



Careers Policy

Date: August 2026	Next review: August 2027
Ratified by: Susi Earnshaw (proprietor)	

At Susi Earnshaw we aim to provide a **whole school approach** to the subjects in PSHE. In our timetable, this subject is referred to as “**Lifeskills and Careers**” and are taught mainly by Melissa Gillespie.

The School is an independent school with a strong specialised background in the performing arts. Upon joining the school, it could be said that many students may have already chosen their career path. The aim of our vocational school, is to ensure that specific skills and talents are nurtured with the view that students may pursue these areas in adult life. Although our vocational programme is effective in preparing students for further training in performing arts, the school recognises that pupils' interests and aspirations may change and that specialist training in the performing arts should not restrict pupils' future choices.

The school recognises that pupils should not be limited by their current interests or perceived career choices. We therefore provide a broad and balanced careers programme which encourages every pupil to explore a wide range of academic, technical, vocational and employment pathways.

Our School places great value on education that will prepare pupils for the challenges of their future lives. It recognises that in a world of rapidly changing employment opportunities pupils need to be given equally wide information, experience, and understanding of the world of work. It also recognises that pupils need to be given assistance in recognising their own abilities and aptitudes so that they can develop high and appropriate aspirations for their own future.

The school will have regard to the principles and expectations contained within the Department for Education's **Careers guidance and access for education and training providers**, updated 23 June 2026, as appropriate to an independent school.

Our careers programme aims to ensure that pupils:

- understand themselves, their interests, strengths, skills and aspirations; • understand the full range of education, training and employment opportunities available to them;
- develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to make informed decisions; • understand the changing world of work and relevant labour-market trends; • develop employability, enterprise and essential workplace skills;
- encounter employers, employees and professionals from a wide range of sectors; • experience workplaces and develop an understanding of workplace expectations; • understand academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship pathways; • receive impartial and personalised careers information, advice and guidance; • are supported to make successful transitions to further education, training or employment; and
- develop high aspirations while recognising and overcoming potential barriers to progression.

The school will use the **eight Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance** as the framework for planning, delivering and evaluating its careers programme. The updated Gatsby Benchmarks have been in implementation from the 2025–26 academic year and are the framework referenced by the Department for Education in its current 2026 guidance.

Scope

This policy applies to pupils in **Years 7–11**.

Although the school's statutory obligations may differ from those applying to maintained schools and academies, Susi Earnshaw Theatre School has chosen to structure its careers programme in accordance with the expectations of the Department for Education's current careers guidance and the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The school will keep its careers provision under regular review and will respond to changes in legislation, Department for Education guidance, qualification pathways, the labour market and the needs of its pupils.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is delivered through a combination of:

- Lifeskills and Careers lessons;
- curriculum-based careers learning;
- assemblies and presentations;
- visiting speakers;
- employer and employee encounters;
- workshops and masterclasses;
- workplace visits and work experience;
- encounters with colleges, universities and training providers;
- apprenticeship and technical education information;
- careers fairs and events;
- individual and group careers discussions;
- personal careers guidance;
- support with applications, interviews and progression;

- information about labour-market trends;
- opportunities to develop enterprise and employability skills; and
- engagement with parents and carers.

The programme will be progressive, beginning in Year 7 and developing pupils' career knowledge, skills and confidence as they progress through the school.

Careers education will not be restricted to pupils who have already expressed an interest in a particular career. All pupils will be encouraged to explore a broad range of future possibilities.

Aims and Objectives

The school's careers programme aims to:

1. raise pupils' aspirations and broaden their understanding of possible futures;
2. provide impartial careers information, advice and guidance;
3. enable pupils to make informed choices about education, training and employment;
4. ensure that pupils understand the full range of academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship pathways;
5. connect learning in the classroom with future careers and employment;
6. provide meaningful encounters with employers and employees;
7. provide meaningful experiences of workplaces;
8. develop pupils' employability, enterprise and essential skills;
9. provide additional support for pupils who may face barriers to progression;
10. promote equality of opportunity and challenge stereotypes about careers;
11. involve parents and carers in supporting pupils' career development;
12. make effective use of labour-market information;
13. support successful transitions at key points in pupils' education; and
14. evaluate the impact of careers provision and use the findings to improve the programme.

The Gatsby Benchmarks

Susi Earnshaw Theatre School will use the eight Gatsby Benchmarks as the framework for its careers programme.

The benchmarks are:

Summary of the Gatsby Benchmarks

1. A Stable Careers Programme: The school should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by students, teachers, parents and employers.
2. Learning from Career and Labour Market Information: Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.
3. Addressing the Needs of Each Student: Students have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. The school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.
4. Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers: All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of

STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.

5. Encounters with Employers and Employees: Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.
6. Experiences of Workplaces: Every student should have first-hand experience of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.
7. Encounters with Further and Higher Education: All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.
8. Personal Guidance: Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided that they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all students but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

As part of the School's commitment to the broadest and fullest education for every one of its pupils, each pupil is entitled to an effective programme of Careers education, information, advice and Guidance (CEIaG) at appropriate phases of their progress through the School. The CEIaG programme aims to empower pupils to gather as much relevant information as possible, under the School's guidance, in order for them to be able to make informed decisions about their futures.

Opportunities and Provision

The school will provide a range of workplace experiences appropriate to pupils' age and circumstances. These may include:

- work shadowing;
- short placements;
- employer-led projects;
- industry workshops;
- enterprise activities;
- workplace simulations;
- visits to theatres, studios, production companies and other creative organisations;
- placements with employers within the performing arts and wider creative industries;
- and
- placements and experiences in sectors outside the performing arts.
- Workplace visits

The school recognises that, because of its specialist performing-arts curriculum, pupils may have particular opportunities within theatre, dance, music, television, film and the wider creative industries. However, work experience will not be restricted to these sectors. Pupils will be encouraged to explore a broad range of occupations and industries in order to keep their future options open.

Where practicable, pupils will have the opportunity to undertake meaningful workplace experiences before the end of Key Stage 4.

The school will work towards the Department for Education's expectation that pupils should experience the equivalent of two weeks' worth of work experience by the end of Key Stage 4,

comprising approximately one week's worth of workplace experiences during Years 7–9 and approximately one week's worth of work-experience placement during Years 10–11.

Former visits have included annual trips to the London Careers Fair, Sky studios, Move it, Theatre trips. Talks from various industry professionals in different sectors.

The school will take a flexible approach to meeting this expectation, recognising that meaningful workplace experience may comprise a combination of different activities rather than a single block placement.

Employer Engagement

The school will seek to establish relationships with a diverse range of employers and organisations to support its work-experience programme.

Employers may include organisations from:

- performing arts
- theatre and live entertainment
- film and television
- music
- dance
- production and technical theatre
- arts administration
- education
- media and communications
- business and professional services
- health and public services
- technology and
- other sectors relevant to pupils' interests and the local and wider labour market.

The school will seek to ensure that pupils are exposed to a range of workplace environments and career opportunities, including occupations that they may not previously have considered.

Safeguarding and Health and Safety

The safety and welfare of pupils is the school's priority.

Before approving a work-experience placement, the school will consider the suitability of the employer and the proposed activities and will ensure that appropriate safeguarding, health and safety and risk-management arrangements are in place.

The school will maintain appropriate communication with the employer, pupil and parent/carer throughout the placement.

The school will consider current Department for Education guidance relating to safeguarding and work experience, including whether any checks or additional safeguards are required depending on the nature and circumstances of the placement.

Pupils will be given clear information about how to report a safeguarding, health and safety or welfare concern while undertaking work experience.

All provider visits and activities will be subject to the school's safeguarding procedures.

Providers will be expected to comply with the school's safeguarding requirements and any relevant health and safety arrangements while on school premises or working with pupils.

The school reserves the right to decline or postpone a provider activity where appropriate safeguarding, health and safety or operational requirements cannot be satisfactorily met.

SEND and Additional Support

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND and pupils who may otherwise experience barriers to participation have meaningful access to workplace experiences.

Placements will be considered on an individual basis and may include reasonable adjustments, additional preparation, enhanced supervision or other appropriate support.

The school will work with pupils, parents/carers, employers and relevant staff to identify suitable opportunities and remove unnecessary barriers to participation.

Provider Access

Susi Earnshaw Theatre School is committed to ensuring that pupils are informed about the full range of education, training and progression opportunities available to them, including academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship pathways.

As an independent school, the school recognises that the statutory provider-access requirements under Section 42B of the Education Act 1997 apply to the institutions specified in the relevant legislation and Department for Education guidance. The school will nevertheless adopt the principles of provider access as good practice and will provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to hear directly from a range of education and training providers.

Provider encounters may take place through:

- assemblies;
- careers events and fairs;
- options events;
- group discussions;
- workshops;
- presentations;
- taster sessions;
- workplace or provider visits;
- online or virtual sessions where appropriate; and
- other activities forming part of the school's wider careers programme.

The school will seek to ensure that provider encounters are meaningful, relevant and appropriate to the pupils involved, with opportunities for pupils to ask questions and reflect on what they have learned.

The school will aim to provide a broad range of provider encounters, including opportunities

to learn about further education, higher education, technical education, apprenticeships and other recognised education and training routes.

The school will ensure that provider engagement complements the wider careers programme and supports the Gatsby Benchmarks, particularly:

- Benchmark 2 – Learning from career and labour market information;
- Benchmark 3 – Addressing the needs of each young person;
- Benchmark 5 – Encounters with employers and employees;
- and** • Benchmark 7 – Encounters with further and higher education.

Provider Requests for Access

Providers wishing to offer an encounter or activity should contact the school's Careers Leader.

Requests will be considered according to:

- relevance to the school's careers programme;
- the age and needs of pupils;
- the educational value of the proposed activity;
- the timing and availability of pupils and staff;
- safeguarding requirements;
- health and safety considerations;
- the availability of appropriate facilities; and
- the school's ability to provide a meaningful and appropriately managed encounter.

The school will seek to facilitate suitable provider access wherever reasonably practicable.

Careers Leadership and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- provide strategic leadership for careers provision
- ensure the school meets its applicable legal and regulatory requirements
- support the Careers Leader
- ensure appropriate resources are available and
- review the careers programme annually

Careers Leader

The Careers Leader will:

- coordinate the careers programme
- maintain the school's careers programme and annual plan
- ensure provision is mapped against the Gatsby Benchmarks
- coordinate employer and provider engagement
- coordinate workplace experiences
- facilitate access to personal guidance
- monitor participation and engagement
- work with teachers to embed careers across the curriculum
- engage parents and carers
- evaluate the effectiveness of provision
- maintain appropriate records and
- report to the Headteacher on progress and areas for development

Teachers and Other Staff

All staff have a role in supporting pupils' career development.

Teachers should:

- make links between curriculum learning and careers;
- challenge stereotypes and raise aspirations;
- identify pupils who may need additional careers support;
- encourage pupils to consider a broad range of pathways; and
- support the delivery of careers activities.

Proprietor

The school's leadership/governance arrangements will provide appropriate oversight of careers provision and will ensure that careers remains a strategic priority within the school's wider educational provision.

Opportunities for access

A number of events, integrated into the school careers programme, will offer providers an opportunity to come into school to speak to students and/or their parents/carers.

Premises and facilities

1. The school will make the main studio, theatre, classrooms or private meeting rooms available for discussions between the provider and students, as appropriate to the activities.
2. The school will also make available AV and other specialist equipment to support provider presentations. This will all be discussed and agreed in advance of the visit with the Careers Leader or appropriate member of school staff.
3. Providers are welcome to leave a copy of their prospectus or other relevant course literature at our school.

Policy monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the head teacher and head of careers (Melissa Gillespie) on an annual basis.

Parent and Carer Involvement

Parents and carers will be provided with appropriate information about work-experience arrangements, including:

- the purpose of the placement;
- dates and times;
- the employer and workplace;
- contact arrangements;
- safeguarding and health and safety arrangements; and
- any information required to support the pupil's participation.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to support pupils in preparing for and reflecting upon their workplace experiences.

Evaluation

The school will evaluate work-experience activities to assess their effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

Evaluation may include feedback from:

- pupils;
- parents and carers;
- employers;
- teachers and other staff; and
- external partners.

The school will consider whether work experience has enabled pupils to develop greater knowledge of workplaces, increased their understanding of career pathways and improved their confidence and employability skills.

Findings will be used to inform the school's annual careers programme and its progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks.