



Policy Information Sheet

Name of Policy:	Careers Policy
Delegated Authority	☒ Trust Board ☐ Nominated Committee ☐ CEO ☐ CFO ☐ Other _____
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1.0	Lorna Mclean	Added ref to digital and inclusive accessible resources	July 2025
2.0	Rick Kitson	Updated to reflect current DfE statutory guidance, Gatsby Benchmarks 2025, provider access legislation, Ofsted inspection changes, SEND/PfA expectations and the annual rolling careers plan.	06.10.2026

Careers Programme and Policy

1. Purpose and vision

All pupils need a planned, progressive programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance to help them understand themselves, explore options, make informed choices and prepare for their next steps in education, employment, training and adult life.

At Hartlepool Free School, careers education is part of our wider Preparation for Adulthood offer. We aim to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills, confidence and coping strategies they need to make realistic, ambitious and well-supported decisions about their future.

Our programme is personalised to reflect pupils' SEND, SEMH needs, aspirations, strengths, barriers, Education, Health and Care Plans, family context and transition needs.

2. Scope

This policy applies to careers education, employer engagement, provider access, personal guidance, work-related learning and transition planning at Hartlepool Free School.

The statutory careers guidance applies to pupils in Years 7 to 13 and to learners up to age 25 where they have a current EHCP. KS2 activity at Hartlepool Free School focuses on early aspiration, strengths, community roles and preparation for future choices.

Where a pupil attends Hartlepool Free School beyond Year 11 or in Key Stage 5 in exceptional circumstances, provision will be flexible and focused on preparation for the next appropriate education, employment, training or supported pathway.

3. Statutory and guidance framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- DfE Careers guidance and access for education and training providers: statutory guidance for schools, colleges and independent training providers, updated June 2026.
- The updated Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance, implemented from September 2025.
- Provider access legislation, including the duty to provide meaningful encounters with providers of technical education and apprenticeships.
- The SEND Code of Practice, including preparation for adulthood from Year 9 onwards for pupils with EHCPs.
- The Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and state-funded school inspection toolkit, including the Personal Development and Wellbeing evaluation area.

4. Careers entitlement

All pupils will have access to a planned and progressive careers programme. This will include:

- a stable annual careers programme shared with pupils, staff, parents/carers, governors/trustees and providers;
- careers learning through tutor time, PSHE, curriculum areas, Duke of Edinburgh where appropriate, EHCP reviews, visits, events and wider personal development opportunities;
- access to impartial information about academic, technical, vocational, apprenticeship, employment, supported employment and supported internship routes;
- meaningful encounters with employers, employees, FE providers, training providers and apprenticeship providers; from age 11, pupils will participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer each academic year, adapted where necessary to ensure meaningful participation for pupils with SEND;
- opportunities to learn from career and labour market information, including local and regional opportunities;
- personal guidance from an appropriately qualified careers adviser at key decision points, including at least one personal guidance meeting by age 16 and a further meeting by age 18 where applicable;

- workplace experiences, including internal, supported external or independent external placements where appropriate;
- individual transition planning, including a Careers Passport, destination tracking and Plan A/B/C planning for Year 11 pupils.

5. Gatsby Benchmarks

Hartlepool Free School uses the Gatsby Benchmarks as the framework for planning, reviewing and improving careers provision. The benchmarks are:

Benchmark	Focus
Gatsby Benchmark 1	A stable careers programme
Gatsby Benchmark 2	Learning from career and labour market information
Gatsby Benchmark 3	Addressing the needs of each pupil
Gatsby Benchmark 4	Linking curriculum learning to careers
Gatsby Benchmark 5	Encounters with employers and employees
Gatsby Benchmark 6	Experiences of workplaces
Gatsby Benchmark 7	Encounters with further and higher education
Gatsby Benchmark 8	Personal guidance

6. Annual rolling careers programme

The annual rolling programme is reviewed each year and recorded through Compass+. The detailed annual plan sits alongside this policy. The overview below summarises the core annual offer and the Gatsby Benchmarks evidenced each month.

Month	Core activity from annual rolling plan	Gatsby Benchmarks evidenced
September	Careers Passport reviews, pupil voice baseline, EHCP/PfA focus, Compass+ baseline, programme shared, Year 11 destination RAG and Plan A/B/C, leaver follow-up, website check.	1, 3
October	Community role visitor, local jobs and “what is work?”, academic/vocational/technical pathways, CV writing, Year 11 applications, employability audit, parent/carers pathway information.	2, 3, 5
November	Strengths linked to adult roles, Year 8/9 provider encounter, Year 10/11 provider encounter, provider access recording.	3, 7
December	Enterprise Week, applications and interview practice, workplace behaviour/problem-solving, termly evidence review and SLT/governor/trust update.	1, 3, 5
January	Adult skills and workplace skills carousel, independent careers guidance interviews, work experience readiness assessment.	3, 8
February	Careers linked to subjects week, employer-led workplace activity or visit, mock interviews, CV review, employer mentoring/supported employment session.	4, 5, 8
March	Technical pathways and apprenticeships lesson with provider input or supported visits where appropriate, college/supported internship/employment preparation, Year 11 destination review and Plan A/B/C confirmation, termly evidence review.	1, 2, 3, 7
April	Community participation, workplace expectations, work experience preparation, employer research, independent living and employment routines, risk assessments.	3, 6
May	Work experience activities, employer-led challenges and workplace visits; KS4 internal, supported external or independent external placements.	5, 6
June	Careers reflection, Year 10 work experience reflection, Year 11 transition passport, progression portfolio, final transition plan, destination tracker, parent/carers feedback.	1, 3

Month	Core activity from annual rolling plan	Gatsby Benchmarks evidenced
July	Aspiration targets, experience reflection, Careers Passport completion, Compass+ updates, annual impact review and next-year priorities shared with SLT/governors/trust.	1, 3

7. Provider access and impartiality

Hartlepool Free School will ensure pupils have access to a range of education and training providers so they can learn about technical education, apprenticeships, FE, supported internships, employment with training and other appropriate pathways.

Provider access will be managed through the school's Provider Access Statement, which is reviewed annually and published on the school website. The school will record provider encounters against statutory requirements, including two encounters in Years 8/9, two in Years 10/11 and, where applicable, two offered in Years 12/13.

Careers information, advice and guidance will be impartial and will not promote one route, provider or type of qualification above another. Pupils and families will be supported to consider realistic, ambitious and appropriate pathways.

8. SEND and preparation for adulthood

Careers education at Hartlepool Free School is adapted to meet pupils' individual needs. The programme will consider communication needs, cognition and learning, SEMH needs, anxiety, attendance, sensory needs, social care involvement, transport, family context and risk of poor transition.

For pupils with EHCPs, annual reviews from Year 9 onwards will include a focus on preparation for adulthood, including employment, independent living, community inclusion and health. Where appropriate, the school will involve parents/carers, local authority SEN teams, social care, health professionals and post-16 providers in transition planning.

Pupils will be supported to build confidence through Careers Passports, employability skills, workplace routines, supported visits, travel preparation, transition passports and individual Plan A/B/C destination planning.

9. Work experience and employer engagement

Pupils will experience employers and workplaces in a way that is meaningful and appropriate to their stage of development and needs. This may include visitors, workplace visits, employer-led activities, enterprise, mentoring, internal placements, supported external placements or independent external placements.

From September 2026, the school will progressively reform its work-experience programme in line with DfE guidance towards two weeks' worth of work experience by the end of Key Stage 4: a week's worth of meaningful employer-led work experience activities in Years 7 to 9 and a week's worth of meaningful work experience placement activity in Years 10 to 11, delivered flexibly and proportionately for pupils with SEND and SEMH needs.

Risk assessments will be completed for relevant visits and placements. Employers and providers will receive appropriate information about safeguarding, expectations, reasonable adjustments and the needs of pupils, where this is lawful and appropriate to share.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Trust Board/Governors	Approve and monitor the policy, Provider Access Statement and strategic careers provision.
Headteacher/SLT	Ensure careers education is resourced, implemented, inclusive and linked to school improvement and personal development.
Careers Leader	Lead the careers programme, maintain Compass+ records, coordinate providers/employers, monitor Gatsby Benchmarks, report impact and review provision.

Role	Responsibility
SENCO/Pastoral/DSL/Attendance Leads	Support individualised planning, especially for pupils with EHCPs, barriers to engagement, safeguarding vulnerabilities or transition risks.
Tutors/Teachers	Embed careers links within the curriculum, discuss aspirations, support Careers Passports and contribute to preparation for adulthood.
Qualified Careers Adviser	Provide impartial personal guidance, action planning and support for key transition decisions.
Parents/Carers	Work with school to support aspirations, choices, applications, visits and transition planning.

11. Recording, monitoring and evaluation

The school will record and evaluate careers activity using Compass+ and school-based trackers. Evidence will include Careers Passports, pupil voice, parent/carer voice, registers, provider and employer feedback, work experience evaluations, guidance action plans, EHCP/PfA review records, destination data and case studies.

The Careers Leader will complete termly evidence reviews and updates to SLT/governor/trust link. An annual careers impact review will evaluate Gatsby Benchmark progress, participation, destinations, pupil outcomes and next-year improvement priorities.

The school will pay particular attention to participation and outcomes for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, pupils known to social care, pupils with low attendance and pupils at risk of poor transition or becoming NEET.

12. Linked documents

- Provider Access Statement
- Annual Careers Rolling Plan
- Compass+ Benchmark Termly Reports
- SEND Policy and EHCP Annual Review documentation
- Student Risk Assessment Policy
- PSHE/Personal Development Curriculum
- Work Experience risk assessment and visit documentation

13. Review

This policy, the Provider Access Statement and the annual careers programme will be reviewed.