

Blackpool Aspire Academy:

Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy 2026-2027

High-quality careers education, information, advice, and guidance (CEIAG) is a cornerstone of the strategic mission in improving the life chances of our students here at Blackpool Aspire Academy. In a rapidly evolving global economy, professional careers guidance serves as a critical catalyst for social mobility, actively breaking down historical barriers to opportunity and ensuring that every student—regardless of background—develops the knowledge, ambitions, and skills necessary to thrive. By aligning our provision with the government’s 2026 missions, we meet critical skills gaps in priority sectors, driving local economic growth and improving national productivity. At Aspire, high-quality provision is not merely an add-on but an essential engine for student success and institutional improvement.

This policy is issued under the authority of **Section 45A of the Education Act 1997**. Blackpool Aspire Academy operates under a rigorous legal framework, synthesising requirements from the Education Act 1997 (Sections 42A, 42B, 45, and 45A) and the Education and Skills Act 2008. The Academy fulfills the following mandatory duties:

- **Independent Careers Guidance:** Provision of independent guidance to all students from Year 7 to Year 13.
- **Impartiality:** Guidance must be delivered impartially, showing no bias toward institutional interests or specific education/work options.
- **Provider Access Legislation (The "Baker Clause"):** Ensuring at least six mandatory encounters with providers of technical education and apprenticeships.
- **Breadth of Information:** Ensuring students understand the full range of pathways, including T Levels and Foundation Apprenticeships.
- **Best Interests:** All guidance must prioritise the individual needs and best interests of the student.

Strategic Objectives for 2026-2027

For the current academic cycle, the Academy has established the following primary priorities:

1. **Work Experience Guarantee:** A commitment to delivering two weeks of meaningful work experience for every student by the end of Key Stage 4.
2. **Jobs and Careers Service Integration:** Seamlessly embedding the national jobs and careers service to unify employability and careers provision.
3. **Wider Skill Development:** Leveraging the new Enrichment Framework to develop wider life and future skills alongside statutory curriculum learning. These legal mandates and strategic objectives are operationalised through the rigorous application of the updated Gatsby Benchmark framework.

Blackpool Aspire Academy delivers a robust careers programme fully aligned with the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, alongside guidance from the Career Development Institute (CDI) framework and the PSHE Association. To ensure strategic alignment and maintain high standards, the programme undergoes a formal annual review against national benchmarks. Blackpool Aspire Academy delivers a multi-faceted CEIAG provision embedded across PSHE, subject disciplines, assemblies, and form time. Students actively engage in practical experiences—including CV workshops, employer talks, and expert higher education guidance—ensuring every learner receives a tailored, well-rounded careers education.

The 2025 update to the Gatsby Benchmarks (and subsequent 2026 updates) serves as the world-class framework for Blackpool Aspire Academy’s program design. These revisions ensure our provision addresses technological shifts and labour market changes, moving beyond simple study options to focus on all transition and progression pathways.

The 8 Benchmarks for 2026-2027

1. **A Stable Careers Programme:** The bedrock of our offer, this structured program has explicit senior leadership backing and is published transparently on the Academy website.
2. **Learning from Career and Labour Market Information (LMI):** We utilise the Unifrog online platform to provide students and parents with data on wage rates, skills gaps, future trends, and growth-driving sectors within the local economy.
3. **Addressing the Needs of Each Pupil:** Provision is tailored to individual requirements, focusing on challenging stereotypical thinking and maintaining systematic digital records of participation. This is achieved through the work undertaken by our independent careers advisor and engagement coach
4. **Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers:** Subject staff, under the support of the Careers Lead, utilise the Career Development Institute Framework to deliver progressive learning outcomes across all key stages, supported by specialised professional development, the 'Subject Library' within the Unifrog online platform and own professional experiences.
5. **Encounters with Employers and Employees:** Students participate in varied, meaningful encounters. Technology is utilised alongside, but not instead of, in-person activity to ensure authentic engagement.
6. **Experiences of Workplaces:** In line with the 2026 mandate, the Academy ensures every student completes two weeks of work experience by the end of Year 11. Work Experience week in Year 10 is the pinnacle of this offer, with all students in the Year 10 taking part in experiences of the working world.
7. **Encounters with FE and HE:** We provide clear differentiation between academic routes (A Levels) and technical pathways (T Levels, Higher Technical Qualifications, and Apprenticeships). These encounters happen on the institutions sites as well as during year group focused assemblies and workshops.
8. **Personal Guidance:** Blackpool Aspire Academy is committed to delivering impartial, personalised careers advice tailored to the unique needs of every student. The Academy actively engages external partners and specialist agencies to enrich the CEIAG curriculum, continuously tracking post-academy destination data to evaluate and ensure provision impact. In accordance with statutory guidelines, the Academy maintains total impartiality, offering all post-16 and Further Education providers equal opportunity to share pathway information with students.

Careers guidance at Blackpool Aspire Academy is a "whole-institution endeavour," inextricably linked to our vision for attendance, behaviour, and attainment supporting the whole school ethos of ***Being Ready, Respectful and Safe.***

Role	Core Responsibilities
Governing Body	Strategic oversight of legal duties; holding leaders to account; ensuring a dedicated governor oversees careers.
Headteacher	Setting whole-institution direction; providing explicit backing; linking careers to the Academy Development Plan.
Careers Leader	Planning and delivery of the progressive program; budget management; coordinating staff .
Entitlement curriculum coordinator	Ensuring employer links and experiences are delivered to the student body.
SENCO	Collaborating with the Careers Leader to identify guidance needs for SEND students and personalising transition plans, also alongside the engagement coach.
Careers Hub & Enterprise Advisers	External strategic support; connecting the Academy to local employer networks and national priorities.

Governance & Statutory Oversight:

Mrs. S. Matthews serves as the appointed Link Governor overseeing the CEIAG strategy, ensuring careers education remains a formal annual agenda item for the Governing Body. The Governing Body holds statutory responsibility for:

- Securing independent, impartial careers guidance for all registered students across Years 7 through 11.
- Ensuring statutory access for a range of education and training providers to inform students regarding approved vocational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Guaranteeing that advice is presented without institutional bias, covering the full spectrum of academic, technical, and apprenticeship options.
- Enforcing non-discrimination across all protected characteristics, including ethnicity, national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.
- Managing policy-related complaints via the established school Complaints Procedure Policy and advising the Headteacher on strategic legal compliance.

Careers Lead Responsibilities

Our named Careers Lead is Mr. D Ewart (Deputy Headteacher). They can be contacted via d.ewart@aspire.fcat.org.uk. From December 2026, they will be qualified as Blackpool Aspire Academy's Level 6 Careers Lead. Alongside their whole school leadership role, they will...

- Advise the Senior Leadership (SLT) in their capacity as both Deputy Headteacher and Careers Lead on CEIAG policy, strategy, resource allocation, and statutory compliance.
- Manage the overall delivery of careers information and overseeing the implementation of the CEIAG curriculum plan alongside the Unifrog platform.
- Conduct annual self-evaluations via Compass+ alongside representatives from the Career and Enterprise Company to continuously benchmark performance, aiming for 100% compliance across all Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Maintain up-to-date sector knowledge through Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Publish the statutory Careers Programme details and Provider Access Policy Statement on the academy website.

Curriculum Delivery & Staff Development

- Monitor teaching and learning quality across careers education, as well as student take-up of guidance services.
- Support teachers, tutors, and staff through guidance training to promote embedded careers learning across subject areas.
- Partner with Subject Leaders to integrate contextualised careers learning into the wider curriculum.

Targeted Support & Internal Collaboration

- Collaborate with Form Tutors, Heads of Year, SLT, and the SENCO to identify pupils requiring targeted intervention around careers and post 16 progression.
- Line manage the Engagement Coach to provide focused support for students at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).
- Line manage the schools external Careers Advisor in providing impartial advice and guidance to students.
- Refer students to specialist external careers advice services whenever appropriate.

External Partnerships & Provider Access

- Develop and sustain partnerships with Further Education colleges, universities, apprenticeship providers amongst others. As well as local employers alongside the Entitlement Curriculum Coordinator.
- Facilitate full provider access in compliance with legislation to ensure all pupils explore vocational, technical, and academic routes.

Digital Integration, Events & Guidance Services

- Utilise the Unifrog platform to deliver the careers curriculum, support Post-16 destination research with council representatives, and coordinate the Year 10 Work Experience programme.
- Provide a personalised, open-door and remote guidance service for students, teachers, and parents/carers.
- Organise career workshops and promoting provision through open evenings, careers fairs, assemblies, and parents' evenings.
- Create visual displays and produce digital and print careers literature across the academy.

Destination Tracking & Post-16 Progression

- Support social mobility by delivering personalised, high-quality career guidance (alongside the Careers Advisor) that improves long-term student outcomes.
- Compile and monitor destination data for Year 11 leavers progressing into Year 12 pathways the academic year following their leaving of Blackpool Aspire Academy.
- Extend advice and support services to former students for up to one year following their departure from compulsory education, with the support of the Engagement Coach.

Role of Teaching and Pastoral Staff in Delivering CEIAG

Teaching staff play a central role in delivering CEIAG through their work as form tutors and subject teachers. Pastoral staff—including Heads of Year, Form Tutors and the SENDCO—are responsible for ensuring that all students access the CEIAG entitlement appropriate to their individual needs.

- Subject Leaders and teachers must ensure that careers education is fully embedded within curriculum planning and development, with clear and purposeful links made between classroom learning and real-world career pathways.
- Staff are expected to engage in relevant CPD or training to remain informed, competent and aligned with the school's careers strategy. This includes (but is not limited to) attendance to CPD and whole staff briefings centring on the Careers Curriculum delivery and Gatsby Benchmark 4 compliance.
- Careers guidance should be actively promoted within classrooms and departments through visual displays and other appropriate resources.
- Staff are responsible for creating learning environments that encourage students to engage with real-life challenges, assess and manage risks, and develop transferable skills that support future employability.
- Where internal training needs are identified through the personal development cycle, or where knowledge gaps arise within the CEIAG provision, staff will participate in the appropriate CPD or training opportunities as part of their ongoing professional development.

The Aims of our CEIAG Offer

- Blackpool Aspire Academy ensures that all students and parents/carers have access to high-quality information regarding post-16 study options and labour market opportunities, signposting users to approved digital platforms and the academy website.
- The academy will actively educate families on the importance of LMI, providing data on sector-specific salaries, career progression routes, and regional job availability across diverse industries. This will be through 'Jobs of the Week' communications and scheduled 'Coffee Mornings'.

Social Mobility & Raising Aspirations

- The academy will drive social mobility by raising student aspirations and challenging traditional workplace stereotypes.

- Students will engage with professionals in non-stereotypical roles, thus widening awareness of career pathways—particularly within Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Impact Evaluation & Stakeholder Feedback

- Provision impact is continuously monitored via student surveys, PSHE discussions, and staff feedback questionnaires.
- Parents and carers will be actively encouraged to engage with the careers framework during key calendar events, including Options Evenings, the offering of work experience placements and Careers Fairs.

Blackpool Aspire Academy fully aligns its provision with statutory Department for Education (DfE) guidance through the following core commitments:

- All Year 7 students access structured careers learning from entry, incorporating Labour Market Information (LMI), cross-curricular connections, and direct employer encounters (Gatsby Benchmark 1).
- Every student receives at least one formal guidance interview with a Level 7-qualified Careers Adviser by the end of Year 11, with targeted early intervention for vulnerable learners and those at risk of NEET.
- The Academy guarantees a minimum of six meaningful encounters with external providers (two per key phase across Years 8–9 and Years 10–11) showcasing technical, apprenticeship, and academic pathways.
- Collaborative oversight between the Careers Lead, Careers Adviser, Engagement Coach, SENDCo, and pastoral teams ensures bespoke transition support for SEND, Pupil Premium (PP), and NEET-risk pupils.
- Provision is benchmarked via Compass+, evaluated through multi-stakeholder feedback, and tracked using Unifrog from September 2026.
- Provider Access Statement, and destination data are updated and published annually on the Academy website.

Accountability and Ofsted:

Under the revised Education Inspection Framework (Nov 2025), Ofsted utilises report cards to provide greater transparency, granularity, and insight. These report cards serve as a tool for parents to drive system improvement.

Inspectors specifically evaluate:

- Readiness for transition and the quality of impartial guidance.
- Meaningful progress toward all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Student knowledge of local and national employment trends.
- Coherent careers education and tailored guidance for learners with SEND or those facing barriers.

In compliance with the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, the Academy ensures students understand the benefits of all academic and technical routes.

The Academy guarantees a minimum of six encounters, occurring during the standard school day. **Note:** Encounters occurring outside school hours (e.g., parents' evenings) are complementary and do not count toward the legal mandate.

- **Years 8-9:** Two mandatory encounters for all pupils (Year 8 or between 1 Sept – 28 Feb in Year 9).
- **Years 10-11:** Two mandatory encounters for all pupils (Year 10 or between 1 Sept – 28 Feb in Year 11).

The Academy mandates that providers inform students of: (1) the provider/qualifications offered, (2) the careers these lead to, (3) what learning/training is like, and (4) answering student questions. Providers may request access via the Careers Leader. Access is granted based on non-disruption of exams and alignment with the careers schedule. The Academy provides all necessary premises and AV equipment. The Provider Access Policy statement can be found on the policies section of the school website.

Blackpool Aspire Academy recognises that high-quality careers provision has double the impact on disadvantaged learners. We use vocational profiling from Year 7 to identify strengths and preferences.

Specific Support Groups

- **SEND Students:** Guidance is aligned with the SEND Code of Practice. Vocational profiling is used to match students' suitability; for example, for specific work experience placements.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** We prioritise removing barriers for students eligible for Pupil Premium.
- **NEET Prevention Strategy:** The Academy uses a data-driven approach to identify students at risk of disengagement from Year 7:
- **OnTrack+:** This Compass+ feature identifies emerging risk factors and supports timely intervention in supporting those students at risk of NEET through various indicators.
- **Swift Intervention:** We work with the Local Authority to highlight students at risk of withdrawing from post 16 education as a preventative measure and support coordinative action if a student drops out of a program before completion.

Digital tools transform guidance from a series of events into a measurable, progressive journey. Blackpool Aspire Academy will incorporate the integration of these in the following ways.

- **Unifrog:** Utilised across all year groups as the primary platform for students to explore post-16 pathways, log competencies, and draft destination applications. Our Careers Curriculum is also rooted within the platform, as is the administration of our Work Experience week for Year 10.
- **Compass+:** By September 2026, all Academy careers data will have been fully migrated to Compass+ following the discontinuation of the legacy Compass tool.
- **Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ):** Used to measure "career readiness" at transition points.
- **Your Child's Future (YCF):** Available from Sept 2026 to strengthen parental engagement through data-driven insights.
- **Education Record App:** Year 11 results are available via the app from 11 am on GCSE results day to facilitate instant post-16 enrollment and transition support.
- **Careers Impact System:** Annual internal leadership reviews ensure careers remains a primary driver for institutional improvement. These are then revisited in the Summer Term via Peer to Peer reviews at Lancashire Council as a collaborative measure on developing areas for improvement with fellow schools.
- **Continuous Improvement:** We conduct termly self-reporting via Compass+ alongside the Careers and Enterprise Company and their Enterprise Coordinator, Mr. Sam Bates against the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and annual reviews of the Provider Access Policy are undertaken, ensuring our program evolves with the changing labour market and beyond.

Blackpool Aspire Academy's careers programme is designed to elevate the aspirations of every student through highly personalised guidance. By exposing learners to a comprehensive range of future opportunities, the academy encourages students to aim higher and make informed, ambitious choices that reflect their true potential. To ensure equity and broad horizons, all forms of stereotyping are strictly prohibited across our advice and guidance services. This inclusive approach guarantees that students from all backgrounds, genders, and diversity groups, alongside those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), are empowered to explore the widest possible spectrum of career pathways.

To effectively support each student's career development journey, the academy maintains comprehensive and accurate digital records. These files are held securely within the school's Google Drive system and are accessible only to authorised personnel. Furthermore, the academy utilises Compass Plus and Unifrog as primary digital platforms to systematically log every student's career-based experiences and employer encounters. Should a student transition to

another educational setting, the academy is committed to transferring their complete career-related learning history. This data transfer is achieved using the 'Learner Report' download feature on Compass Plus and the Student Profile Download option within Unifrog. Additionally, the academy ensures full transparency by allowing students and their parents or carers access to this information upon request.

The continuous improvement of our careers provision relies on robust data tracking and analysis. The academy systematically collects and analyses the destination data of our most recent leavers to evaluate how effectively the programme raises aspirations and counters limiting stereotypes. On an annual basis, this data is thoroughly reviewed by the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher for Personal Development, who also serves as the Careers Lead. By identifying key areas of success and opportunities for growth, this executive review directly informs and shapes the future strategic development of the academy's CEIAG provision.

This policy has been developed in full alignment with relevant statutory guidance and legislative frameworks. It complies with Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance—specifically Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (incorporating updates through June 2026)—and upholds the legal duties set out in the following legislation:

- *Education Act 1997 (Sections 42A and 45A)*
- *Education and Skills Act 2008*
- *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009*
- *Equality Act 2010*
- *Education Act 2011*
- *Children and Families Act 2014*
- *Technical and Further Education Act 2017*

This policy was developed in August 2026. It will be reviewed in September 2027