

PROVIDER ACCESS POLICY



Smestow Academy

June 2026

Review Date: June 2027

Review led by: I Chamberlain

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1. Aims

The Provider Access policy sets out:

- Procedures in relation to requests for access
- The grounds for granting and refusing requests for access
- Details of premises or facilities to be provided to a person who is given access

2. Statutory Requirements

Schools are required to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers, including colleges, universities, independent training providers, apprenticeship providers and employers, to access students in Years 8 to 13 for the purposes of informing them about the full range of education, training and career pathways available.

Schools must also have a policy statement that outlines the circumstances in which education and training providers will be given access to these students.

This is outlined in section 42B of the [Education Act 1997](#).

This policy shows how our school complies with these requirements.

3. Learner Entitlement

3.1 All students at Smestow Academy 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 diverse range of providers, including further education colleges, universities, independent training providers, apprenticeship providers and employers, about the opportunities available to them.
- Understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses
- Receive encounters that are tailored, inclusive and accessible, taking account of the needs of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and other vulnerable groups.

These encounters are mandatory and there will be a minimum of two encounters for pupils during the 'first key phase' (years 8 to 9) and two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (years 10 to 11). For students in the 'third key phase' (year 12 to 13), particularly those that have not yet decided on their next steps, there are two more provider encounters available during this period, which are optional for students to attend.

These provider encounters will be scheduled during the main school 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 staff and pupils from the provider)
- answer questions from pupils.

3.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have access to high-quality careers education and provider encounters regardless of background, ability, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic circumstance or special educational need and disability.

Provider encounters will be planned to support equality of opportunity, challenge stereotypes and raise aspirations for all learners.

4. Meaningful Provider Encounters

A meaningful encounter is one in which pupils have the opportunity to explore learning and career pathways, understand entry requirements, gain first-hand insight into education, training or employment opportunities, and engage directly with providers through discussion and questioning. We are committed to providing meaningful encounters to all pupils using the [Making it Meaningful Checklist](#). Where appropriate, meaningful encounters will include opportunities for pupils to meet current learners, apprentices, employers or alumni and to reflect on learning following the encounter. Meaningful online engagement is also an option, and we are open to providers that are able to provide live online engagement with our pupils. Provider encounters may be delivered face-to-face, virtually or through blended approaches where this enhances accessibility and engagement.

5. Previous Providers

In previous terms/years we have invited the following providers from the local area to speak to our pupils (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Careers & Enterprise Company
- Walsall College
- Dudley College
- Halesowen College
- Sandwell College
- Nova-T
- Juniper Training
- LD Training
- University of Wolverhampton
- Aston University

- Newman University
- Barr Beacon SCITT
- NHS Careers
- West Midlands Fire Service
- Cambridge and Oxford University

The school actively seeks to ensure a balanced representation of academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship pathways within its programme.

6. Destinations of our pupils

Last year our year 11 pupils moved to range of providers in the local area after school:

- 37.6% remained at Smestow Academy
- 6.4% went to another School Sixth Form
- 47% went to a College
- 4% went to a training provider
- 2% left the country
- 1% were unplaced at the time of data being reported

Last year our year 13 pupils moved to range of providers in the local area after school:

- 87.5% of pupils went to study at University
- 6.25% of pupils went into full time employment
- 6.25% of pupils were unplaced at the time of data being reported

Destination data is reviewed annually to inform careers provision and ensure that provider encounters reflect the aspirations and progression opportunities available to pupils.

7. Management of Provider Access Request

7.1. Procedure

A provider wishing to request access should contact Ms A Heilbronn, Careers Leader.

Telephone: 01902 539500

Email: postbox@smestowacademy.co.uk

7.2. Opportunities for access

A number of events, integrated into our careers programme, will offer providers an opportunity to come into school to speak to students and/or their parents/carers. These are detailed in our Career Plan [Careers Plan Smestow Academy June 2025 .docx](#). Please speak to our Careers Leader to identify the most suitable opportunity for you.

7.3. Granting and refusing access

We will always try to grant access wherever possible but may refuse based on the following criteria. Please note this list is not exhaustive and each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Nature of the request from provider
- The needs of the students
- The needs of the curriculum
- Number of requests received from provider
- Number of requests received for a particular cohort of students
- Timing of the academic day
- Availability in our calendar
- Quality of previous interactions with our students
- Failure to pass safeguarding checks
- Safety of our pupils, staff and visitors.

The school will seek to ensure that access arrangements support a balanced and representative range of providers and progression routes throughout the academic year.

7.4. Safeguarding

Our Child Safeguarding Policy outlines the school's procedure for checking the identity and suitability of visitors. Education and training providers will be expected to adhere to this policy.

Providers will only be permitted to take photographs of events if they have agreed this with the Careers Leader in advance and adequate time has been given to make appropriate permission checks.

[Matrix-Child-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf](#)

7.5. Premises and facilities

Depending on the nature of the session, providers will have access to presentation rooms or classrooms with audio/visual equipment, projectors or interactive whiteboards. Organisation of these facilities will take place when you contact the Careers Leader about your proposed session.

Providers will be asked to send a copy of any presentation slides or materials to the Careers Leader 24 hours in advance of the session. The use of USB sticks is not possible.

Providers can leave materials such as prospectuses for the students to read but we kindly ask that this is agreed with the Careers Leader first. Such materials will be assessed for their suitability.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where required to ensure that provider encounters are accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

7.6. Complaints:

Any complaints with regards to provider access can be raised following the school complaints procedure or directly with The Careers and Enterprise Company via provideraccess@careersandenterprise.co.uk.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

The school's arrangements for managing the access of education and training providers to pupils is monitored by Mrs F Bryant, Careers Leader.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Mrs F Bryant, Careers Leader and Mr I Chamberlain, Headteacher.