



**Shaw
Education
Trust**

Careers Policy

2025/26

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Vision and Purpose

At Portland School, we believe that our most fundamental function is to prepare our young people for what comes next in their lives, and for helping them to develop the skills to become as independent as they possibly can be into adulthood.

For a majority of our pupils we believe that this can and should include moving into paid employment in adulthood, and we intend our Careers programme to inspire and prepare our pupils to achieve that goal.

Through the Careers programme set out in the appendices to this document, and with the support of the Careers & Enterprise Hub (Careers Hub), Enterprise Advisor, local employers and partner agencies, we intend to foster and develop a philosophy of aspiration amongst our staff, our pupils and their families towards an aspirational expectation of meaningful employment, further education or training for all pupils.

Further to developing an aspiration for employment, we also believe that developing the skills identified by employers as being desirable in the job market has a positive effect on the general wellbeing of each individual. Skills and attributes such as resilience, working well with others and understanding of our own strengths all contribute to a positive self-image and more secure mental health.

Local and National Expectations

We are committed to meeting the requirements and expectations laid out in the Governments' Careers strategy (Dec 2017) and adhering to the DfE statutory guidance on Careers Education (May 2025 update).

These requirements are:

- To ensure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance from year 7 - 11.
- To ensure that there are opportunities for employers and education and training advisors to have access to pupils in line with the Provider Access Legislation (Baker Clause).
- SLT to support and include the careers programme in wider strategic planning.
- To publish a Provider Access Statement on the school website.
- To use the Gatsby Benchmarks and comply with them in full where appropriate and aligned to the SEND Gatsby Toolkit (CEC 2019).
- To build in the opportunity for our pupils to meet with or visit at least one employer or place of work each year from Year 7 – 9; and guarantee at least one experience of the workplace in Years 10–11.
- To appoint a named Preparation for Adulthood Advisor to lead the careers programme and work alongside the SENCOs to ensure EHCP plans reflect outcomes and aspirations.
- To include students, parents, carers and guardians in the planning and execution of the careers programme.
- To maintain Compass+ for tracking, programme evaluation and Hub compliance.

Challenges

All pupils who attend Portland School have an Education Health and Care Plan which outlines their primary need of SEMH (Social, Emotional & Mental Health).

A significant number of our pupils live in houses where no adult is in employment. Whilst reasons are complex, we recognise that:

"Children who grow up with workless parents are more likely to be workless themselves as adults..."

(Gregg et al., 2017; Schoon et al., 2012)

'People with special educational needs are seven times less likely to work than their mainstream peers' (ONS 2015).

We believe that breaking the cycle of worklessness, where it does exist, is of the utmost importance and can impact positively, not only on our pupils, but on generations of their families to come.

"We know that all young people face challenges in finding employment,

but for the 14% of young people with special educational needs and disabilities, finding a job is even more complicated..." – *SEND Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit (CEC, 2019)*

Current priorities:

Our careers strategy is informed by these current priorities:

- Supporting and developing individual aspirations, improving attainment and ensuring positive destinations.
- Meeting the needs of specific groups including looked after children, young carers, and pupils from economically-deprived backgrounds.
- Developing learner's career aspirations and skills, especially those associated with perseverance, self-reliance, resilience, independence, problem-solving, engagement and employability.
- Improving young people's opportunities for a working life through identifying the values that are important to them...
- Developing the use of a range of resources to meet young people's career development needs alongside face-to-face support.
- Working with parents/carers, alumni and education, community and business partners to meet student's career development needs.
- Ensuring the Careers Programme is monitored, evaluated and quality assured through Compass+, Governor scrutiny, pupil voice and Careers Hub support.

Strategy

In order to meet the objectives of this policy we will ensure that;

- The Careers programme in school will be guided by a named member of Governance, who will assume a strategic interest and encourage employer engagement. It will also have the backing to deliver Careers Guidance across all eight Gatsby Benchmarks, of a named member of the Senior Leadership Team, and will be led on a daily basis by a named Preparation for Adulthood Advisor.
- In collaboration with the skills builder partnership, staff throughout the school will use all eight skills areas of: listening, presenting, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork to identify the building blocks of employability skills, explicitly teach them and assess pupil progress against them; aligned with local employer competency framework for skills.
- Pupils have the opportunity to develop their independence through inclusion in the Travel Training programme where appropriate.
- The Preparation for Adulthood Advisor and where appropriate the SLT lead will liaise with representatives of the Careers and Enterprise Company, The Careers Hub and the school's Enterprise Advisor to ensure best practice and most up to date advice with regard to LEP priorities.
- Pupil understanding of the world of work develops by exposing them to a significantly increased number of carefully planned, meaningful employer contacts in their time at school, beyond the 1 contact per year (in KS2 and 3) mandated by the Gatsby Benchmarks



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