# Policy Information Sheet

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| **Name of Policy:** | **Careers Policy** |
| Delegated Authority | ☒ Trust Board<br>☐ Nominated Committee<br>☐ CEO<br>☐ CFO<br>☐ Other _____ |
| Policy review cycle | ☒ Annual<br>☐ 3 years<br>☐ Other _____ |
| Statutory policy | ☒ Yes<br>☐ No |
| Published online | ☒ Statutory<br>☐ Trust recommended<br>☐ No |

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| **Document History** | | | |
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| Version | Author | Revisions | Final approval date |
| 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; guidance must be independent, impartial and delivered by an appropriately trained/qualified adviser;
- 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/carer 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/carer 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 updated in June 2026 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, sustained-destinations, provider-access compliance 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 in September 2027 by the Careers Lead.