



An Active Learning Trust School

Careers Guidance and Aspiration Strategy 2025-26



A Strategy for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

Our Strategy:

Our strategy is to ensure that every Neale Wade Academy student can access the career and education pathway of their choice. Our goal is for every student to:

- Develop the behaviours and skills to support their progress towards a career pathway, including communication, creativity, problem solving, confidence, digital literacy and resilience in the face of challenge.
- Have access and exposure to a full range of opportunities which help them visualize what their future looks like and make good decisions supporting their progress towards that vision.
- Be ambitious and inspired about their future holds.

Our Objectives:

- To have a clear plan for careers education, advice, information and guidance (CEIAG) for students in Year 7 through to 13
- To engage with employers to raise aspiration through knowledge of careers and career pathways
- To forge strong links between the curriculum taught at Neale Wade Academy and the skills needed to create successful careers
- To ensure students receive impartial, independent advice at all stages of their time at Neale-Wade Academy.

Statutory Duties

1. Section 42A of the Education Act 1997 requires governing bodies to ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 (12-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds).

2. The governing body must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:

- Is presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option.
- Includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes.
- Is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.

3. The Technical and Further Education Act 2017 inserts section 42B into the Education Act 1997 and came into force on 2 January 2018. This new law requires the proprietor of all schools and academies to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in year 8 to year 13 for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships. Further details of this can be seen in the Provider Access Policy on our website.

In January 2024 Neale-Wade Academy was awarded the ‘Quality in Careers Standard’ through the Cambridgeshire CEIAG quality award ‘Investing in Quality’. ①

Introduction and background

Neale-Wade Academy has statutory responsibility for securing access to independent and impartial careers guidance for all pupils in years 8-13. In the context of this duty, careers guidance consists of services and programmes intended to assist pupils in making education, training and occupation choices and in learning how to manage their progress towards careers.

The aim of CEIAG is to raise our students’ aspirations, broaden their horizons and empower them to make informed realistic decisions at all key transition points in learning and work. The role of our Careers Team is to assist young people’s career learning, planning and development by creating, leading and managing the development of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in school. A Careers Guidance Counsellor, under the direction of the Careers Leader facilitates the contribution of colleagues, students and partners, develops the careers programme, organises resources and ensures that students have access to impartial Information, Advice and Guidance within the Academy.

Most people spend many years of their life in a working environment which is becoming increasingly fluid. It is important to equip our students with the necessary skills and information so that they can plan for their future careers, know how and where to access impartial and unbiased information, and use what they have learned through the careers program to support themselves autonomously and independently in the future.

In the academic year 2024-2025, the Academy NEET (not in employment, education or training) figures remain very low. Our 2024 leavers progressed successfully onto the pathways of their choice with only 4% of the cohort not taking up offers in post-16 education or training.

Neale-Wade Academy has strong links with outside agencies including universities and colleges, global corporations and local businesses who contribute to:

- Raising aspirations and increasing motivation – helping young people to identify educational and occupational goals.
- Demonstrating the relevance of the knowledge and the skills learnt in subjects to future opportunities in learning and working.
- Developing the skills for effective learning – reviewing achievements, setting targets, planning and taking action.
- Demonstrating the links between living, learning and earning.
- Improving literacy – developing information and communication skills
- Improving progression.
- Reducing NEET.
- Supports strategies for student’s personal and social development by:
 - Building self-confidence and self-reliance.
 - Promoting positive and informed attitudes to learning.
 - Promoting leadership, organisation, resilience and initiative.
 - Developing good communication skills.

Careers Guidance and Inspiration

The Careers programme is developed in consideration of the CDI (Career Development Institute) framework and the 8 Gatsby benchmarks (more detail of each benchmark is available in the Careers section of the Academy website) which cover:

- ① A Stable Careers Programme.
- ② Learning from Career and Labour Market Information.
- ③ Addressing the Needs of Each Pupil.
- ④ Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers.
- ⑤ Encounters with Employers and Employees.
- ⑥ Experiences of Workplaces.
- ⑦ Encounters with Further and Higher Education.
- ⑧ Personal Guidance.

Neale-Wade Academy has an embedded programme of career education and guidance which ensures that all students and their parents have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. Students have different career guidance needs at different stages of their education and advice, and support are tailored to the needs of each student. All teachers aim to link curriculum learning with skills needed by employers and careers, with particular emphasis on the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.

Every student has multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. All students are given the opportunity to understand the full range of career education opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic, vocational and apprenticeship routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and the workplace. Every student has the opportunity for at least one guidance interview with a qualified career adviser. This is available whenever significant study or career choices are being made.

Our careers strategy enables students to be:

- Engaged in understanding the world of work and motivated to pursue a career.
- Aware of options in the labour market, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Aware of their current strengths and interests and how these relate to future careers.
- Able to make choices, aligned to labour market opportunities, that support their aspirations.
- Able to acquire skills and behaviours necessary to attain their desired employment.

We have a planned approach to careers education each year group with each activity mapped against the Gatsby Benchmarks and delivered through the Life Skills curriculum:

Year 7

- Careers education units in Life Skills lessons to cover careers and jobs and relating jobs to earning and budgeting ② ④
- Use of Unifrog, an on-line CEIAG tool which informs and inspires young people about the world of work. This includes logging in, recording careers related activities, and using personal careers diagnostic tools help build initial thoughts and ideas on careers pathways ④ ②
- Assemblies to introduce the importance of thinking about the future
- Assemblies to introduce different career pathways including the concept of higher education, GCSE and post-16 options, and apprenticeships ⑦
- A Careers fair to meet a range of employers and organisations ⑤

Year 8

- Careers education units in Life Skills lessons to include labour market information, entrepreneurship and enterprise, making career choices, the importance of skills in the workplace, interview techniques. We also consider stereotyping and unconscious bias in careers ② ④
- PAL Assemblies offering information from local post 16 providers ⑦
- 'What is higher education?' workshops ⑦
- A Careers fair to meet a range of employers and organisations ⑤
- Entrepreneurship and enterprise activities ⑤ ②

Year 9

- Understanding what success means and how aiming high is important in making decisions about GCSE option choices. Unifrog is used to support research into qualifications and requirements needed for different careers ④
- Workshops and assemblies exploring different pathways Post 16 and Post 18 including apprenticeships and university ⑦
- PAL Assemblies offering information from local post 16 providers ⑦
- Curriculum based career opportunities ④ ⑤
- A Careers fair to meet a range of employers and organisations ⑤
- Pathways Day – an insight into careers and the opportunity to take subjects tasters as preparation for the GCSE options process ④ ② ⑤ ③
- The opportunity for a personal guidance meeting to discuss GCSE Options ⑧

Year 10

- Life skills lessons which explore different job sectors and examine why there is stereotyping in careers. Students start to identify their own personal brand and explore the importance of professional networking and volunteering. ② ③ ④
- All Year 10's will take part in 2 weeks of work experience during May ⑥
- PAL Assemblies offering information from local post 16 providers ⑦

- Employability skills day which focuses on CV writing, understanding and development of soft skills and employer engagement through mock interviews ⑤②⑧④
- STEM engagement opportunities linked to careers in engineering, construction and science ⑤
- A Careers fair to meet a range of employers and organisations ⑤
- University visits ⑦
- The opportunity for a careers guidance meeting ⑧

Year 11

- Life skills lessons which explore all available pathways at Post 16 and looking forwards to Post 18 and how the application process works. ②③
- Assemblies, and parent events with a focus on pathways at Post 16, and the application process ③
- Generating career ideas and plans based on their own interests, skills and aspirations ③④⑤
- Encouraging students to explore their own career ideas and assess how well suited they are from an education, skills and behaviours perspective ③
- Helping prepare for transitions post-16 and post-18 ⑧③
- Use of Labour Market Information to inform and demonstrate the changing job market ⑧
- Workshops for students on university and apprenticeship choices to inform Post 16 choice ③⑦⑧
- A Careers fair to meet a range of employers and organisations ⑤
- Post 16 Open Evening ④⑦
- The opportunity for a careers guidance meeting ⑧

Post 16

- Employability skills day to incorporate CV writing, understanding and development of soft skills and employer engagement through mock interviews ⑤②⑧④
- Enterprise activities such as 'Build a Business' with The Skills Service ⑤②⑧④
- University Visits ③⑦⑧
- Personal Statement writing workshops for support with application to university ③⑦⑧
- Pre-apprenticeship programme which incorporates:
 - Visits to local employers
 - Mock interviews
 - CV Writing
 - Improving presentation skills
 - Mock assessment centres ⑤②⑧④
- A work experience programme ⑥
- Careers Festivals ⑤
- Careers opportunities throughout the curriculum ④

Employer Engagement ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

Working with employers aims to develop an understanding of the challenges faced by organisations employing young people. This is done through collaborative sharing of skills, knowledge and vision. We want our Academy to be known as the Academy that works with employers to understand the employers' approach to human resources so that we can proactively boost the employability competencies and job prospects of our young people.

Working with employers also enables the Academy to provide impartial careers guidance across a range of pathways such as university, apprenticeships and other vocational pathways.

Our goal is for all students to have at least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year, but this is often much higher.

Alumni ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

With the support of Future First, the Academy has set up an alumni network to recruit former students with the aim of growing our employer network. To date we have over 600 members and the number continues to grow.

Our alumni community gives us access to role models from a wide range of backgrounds, careers and experience. In addition, our alumni are supporting us with work placement opportunities, student mentoring and our employer engagement activities.

Utilisation of the alumni network has waned in recent years but will be re-invigorated through the 2025-2026 academic year.

Enterprise Network ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

Neale-Wade Academy is part of the Careers and Enterprise Company's Enterprise Network. We are delighted to work with Shelley Hankins, Smurfit Kappa.

This partnership aims to:

- Support the delivery of world class careers guidance to our students.
- Undertake strategic planning, developing skills in communication and strategy development.
- Build strong working relationships and provide insight into the professional services sector and the opportunities available in the local labour market.
- Support the development of the Academy's local business network.

Working alongside Shelley this year, we aim to increase the numbers of businesses supporting our work experience programme for Year 12 as well as building our student enterprise skills.

Management

Miss Sam Bathurst is the member of SLT with responsibility for Careers at the Academy.

Our Careers Leader and Guidance Counsellor is Mr Neil Matthews who is qualified as a Careers Leader through Teach First and will shortly be fully qualified as a Level 6 Careers Guidance Counsellor. Careers are supported by Mrs J Bradford, Teacher of DT, and by Mrs S Ayres, Careers and Sixth Form Administrator.

Staffing

All staff contribute to CEIAG through their roles as tutors and subject teachers. Specialist sessions supporting careers pathways are delivered through some curriculum areas, specifically Science, Sport and Performing Arts, with an intention of expanding this to all curriculum area during this academic year in line with changes to Gatsby benchmark 4.

All Careers information is available on-line via the Neale Wade Academy website. The Academy additionally actively promotes the National Careers website/helpline and the apprenticeship website.

Data

Neale-Wade Academy uses both internal and external data to support the following:

- Destination data to inform curriculum planning
- ARBOR and Pupil Progress assessment data to ensure advice given is aspirational and in line with target grades and predictions
- Data to inform the Local Authority Transition Advisors to support students targeted as at risk of not participating at Post 16

Our school data also identifies those students who need extra support with applications. These students may be highlighted as requiring additional support to make applications or with transition through to Post 16 or university. Examples could be students who are looked after, students with reduced attendance, other vulnerable students and those with low prior attainment. It is the Academy's aim that none of these barriers will prevent any student from moving onto their next step and will ensure that this progression is appropriate and supported.

Evaluation of the CEIAG Programme

It is important that we measure the impact of our strategy through student, employer and parent feedback. We also track the destinations of our students Post 16 and Post 18.

We use the Careers and Enterprise Company's Compass Tool self-assess our strategy against the Gatsby Benchmarks, which have a separate section on the website.

We also survey students, staff, parents and employers twice a year to allow feedback from stakeholders about the programme to be given, analysed, and improvements identified and planned for.

Ofsted Monitoring Visit – January 2025

'The school has begun to provide pupils with a more positive experience of Education. An example of this is that pupils receive more cohesive careers guidance. They are now able to make informed choices about their next steps'

Year 10 Visits to Lincoln University 2024

78% of students have not visited a university before. 63% of students did not have a close family member who had been to university. Before the visit, 67% of students said they would consider university, this rose to 82% following the visit.

Student Feedback following Year 10 Future choices days (July 2025)

Year 10 students participated in a collapsed 2 days in July 2025 in order to gather information on what post-16 education might look like for them. This was done through participation in workshops associated with post-16 courses (both vocational and academic) and included external visitors from Education and Training providers, and training in how to

apply for post-16 courses. Feedback from this day was gathered through surveys, and the results showed a strong willingness of many students to progress to both academic and vocational pathways locally. Feedback was positive and gave the school good information on which to plan for the future and provide support through Year 11.

Year 10 Work Experience May 2025 – Employer feedback

Many employers fed back to the Academy that they felt Neale Wade Academy students demonstrated responsibility and acted in a mature way during their work experience week, and were a credit to the community and to the Academy.