Highcroft School

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

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Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy

Policy Number:	EDU.POL.006	Policy Owner Job Role	Quality Manager
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Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	No		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

Table of Contents

Section	
1	**Supporting Documents**
2	**Introduction**
3	**Aim & Scope**
4	**Abbreviations/Definitions**
5	**Policy Content**
6	**Responsibilities**
7	**Training Requirements**
8	**Equality Impact Statement**
9	**Sources of Information / References**
10	**Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar)**
11	**Appendices**

1. Supporting Documents

This policy connects to the SEND policy (EDU.POL.022), the PSHE & RSHE policy (EDE.POL.003), the Curriculum policy (EDU.POL.008) and the school's arrangements for looked after children.

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Highcroft School, we believe that every pupil, whatever their needs or starting point, is entitled to high quality careers education that opens doors rather than closing them. We are a special school community and many of our pupils follow complex and individual pathways. Our careers provision is personalised, ambitious and built on the belief that every young person can move on to a positive and fulfilling destination. This policy sets out how we prepare pupils for life after school and the standards we hold ourselves to.

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3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents and carers, and the external partners who support careers provision at Highcroft School. It aims to:

- Give every pupil access to accurate, up to date and impartial careers guidance that helps them make informed choices and fulfil their potential.
- Deliver a planned and progressive careers programme from Year 7 onwards that is matched to each pupil's needs, aspirations and stage of development.
- Link careers learning to the curriculum, to real world skills and to current labour market information.
- Provide meaningful encounters with employers and the workplace, and access to further education, higher education and training providers.
- Support smooth transition into post 16 and post 18 education, employment or training, reducing the risk of any pupil becoming not in education, employment or training.
- Tie careers guidance closely to each pupil's EHCP outcomes and preparing for adulthood planning.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

- CEIAG means careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- The Gatsby Benchmarks are the eight national benchmarks of good career guidance that Highcroft School uses to plan and evaluate its provision.
- Preparing for adulthood means the planning that supports pupils with SEND towards employment, independent living, good health and community inclusion, beginning in the EHCP review from Year 9.
- NEET means not in education, employment or training.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

We hold high aspirations for every pupil and do not limit a young person's horizons because of their needs or history.

Our guidance is impartial. We act in the pupil's best interests, not in the interests of any particular provider or pathway.

Provision is personalised. We plan around each pupil's strengths, interests, EHCP outcomes and barriers.

Careers learning is progressive and starts early, building year on year from Year 7.

We work in partnership with families, employers, colleges and external advisers, because good transitions are built together.

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5.2 Our Careers Programme

The Gatsby Benchmarks

At Highcroft School, we use the eight Gatsby Benchmarks to plan and measure the quality of our careers provision. We review our position against each benchmark at least annually and use the findings to improve.

A progressive programme

Careers learning runs from Year 7 to post 16 and builds year on year. It is adapted to each pupil's needs and stage of development.

- In Years 7 to 9, pupils build self awareness, explore the world of work and begin to link the curriculum to careers.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils take part in individual guidance meetings, work related learning and supported encounters with employers and providers, and begin detailed transition planning.
- Post 16, the focus is progression into further education, employment, training or a supported pathway, with personalised support and provider liaison.

Impartial guidance and provider access

Every pupil has access to impartial careers guidance, including support from a qualified external careers adviser, particularly in Years 10 and 11. We give providers of further and technical education and apprenticeships opportunities to talk to pupils about their offer.

Encounters with employers and the workplace

We arrange meaningful encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace, adapted to each pupil's needs. Where a traditional placement is not appropriate, we use supported, flexible and in school alternatives so that no pupil is left out of work-related learning.

Pupils with SEND and other vulnerable groups

Careers guidance is tied to each pupil's EHCP outcomes and preparing for adulthood planning, which begins in the Year 9 review. We give particular attention to pupils with EHCPs, looked after children, care leavers and other vulnerable pupils, working with the SENCO, families, social workers and external agencies to plan transitions and to use accessible resources and communication. Careers guidance will be delivered in accessible formats appropriate to pupils' communication, cognition and sensory needs.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Pupil careers activity, guidance meetings and destinations are recorded on Arbor. We track the destinations of leavers and review the proportion progressing to positive post 16 and post 18 outcomes. The careers lead evaluates the programme

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at least annually against the Gatsby Benchmarks and pupil outcomes, and reports to the headteacher and the proprietor and governors. The school seeks to track destinations for at least one year following transition wherever this information is available.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Highcroft School, this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We monitor the impact of this policy on pupils with protected characteristics and adapt our practice to remove disadvantage. Any concern that this policy disadvantages a pupil or group should be raised with the headteacher.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Pupils engage with careers activities, guidance meetings and work related learning, and share their aspirations and views so that support can be shaped around them.

6.2 Staff

Staff embed careers learning in their teaching where relevant, support pupils through guidance and transition, and help maintain a culture of high aspiration.

6.3 Leadership

The headteacher ensures this policy is implemented, that staff are trained, and that the programme is resourced and evaluated. The careers lead completes and reviews the Compass+ evaluation tool annually.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors provide oversight of careers provision, monitor pupil destinations and hold leaders to account for the quality of the programme.

6.5 Parents and carers

Parents and carers work in partnership with the school, take part in transition and EHCP reviews, and support their child to engage with careers activities.

6.6 Named leads

The named lead for careers at Highcroft School is Christine Wade. The named SENCO is Stephanie Goddard, who works with the Careers Lead to support pupils with SEND.

7. Training Requirements

Staff involved in careers receive training to keep their practice current and compliant, and new staff cover this policy and the careers programme at induction. The careers lead maintains the professional knowledge needed for the role.

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8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, standard 2(2)(e), which requires that pupils receiving secondary education have access to accurate, up to date careers guidance that is presented impartially, enables informed choices about a broad range of options and helps them fulfil their potential.
- Independent School Standards: guidance for independent schools (DfE, April 2026), which confirms that this standard applies to pupils aged 12 and over and that a written careers policy and supporting materials are required.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), on preparing pupils with SEND for adulthood and reviewing EHCP outcomes from Year 9.
- Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (DfE statutory guidance, May 2025) and the updated Gatsby Benchmarks adopted from September 2025, which Highcroft School follows as best practice.
- The Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments so that all pupils can access careers support.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Highcroft School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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11.1 Appendix B: Careers Programme Overview

This is the school's stage by stage careers programme. The Head adapts it to reflect the opportunities and resources available at Highcroft School.

Year group	Careers focus	Key activities	External engagement
Year 7	Introduction to careers, self-awareness, skills identification	PSHE lessons on aspirations, skills audits	Visits from local professionals
Year 8	Exploring career options and the world of work	Workshops on different sectors, employer talks	Work experience taster sessions where appropriate
Year 9	Linking the curriculum to careers, employability skills	Project work linked to vocational options	College and training provider visits
Year 10	Work experience and career pathway planning	Individual guidance meetings, careers fairs, BTEC A units.	External careers adviser sessions
Year 11	Transition planning and post 16 options	Mock interviews, CV writing workshops BTEC A units.	Supported visits to colleges and providers
Post 16	Progression into education, employment or training	Personalised support, employability skills	Liaison with employers and apprenticeship providers

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11.2 Appendix C: Local Partnerships and Providers

The Head keeps this list current at Highcroft School.

Colleges and Training Providers:

- Bishop Auckland College – Contact: 01388 443000
- Catch 22 – South Church – Contact: 01388 665792
- Darlington College – 01325 503030
- Houghall College – 0191 375 4700

Employers and Work Experience Providers:

- Kerry Dodgson – Sector: Childcare – Contact: 01388 608157
- The Well – Sector: Hospitality – Contact: 01388 834005

We are continuously trying to source more work experience providers from different professions.

Careers Advisory Services:

- Education Development Trust – Contact: 0118 902 1000
- Local Authority Careers Service – Durham Works – Contact: 03000 262 930

Careers Lead Name: Christine Wade
Job Title: Careers Lead / Coordinator
Email Address: Christine.wade@keyseducation.ac.uk
Telephone Number: 01388 718031
Office Location: Highcroft School

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11.3 Appendix D: SEND and Vulnerable Pupils Support

At Highcroft School, careers support for pupils with SEND and other vulnerable groups is planned as follows:

- Identification, working with the SENCO and key workers to identify pupils with SEND, looked after children, care leavers and other vulnerable pupils, and reviewing EHCPs and personal education plans.
- Personalised support, providing careers guidance matched to each pupil's abilities, interests and needs, developing transition plans with families, social workers and agencies, and using accessible resources and communication.
- Monitoring, reviewing the progress and engagement of vulnerable pupils and adjusting support as needs change.

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11.4 Appendix E: Monitoring and Evaluation

The Careers Lead at Highcroft School is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the effectiveness of the school's careers programme to ensure it meets the needs of pupils and aligns with statutory guidance and best practice.

The impact and quality of the careers programme are evaluated through a range of measures, including:

- **Annual Gatsby Benchmark Review** – The careers programme is assessed annually against the Gatsby Benchmarks to identify strengths, areas for development and future priorities.
- **Independent Careers Guidance** – An annual visit from the Education Development Trust (EDT) provides Key Stage 4 pupils with impartial careers guidance and the development of individual careers action plans. These plans are reviewed and monitored by the Careers Lead to ensure pupils receive appropriate support and guidance towards their next steps.
- **Work Experience Programme** – The Careers Lead oversees the planning, organisation and monitoring of Key Stage 4 work experience placements. Pupils complete work experience booklets to record and reflect upon their experiences, allowing the school to evaluate the impact of placements on career readiness and employability skills.
- **Curriculum-Based Careers Education** – The Careers Lead works collaboratively with teaching staff to monitor and evaluate careers education delivered through BTEC and vocational qualifications. Careers-related learning opportunities embedded within units of work are reviewed to ensure pupils develop relevant employability skills and an understanding of future education, training and employment pathways.

Findings from these activities inform annual careers development planning and contribute to the continuous improvement of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) across the school.

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