

Provider Access Policy Statement

Introduction

This policy statement sets out the academy's arrangements for managing the access of education and training providers to the academy for the purpose of giving information about the provider's education or training offer.

It 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.

Statutory requirements

Schools must ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access scholars in years 8 to 11 for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

As an 11-16 academy, Castle Mead Academy must provide a minimum of four encounters with providers of technical education or apprenticeships for all scholars in years 8 to 11.

Schools must also prepare and publish a policy statement setting out the circumstances in which education and training providers will be given access to scholars. This requirement is set out in section 42B of the Education Act 1997, as amended by the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and in the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#), updated June 2026.

This policy sets out how Castle Mead Academy complies with these requirements.

For an 11-16 school, the four encounters that must be offered to all pupils in years 8 to 11 are:

- Two encounters for scholars during the first key phase (year 8 or 9)
 - All scholars must attend.
 - Encounters can take place at any time during year 8, and between 1 September and 28 February during year 9.
- Two encounters for scholars during the second key phase (year 10 or 11)
 - All scholars must attend.
 - Encounters can take place at any time during year 10, and between 1 September and 28 February during year 11.

These encounters must take place for a reasonable period during the standard school day. The academy may continue to provide complementary experiences outside the school day, but these do not count towards the statutory provider encounter requirement.

Schools should work with each provider in advance to ensure that, as a minimum, scholars are given:

- Information about the provider and the approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships they offer
- Information about the careers those technical education qualifications or apprenticeships might lead to
- Information about what learning or training with the provider is like
- Opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the provider.

Meaningful provider encounters

One encounter is defined as one meeting or session between scholars and a provider. Castle Mead Academy is committed to ensuring that provider encounters are meaningful, have a clear purpose, include two-way interaction and enable scholars to understand the provider, the routes offered, what learning or training is like and the careers those routes can lead to.

Encounters may be delivered in person or through an appropriate combination of in-person and virtual activity. Scholars and providers will be supported to prepare for the encounter, and scholars will have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned.

Student entitlement

All scholars in years 8 to 11 are entitled:

- to find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships opportunities, as part of a careers programme which provides information on the full range of education and training options available at each transition point
- to hear from a range of local providers about the opportunities they offer, including technical education and apprenticeships – through options events, assemblies and group discussions and taster events
- to understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses.

Management of provider access requests

A provider wishing to request access should contact Chelsea Robertson, Careers Leader, on 0116 214 3150 or via crobertson@castle-tmet.uk.

Opportunities for access

The academy offers the four provider encounters required by law for an 11-16 school, alongside a range of additional activities integrated into the careers programme. Providers are welcome to request opportunities to speak to scholars and, where appropriate, parents and carers. Requests should be made to the Careers Leader so that the most suitable opportunity, timing and format can be agreed.

Two encounters for scholars during the first key phase (years 8 and 9) that are mandatory for all scholars to attend.

1. Year 8 - provider encounter during the standard school day, scheduled as part of the annual careers programme.
2. Year 9 - provider encounter during the standard school day, scheduled between 1 September and 28 February.

Two encounters for scholars during the second key phase (years 10 and 11) that are mandatory for all scholars to attend.

3. Year 10 - provider encounter during the standard school day, scheduled as part of the annual careers programme.
4. Year 11 - provider encounter during the standard school day, scheduled between 1 September and 28 February.

Examples of additional opportunities for provider access include provider assemblies, options events and presentations, taster activities, lunchtime and after-school talks, careers fair, National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week activities, work experience preparation, CV support workshops, mock interviews, workplace visits and careers networking events. Activities outside the standard school day are complementary and do not count towards the statutory provider encounter requirement.

Please speak to our Careers Leader to identify the most suitable opportunity for you.

Granting and refusing access.

The school reserves the right to decline requests for a number of reasons, including (but not restricted to) the following:

- if such attendance would provide an imbalanced view of available provision (e.g. several apprenticeship providers at an event and no colleges);
- if the provider's input would not be relevant to a particular event if the request is not timely (e.g. scholars have already heard from similar providers during the year, or if they are involved in end of year exams);
- if the information is not seen to be in the best interest of scholars or there are concerns about the ethics or quality of the provision. In such cases, the Principal or the Careers Leader would inform the provider of this decision and the reason why. If the provider wishes to appeal this decision, they can contact the Principal. If the provider wishes to appeal the decision received from the Principal, they should contact the Academy Council.

Safeguarding

The academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Parent & Visitor Code of Conduct set out the school's approach to visitors, including education and training providers. Current policies are available on the [Castle Mead Academy policies page](#). Education and training providers are expected to comply with all relevant safeguarding and visitor requirements.

Premises and facilities

The academy will make suitable premises available for discussions between providers and scholars, as appropriate to the activity. This may include the theatre, library or classrooms. ICT and other specialist equipment may also be made available to support provider presentations. Requirements will be discussed and agreed in advance with the Careers Leader or a member of the careers team.

Where appropriate, provider engagement may include a combination of in-person and virtual activity. Providers are also welcome to supply current prospectuses or other relevant course and apprenticeship literature for the careers area in the academy library, which is available to scholars at break and lunchtime.

Previous providers and destinations of our scholars

Castle Mead Academy scholars progress to a range of positive destinations, including sixth forms, further education colleges, apprenticeships and training. The academy works with a broad range of local and national education, training, higher education and employer partners. Recent organisations invited to engage with our scholars include:

- Army
- ASK Programme (Apprenticeships)
- Barratt Developments PLC
- Beauchamp City Sixth Form
- Bosworth Academy
- Brookvale Groby
- De Montfort University
- DWP
- Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service Workforce
- FSD Academy
- Gateway College
- HOET
- LCFC inspires
- LEBC
- Leicester City Council
- Leicester College
- Leicester Magistrates
- Leicester Riders
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- Leicestershire Police

- Loughborough College Group (Loughborough College, SMB and Brooksby College)
- Loughborough University
- MYPATH
- National Space Academy
- NEXTGEN Apprenticeships
- Royal Navy
- NCS
- NHS
- NWSLC
- Prime Life Project
- Royal Air Force
- University of Leicester
- University of Oxford
- Uppingham School
- Wigston College
- WQE College

Complaints

Any concerns or complaints regarding provider access should first be raised through the academy's published complaints procedure. If a complaint about an academy's compliance with the statutory careers guidance remains unresolved, it may be escalated to the Department for Education in accordance with the current guidance. Providers may also [register a concern with The Careers & Enterprise Company](#) regarding Provider Access Legislation.

Links to other policies

All current academy and Trust policies can be found on the [Castle Mead Academy policies page](#).

Monitoring arrangements

The academy's arrangements for managing access by education and training providers are monitored by the Careers Leader and the designated senior leader with responsibility for careers. This policy is reviewed annually by the Careers Leader, Assistant Principal and agreed with the Academy Council.

Last reviewed: August 2026. Next review: August 2027.