CASTLE MEAD
ACADEMY

CAREERS AND GUIDANCE POLICY

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy. The Principal, senior leadership link for careers and Careers Leader will take key roles in monitoring and evaluating its implementation and effectiveness. The policy, alongside other academy policies, will be available on the academy website. The Academy Council will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

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Revision History:

Version:	Date:	Author:	Summary of changes:
1.0	October 2021	Careers Leader	New Policy
2.0	September 2022	M. Rule	Assistant Principal: Scholar Development added; LLEP Enterprise Coordinator updated; Compass+ evaluation paragraph added; provider access opportunities revised; Careers Leader email removed while the position was vacant.
3.0	September 2023	J. Simpkin and D. Walker	Policy updated using templates from The Key and CEC
4.0	November 2024	D. Walker and D. Gilbert	Policy reviewed and updated.
5.0	October 2025	D. Gilbert	Policy reviewed and updated.
6.0	August 2026	C. Robertson and D. Gilbert	2026/27 update: Careers Leader/contact details; June 2026 DfE guidance and provider access; updated Gatsby Benchmarks; work experience, personal guidance, SEND, parent/carer engagement, evaluation and 11-16 terminology.

Vision

Roots and Wings Careers

At Castle Mead Academy, our Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) programme mirrors the school commitment of 'Growing a Community of Excellence' and the Castle Credo of 'Be Kind, Work Hard and Build Your Character'. The programme is experienced as a rich culture that shines throughout the school. Throughout their five-year journey at Castle Mead Academy, we work collaboratively to empower scholars with the knowledge, skills, attributes, experiences and confidence to enable them to make well-informed decisions and ultimately flourish throughout each stage of their career journey as lifelong learners in education, training and the world of work.

The programme is built around two key elements: 'Roots and Wings'. The 'Roots' element builds the careers knowledge and transferable essential skills to empower scholars to be successful. The 'Wings' element provides rich experiences, encounters and opportunities to inspire scholars to realise their potential.

Alongside learning through the progressive careers' curriculum, mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks and the CDI Framework, we aim to provide regular access to impartial careers information, advice and guidance; meaningful encounters with education and training providers, employers and employees; meaningful experiences of workplaces; and up-to-date career and labour market information. We also signpost opportunities and explicitly develop essential employability and career management skills throughout the wider curriculum.

We believe that effective careers education, information, advice and guidance not only contribute to the success and wellbeing of individuals but also has a positive impact on the communities to which they belong, wider society, businesses and the economy.

Aims

This policy sets out Castle Mead Academy's provision of impartial and informed careers education, information, advice and guidance for our scholars. It also explains how scholars, parents and carers, staff, employers and education and training providers can access information about our careers programme. High-quality careers guidance is important for our scholars' futures, and our provision aims to:

- **inspire** scholars to self-reflect and review their personal strengths, interests, and aspirations.
- **equip** scholars with research and career management skills and access to high-quality, impartial and up-to-date resources, information, advice and guidance.
- **enable** scholars to broaden their viewpoints by developing a knowledge and understanding, as well as experiences, of the broad range of education, training and employment options and possibilities available both locally and nationally.
- **help** scholars to develop the skills and confidence to make well-informed decisions in preparation for the next phase of their education, training and the world of work.
- **support** the ambitions and aspirations of all scholars by promoting equality of opportunity and inclusion, helping scholars to explore and challenge stereotypes and barriers.
- **respond** to the needs of each scholar; while the careers programme is robust and progressive, it is designed to be flexible so that it can respond to cohort and individual needs and to the changing world of work.

Statutory requirements

This policy is informed by the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, updated in June 2026. Castle Mead Academy must have regard to this guidance when meeting its statutory careers duties.

The legal framework includes:

- The Education Act 1997, including sections 42A and 42B
- The Education and Skills Act 2008, including section 72
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008

The Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Act 2022 amended section 42A of the Education Act 1997 so that independent careers guidance must be provided to pupils from Year 7. Careers guidance must be presented impartially, include information on the full range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education, and promote the best interests of scholars.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 strengthened the provider access legislation in section 42B of the Education Act 1997. Schools must give providers of technical education and apprenticeships access to pupils so that they can inform them about their education and training offer.

- As an 11-16 academy, Castle Mead Academy must provide four mandatory meaningful provider encounters for all scholars: two during the first key phase (Year 8, or between 1 September and 28 February in Year 9) and two during the second key phase (Year 10, or between 1 September and 28 February in Year 11).
- Within each key phase, the two mandatory encounters must be with two different providers. Further detail about access arrangements, the content of encounters and how Castle Mead Academy meets these requirements is set out in the academy's Provider Access Policy Statement.

As an academy, Castle Mead Academy also publishes current information about its careers programme on its website, including the Careers Leader's name and contact details, a summary of the programme, how stakeholders can access information, how impact is assessed and the next review date. The academy's Provider Access Policy Statement is also published online. This policy complies with the academy's funding agreement and articles of association.

Castle Mead Academy is committed to impartiality and does not show bias towards any particular education, training or career route. Scholars are supported to understand the full range of academic, vocational, technical and apprenticeship pathways. We proactively build relationships with schools and sixth forms, colleges, independent training providers, apprenticeship providers, universities, employers and careers organisations so that scholars and their families can access current information at key transition points. The careers programme is reviewed against the updated Gatsby Benchmarks using Compass+ alongside stakeholder feedback, participation information and destinations data.

Roles and responsibilities

Careers Leader

Our Careers Leader is Chelsea Robertson. She can be contacted on 0116 214 3150 or by email at crobertson@castle-tmet.uk. The Careers Leader will:

- take responsibility for the strategic development, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation of the academy's careers programme, including implementation of a progressive careers curriculum aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- lead and coordinate the internal and external careers team and work closely with the qualified careers adviser.

- plan and manage careers activities, encounters and experiences, ensuring they are meaningful and responsive to scholars' needs.
- manage the budget and resources for the careers programme.
- support curriculum leaders and teachers to embed careers learning, labour market information and progression routes across subjects and the wider curriculum.
- establish and develop links with employers, education and training providers, universities, apprenticeship providers, the Careers Hub and careers organisations.
- use information and data, including aspirations, intended destinations, participation and sustained destinations, to identify needs, target support and evaluate the impact of careers provision.

- work closely with relevant staff, including pastoral, safeguarding and SEND/inclusion teams and the careers adviser, to identify the guidance needs of all scholars and put in place personalised support and transition plans; and work with the academy's designated teacher for looked-after children (LAC) and previously looked-after children to:
    - make sure they know which scholars are in care, are previously looked after or are care leavers, as appropriate.
    - understand their additional support needs and aspirations.
    - ensure that, for looked-after children, the personal education plan can help inform careers provision and transition planning.
- review the academy's Provider Access Policy Statement at least annually, in agreement with senior leadership and the Academy Council.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team, led by the Principal and supported by the senior leadership link for careers, will give explicit backing to the Careers Leader and ensure strong strategic leadership for a progressive and impactful whole-academy careers programme.

SLT will:

- champion and support the careers programme as part of the academy vision and strategic planning.
- support the Careers Leader in developing the strategic careers plan, setting learning outcomes, evaluating impact and driving continuous improvement.
- ensure the Careers Leader has sufficient authority, protected time, appropriate training and access to an adequate budget and resources to perform the role effectively.
- ensure the academy meets the provider access legislation for scholars in Years 8 to 11 and publishes clear arrangements in the academy's Provider Access Policy Statement.
- support effective partnerships with employers, education and training providers, universities, apprenticeship providers and careers organisations.
- ensure careers guidance is embedded across the academy and that all staff understand their contribution to the careers programme and progress towards the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The Academy Council will:

- provide strategic oversight and challenge so that the academy has a careers plan which meets legal and contractual requirements and is aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- identify a member of the Academy Council who takes a strategic interest in careers education and supports employer and provider engagement.
- make sure independent careers guidance is provided to scholars from Year 7 onwards and that it is impartial, includes a full range of education and training options and promotes the best interests of scholars.

- make sure that a range of education and training providers can access scholars in Years 8 to 11 to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships, in line with provider access legislation.
- make sure that the Careers Leader's name and contact details, a summary of the careers programme, information about access and impact, and the review date are published on the academy website.
- make sure arrangements are in place to meet the provider access legislation, including publication and annual review of the academy's Provider Access Policy Statement, and monitor the effectiveness of the careers programme.

Wider responsibilities

Careers learning enables scholars to understand how the subjects they study connect to future pathways, careers and the world of work, and how the knowledge and skills they develop can be transferred. All staff at Castle Mead Academy are committed to providing high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance that inspires scholars and enables them to make informed career decisions.

Members of staff in the pastoral and SEND teams, including Heads of Year, Key Workers, SENDCo and Head of Safeguarding are responsible for:

- liaising and working with the careers team, and providing relevant information in a timely way, so that the careers programme can respond to the needs of individual scholars.
- supporting the careers vision and careers related learning activities.
- providing additional support for the careers team and scholars who may face additional barriers, particularly at key transition points such as the options process, post-16 applications and work experience.

Curriculum leaders and all staff at Castle Mead Academy are responsible for:

- highlighting the relevance of their subject to future pathways, careers and opportunities.
- linking curriculum learning to careers, the world of work, job sectors and progression routes.
- highlighting where key transferable, essential and employability skills are being developed.
- supporting the careers vision and careers related learning activities.
- Castle Mead Academy supports staff involved in careers learning, personal guidance and pastoral support to keep their knowledge current through appropriate continuing professional development and access to up-to-date careers and labour market information.

Parents and carers

We recognise the important role that parents and carers have in their child's career development. We are committed to engaging families throughout the careers programme, sharing current information about pathways, careers and the labour market, and supporting parents and carers to use this information in conversations with their child. Parents and carers are also invited to provide feedback to help us evaluate and improve careers provision.

Our careers programme

Castle Mead Academy has an embedded careers programme that aims to inform, inspire and enable scholars to understand their choices and plan their next steps. We provide independent and impartial careers guidance from Year 7 onwards. Every scholar will receive at least one personal one-to-one guidance meeting by age 16, delivered by a careers adviser trained to at least Level 6 in career guidance and development, with further guidance available according to individual need and at key decision and transition points.

Our programme is developed and evaluated against the updated Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance:

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

Our programme is impartial, promotes high aspirations and enables scholars to explore the full range of academic, vocational, technical, apprenticeship and employment pathways.

It is progressive and structured so that careers learning builds on prior knowledge and experience. Each year group has clear aims, learning outcomes and activities, while provision is adapted where necessary to meet individual and cohort needs.

Our careers programme is delivered through a number of methods, including:

- careers curriculum lessons and tutor-time careers learning.
- careers learning embedded through subject teaching and the wider curriculum.
- one-to-one personal careers guidance and targeted careers interventions.
- group workshops and small-group guidance activities.
- meaningful encounters with employers and employees.
- meaningful encounters with further education, higher education, apprenticeship and independent training providers.
- assemblies, visiting speakers, careers fairs and provider events.
- workplace visits, employer-led projects, challenges and other meaningful experiences of workplaces.
- work experience activities across Key Stage 3 and a one-week work experience placement in Year 10, supporting the DfE ambition for two weeks' worth of work experience by the end of Key Stage 4.
- support from Connexions/local authority services and other partners for scholars requiring additional transition support, where appropriate.
- bespoke interventions with targeted groups and scholars who may face additional barriers.
- Castle Character Time, enrichment, displays and careers-related communications.
- support with post-16 applications, apprenticeships and transition planning.
- drop-in and follow-up support with the careers team.
- opportunities for parents and carers to access information and engage with the careers programme.

Learning in each year has a key focus:

- **Year 7 – awareness**
  "How is what I am learning in school now preparing me for the wide range of future pathways and careers available to me?"
- **Year 8 – explore**
  "As I learn more about the world of work and the labour market, what aspirations do I have for my own careers journey?"
- **Year 9 – consider**
  "How can I prepare to make informed decisions about my future?"
- **Year 10 - experience**
  "How can I develop my employability skills further and articulate what I have to offer to potential employers and post-16 providers?"

- **Year 11 - decide**
  "Which post-16 pathway am I going to take and how do I prepare myself for success at this next stage in my careers journey?"

Scholars with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

All scholars with SEND should be supported to access a careers programme aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks. Reasonable adjustments, different approaches and additional support will be provided where needed so that scholars can participate meaningfully and make successful transitions.

The Careers Leader will work closely with the SENDCo, inclusion and pastoral teams, teachers, the careers adviser and, where appropriate, external professionals to identify individual guidance needs and put in place personalised support and transition plans. This may include helping scholars and their families understand apprenticeships, supported internships for eligible young people with an EHCP, further education, higher education, employment and other appropriate pathways.

Where appropriate, the careers programme will include role models and encounters that broaden aspirations and help scholars understand disability rights, reasonable adjustments and support available in the workplace.

Information, encounters and opportunities available to other scholars will also be made accessible to scholars with SEND, with adaptations and additional support where required.

Additional support will be provided at key transition points, including Year 9 options, work experience and post-16 applications, with input from the careers, pastoral and inclusion teams and other relevant professionals.

Access to our careers programme information

A summary of the academy's careers programme is published on the academy website, including details of how scholars, parents and carers, staff, employers and education and training providers can access further information, how the programme's impact is assessed and when the information will next be reviewed.

Additional information about the careers programme can be requested from Chelsea Robertson, Careers Leader, on 0116 214 3150 or via crobertson@castle-tmet.uk.

Assessing the impact on scholars

The careers programme is evaluated regularly so that we can understand its impact and continue to improve provision. We use a range of evidence, including scholars' careers learning and knowledge, participation in activities, aspirations and intended destinations, stakeholder feedback, and education, training and employment destinations data. We seek feedback from scholars, parents and carers, staff, employers, providers and the careers adviser. Compass+ is used regularly to evaluate progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks, and findings are used to identify priorities, target support and inform the strategic careers plan.

Links to other policies

This policy links a number of other policies including:

- Provider Access Policy Statement
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

All policies can be found on the Castle Mead Academy website: Policies – Castle Mead Academy | TMET Leicester MAT (castle-tmet.uk)

Monitoring and review

This policy, the information it contains, and its implementation will be monitored by the Careers Leader and senior leadership link for careers. It will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation or statutory guidance.