3.2 Learner Entitlement

- 3.2.1 All Learners at Oakwood Specialist College are entitled to:
- Access, as part of a structured and progressive careers programme, information about the full range of education, training, employment and community-based opportunities available at key transition points, enabling Learners to make informed decisions about their future.
 - Participate in meaningful encounters with providers of further education, training, employment and community-based provision, supporting Learners to develop their understanding of available opportunities and progression routes.
 - Receive support to understand, access and prepare for next steps, including transition planning and engagement with progression opportunities that reflect their individual strengths, aspirations, needs and long-term outcomes.

3.3 Provider Encounters

- 3.3.1 To support informed decision-making, Learners at Oakwood Specialist College will have opportunities to participate in meaningful encounters with organisations providing training, employment, community and social care provision, enabling them to explore future pathways, develop their understanding of adult life and learn about the skills, knowledge and attributes valued within different settings.
- 3.3.2 The college is committed to ensuring that engagement with providers is purposeful, inclusive and aligned to individual Learner need, enabling all Learners to make informed decisions about their future.
- 3.3.3 These provider encounters will be scheduled during college hours and the provider will be given a reasonable amount of time to, as a minimum:
- Share information about both the provider and the approved technical education qualification and apprenticeships that the provider offers.
 - Explain what career routes those options could lead to.
 - Provide insights into what it might be like to learn or train with that provider (including the opportunity to meet Team Members and Learners from the provider).
 - Answer questions from Learners

3.4 Managing Provider Access

- 3.4.1 The college offers a comprehensive Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance programme and an overview of this programme can be seen in the College's Careers programme on the college website.
- 3.4.2 Providers should speak to the College's Head of Careers and Futures to identify the most suitable opportunity to arrange a visit.
- 3.4.3 The college will make a suitable space available for discussions between the provider and Learners, as appropriate to the activity. The college will also make available IT and wider equipment to support provider presentations. This will all be discussed and agreed in advance of the visit with the Head of Careers and Futures.
- 3.4.4 Providers are welcome to leave a copy of their prospectus or other relevant course literature with the Head of Careers and Futures so that they can be displayed in the college careers Hub.
- 3.4.5 Any visitors or visiting speakers must be vetted in line with the Visitors and Visiting Speakers Policy.

3.5 Complaints

- 3.5.1 Complaints regarding provider access should be raised through the college complaints procedure, available on the college website.

3.6 Partnership with Parents, Carers and Professionals

- 3.6.1 Oakwood Specialist College recognises the importance of working in partnership with Parents, Carers and external professionals to support Learners in making informed decisions about their future.
- 3.6.2 We ensure that:
- Parents and Carers are actively involved in careers education and transition planning processes
 - Information about pathways and progression opportunities is communicated in a clear, accessible and timely way
 - Families are supported to engage with careers information and contribute to decision-making
- 3.6.3 The college works collaboratively with a range of external partners to support the development and delivery of high-quality careers provision. These include:
- Local Careers Hubs, including Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Careers Hub, Cornwall Careers Hub and West of England Careers Hub
 - The Careers & Enterprise Company
 - Independent careers guidance providers, including Future Smart Careers
 - Social care professionals
 - Allied health professionals

- 3.6.4 This coordinated approach ensures that support is aligned, personalised and responsive, enabling Learners to progress towards outcomes that are appropriate, aspirational and sustainable.

3.7 Commitment to Continuous Improvement

- 3.7.1 The college is committed to delivering a careers programme that is:
- Inclusive and personalised
 - Aligned to national expectations and best practice
 - Focused on impact and positive Learner outcomes
- 3.7.2 The careers programme is subject to regular review and evaluation, drawing on feedback from Learners, Families, Team Members, employers and external partners, alongside analysis of Learner progression and outcomes.
- 3.7.3 This information is used to inform ongoing development, ensuring that provision continues to evolve in response to Learner needs, emerging best practice and changes within the wider education and employment landscape.
- 3.7.4 The college utilises Compass/Compass+ to undertake termly evaluations of its careers provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks. The outcomes of these evaluations are used to identify strengths, inform action planning and support the ongoing development of the careers programme.
- 3.7.5 The college participates in Careers Impact internal leadership reviews and other quality assurance activities where appropriate. These provide opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of careers leadership, assess progress against strategic objectives and identify areas for further improvement.
- 3.7.6 Information gathered through evaluation activities, stakeholder feedback, destination data and quality assurance processes is used to inform college improvement planning and ensure that careers provision remains responsive to Learner needs, emerging best practice and developments within education, employment and adult services.
- 3.7.7 Through this process of continuous review and development, the college seeks to ensure that its careers programme remains relevant, effective and focused on supporting Learners to achieve meaningful, aspirational and sustainable futures.