

Castle Donington College



Careers and Skills Policy

Date to be Reviewed	Autumn Term 2028
Last Reviewed / Updated	Autumn Term 2026 — updated in line with the June 2026 DfE statutory guidance

The College follows Guidance and Advice given by the Government when writing policies; in light of this, changes may need to be made after the adoption of this policy and prior to the review date.

1. Aims

This policy aims to set out our school's provision of impartial and informed careers guidance for our pupils. This includes the ways in which pupils, parents and carers, teachers and employers can access information about our careers programme.

High-quality careers guidance is important for our pupils' futures, and our provision aims to:

- › Help pupils prepare for the workplace, by building self-development and career management skills
- › Provide experience and a clear understanding of the working world
- › Develop pupils' awareness of the variety of education, training and careers opportunities available to them
- › Help pupils to understand routes to careers that they're interested in, and to make informed choices about their next step in education or training
- › Take into account the individual needs of all pupils to tailor the programme accordingly and provide the right level of support
- › Promote a culture of high aspirations and equality of opportunity

2. Statutory requirements

This policy is based on the statutory [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#) guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), most recently updated in June 2026, following a substantial revision in May 2025 which introduced the refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks. The guidance is now published as a single document covering both schools and colleges; as Castle Donington College does not provide post-16 or post-18 education, only the sections relevant to schools (Years 7–11) apply to our provision.

This guidance refers to:

- › The Education Act 1997
- › The Education and Skills Act 2008
- › The School Information (England) Regulations 2008

This policy is also in line with the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (the 'provider access legislation'). It explains that schools must provide a minimum of **6 encounters** with technical education and apprenticeship providers across years 8 to 13 nationally, delivered in three phases of 2 encounters each: years 8–9, years 10–11, and years 12–13. As Castle Donington College is an 11–16 school with no post-16 or post-18 provision, our duty covers the first two phases only, meaning we provide a minimum of **4 encounters** in total — 2 in years 8–9 and 2 in years 10–11 — about pupils' education or training offer. The June 2026 guidance clarifies that 'independent' means external: where careers content is delivered internally, it must always be supplemented by accredited external sources such as employer visits, provider talks or approved helplines. For more detail on these encounters, see our provider access policy statement, which you can find [here](#).

This policy is also in line with the Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Act 2022, which amends the existing duty in The Education Act 1997, so that:

- › Our school must now secure independent careers guidance for pupils from year 7 (instead of from year 8, previously)
- › As an academy in England, we're now required to provide and publish careers guidance

The above guidance requires that we publish information about the careers programme on our website, and that it is communicated in a way that enables learners, parents and carers, staff, and employers to access and understand it. This includes:

- › The name and contact details of the careers leader

- › A summary of the careers programme
- › Details of how pupils, parents and carers, teachers, and employers can access information about the careers programme
- › How our school measures and assesses the programme's impact on learners
- › The date by which we will review information

We also act in line with our statutory duty under the provider access legislation (also known as the 'Baker Clause'), to be impartial and not show bias towards any route, be that academic or technical. This policy should be read in conjunction with our provider access policy statement, which sets out how our school meets this duty, and can be found [here](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board will:

- › Actively engage in setting the direction for a whole-school approach to careers guidance with the Principal, to make sure it is aligned with the school's vision, priorities and development plans
- › Provide clear advice and guidance on which the school can base a strategic careers plan which meets legal and contractual requirements
- › Maintain strategic oversight of the school's legal and contractual requirements for careers guidance and hold senior leaders to account for delivering against those requirements
- › Appoint a member of the governing board who will take a strategic interest in careers education and encourage employer engagement
- › Make sure that independent careers guidance is provided to all pupils throughout their secondary education (years 7 to 11) and that the information is presented impartially, includes a range of educational or training options and promotes the best interests of pupils
- › Make sure that a range of education and training providers can access pupils in years 8 to 11 to inform them of approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships, including newly reformed routes such as V Levels, T Levels and Foundation Apprenticeships, fulfilling the school's 4 mandatory encounters within the national 6-encounter provider access framework
- › Make sure that arrangements are in place for the school to meet the legal requirements of the provider access legislation, including that the school has published a provider access policy statement
- › Make sure that details of our school's careers programme and the name of the careers leader are published on the school's website

3.2 Principal

The Principal will:

- › Work with the governing board to set the direction for a whole-school approach to careers guidance, making sure it is aligned with the school's vision, priorities and development plans
- › Support the careers team to deliver the school's careers programme
- › Build careers into staff development for teachers and support staff, and make sure that the careers leader, senior careers lead and senior leaders receive training and development to deliver high-quality careers provision
- › Make sure that personal guidance is provided to pupils by a qualified careers adviser
- › Network with employers, education and training providers, and other careers organisations

3.3 Senior leadership team (SLT)

The SLT will:

- › Support the careers programme
- › Support the careers leader in developing their strategic careers plan
- › Make sure the careers leader is allocated sufficient time and budget, and has the appropriate training, to perform their duties to a high standard
- › Support the careers adviser to deliver personal guidance to pupils, making sure it's well-resourced
- › Work closely with the careers leader and careers adviser in the overall development and evaluation of the careers programme
- › Network with employers, education and training providers, and other careers organisations

3.4 Senior Careers Lead

Our Senior Careers Lead is **Nathan Barratt**, who provides senior leadership sponsorship for careers education as part of the SLT.

The Senior Careers Lead will:

- › Act as the senior leadership link between the governing board, SLT and the Careers Leader, reflecting the updated guidance's expectation that careers provision is led and championed from the top of the school
- › Support the Careers Leader in embedding the careers programme within the school's wider strategic priorities and improvement plans
- › Help secure the time, budget and staff development the Careers Leader needs to deliver a high-quality programme
- › Support strategic oversight of the school's work experience offer, including progress towards the government's work experience ambition

3.5 Careers Leader

Our Careers Leader is **Sabrina Najib**, who can be contacted by phoning 01332 810528 or emailing postroom@cdcollege.uk.

Our Careers Leader will:

- › Take responsibility for planning and delivering the careers programme and work towards meeting the refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks in a meaningful way
- › Coordinate and manage careers activities and the budget for these
- › Work with the SLT and Senior Careers Lead to make sure the careers programme is informed by a strategic careers plan aligned to the school's priorities
- › Engage parents and carers throughout, including through Compass+'s Your Child's Future feature
- › Establish and develop key relationships to drive progress and continuously improve the careers programme
- › Establish and develop links with external employers (including self-employed people and small and micro employers), education and training providers, and careers organisations
- › Use and sequence labour market information (LMI) throughout the careers programme, tailoring it to individual circumstances
- › Support the careers adviser to work with relevant staff, including the SENCO, subject teachers and pastoral teams
- › Work closely with relevant staff, including our special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and careers adviser, to identify the guidance needs of all of our pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities (SEND) and put in place personalised support and transition plans, using tools such as Compass+'s OnTrack+ feature to identify emerging support needs from year 7

- › Work with our school's designated teacher for looked-after children (LAC) and previously LAC to:
 - Make sure they know which pupils are in care or are care leavers
 - Understand their additional support needs
 - Make sure that, for LAC, their personal education plan can help inform careers advice
 - Engage with the relevant virtual school head and ensure a joined-up approach to identifying and supporting pupils' career ambitions
- › Evaluate and continuously improve the careers programme, drawing on feedback from all stakeholders, the Future Skills Questionnaire, and the destinations of pupils
- › Review our school's provider access policy statement at least annually, in agreement with our governing board

3.6 Careers adviser

Our careers adviser is Jas Singh.

They will:

- › Support pupils to make effective career decisions
- › Work with the Careers Leader and SENCO to identify the needs of pupils with SEND and provide personalised support
- › Contribute to the overall development and evaluation of the careers programme

4. Our careers programme

Our school has an embedded careers programme that aims to inform and encourage pupils to consider their career options, and take steps to understand their choices and pathways. We provide statutory independent careers guidance to pupils from year 7 onwards.

Our programme has been developed to meet the expectations outlined in the refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks, updated by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation in 2024/25 and embedded in statutory guidance from September 2025:

- › A stable careers programme
- › Learning from career and labour market information
- › Addressing the needs of each young person
- › Linking curriculum learning to careers
- › Encounters with employers and employees
- › Experience of workplaces
- › Encounters with further and higher education
- › Personal guidance

The refreshed benchmarks retain this same structure but set clearer expectations for benchmarks 5 and 6 in particular: a 'meaningful' employer encounter or workplace experience must now have a clear shared purpose and learning outcomes, involve extensive two-way interaction, include preparation and reflection, be aligned to regional labour market information, and — for workplace experiences — include employer feedback after a task or project and exposure to a range of workplace staff. The range of employers we draw on for these encounters is also explicitly extended to include self-employed people and small and micro employers, and part-time work undertaken by pupils may count as a valid experience where it meets these criteria. In exceptional circumstances, meaningful hybrid or remote encounters may also be used where they help remove a genuine barrier to access.

Our programme doesn't show bias towards any particular institution, education or career path, and promotes a full range of technical and academic options for pupils, including newly reformed routes such as V Levels, T Levels and Foundation Apprenticeships. We consider the best interests of the pupil to whom the career guidance is given.

It is structured in a way that builds upon previous years, and the overarching aim is divided between the Key Stages so that pupils are encouraged to think appropriately about their future. We provide aims, objectives and activities for each year group.

Our careers programme is delivered through a number of methods, including lessons, guest speakers and visits.

4.1 How we meet our requirements

All subjects link curriculum learning with careers. Additionally, our PSHE curriculum includes information on careers and employability.

Every pupil will receive at least 1 personal guidance meeting with a careers adviser by age 16.

Information about personal guidance support, and how to access it, will be communicated to pupils, parents and carers, and other stakeholders, including through the school website.

Key Stage 3

Our Key Stage 3 careers programme will support pupils in their planning and choices of GCSE subjects. This includes guidance around options choices.

We are meeting our requirements to provide:

- › At least 2 encounters with providers of technical education or apprenticeships in year 8 or 9 (this is set out in more detail in our provider access policy statement, which can be found [here](#))
- › A minimum of 1 week's worth of work experience activities across years 7 to 9, as part of our progression towards the government's ambition of 2 weeks' worth of work experience for every pupil by the end of Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4

Our Key Stage 4 careers programme aims to help pupils research and understand their choices and routes into education and training. This includes a number of visits from and to post-16 providers.

We are meeting our requirements to provide:

- › At least 2 encounters with providers of technical education or apprenticeships in year 10 or 11 (this is set out in more detail in our provider access policy statement, which can be found [here](#))
- › A minimum of 1 week's worth of work experience placement(s), bringing pupils' total work experience across Key Stages 3 and 4 in line with the government's 2-week work experience guarantee; we are reviewing and reforming our work experience programme during the 2026/27 academic year in line with this ambition

4.2 Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

All pupils with SEND will be supported with a careers programme that follows the Gatsby Benchmarks. We expect that the majority of pupils with SEND will follow the same careers programme as their classmates, with adjustments and additional support as needed. Information, opportunities and support will be personalised and sequenced to meet the needs of each pupil with SEND and their families.

Our Careers Leader will work with teachers and, where appropriate, professionals from relevant organisations, to identify the needs of our pupils with SEND and put in place personalised support and transition plans. Compass+'s OnTrack+ feature is used to help identify emerging support needs from year 7 onwards, supporting earlier intervention and progression planning. This may include meetings with pupils and their families to discuss education, training and employment opportunities, supported internships and transition plans into further education.

Our Careers Leader may, as appropriate, invite adults with disabilities to visit and share their experience and advice.

No information will be given to pupils without SEND that is not also offered to our pupils with SEND.

4.3 Access to our careers programme information

A summary of our school's careers programme is published on our school website in the form of this policy, including details of how pupils, parents and carers, teachers and employers can access information about the careers programme.

Pupils, parents and carers, teachers, and employers can request any additional information about the careers programme by contacting **Sabrina Najib** at postroom@cdcollege.uk.

4.4 Access to pupil participation records

We measure the progress of pupils and keep records as they move through the Key Stages.

We collect, maintain and use accurate data for each pupil on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations, to inform personalised support. In line with the updated guidance, we also keep records of each pupil's participation across all aspects of the careers programme — not only the individual advice given to them — together with subsequent agreed decisions.

Pupils have access to these records to support them during transition points and in their career development.

These records will be kept in line with our data protection policy, which can be found at [here](#).

4.5 Assessing the impact on pupils

Our careers programme is designed so pupils and parents/carers can give feedback throughout the course of the programme. We measure and assess the impact of the programme's initiatives by surveying pupils and parents, including through the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ), which DfE recommends as an evaluation tool, and through Compass+'s Your Child's Future feature for parents and carers. This evidence will feed into the overall development plans to make it easier to evaluate, improve and adapt our careers programme to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils.

5. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Provider access policy statement
- › Child protection policy
- › Curriculum policy
- › Data protection policy

6. Monitoring and review

This policy, the information included, and its implementation will be monitored by the governing board and reviewed annually.

We also monitor and evaluate our careers programme through Compass+, and work towards the national Quality in Careers Standard, which DfE strongly recommends all schools work towards. We recognise that, from Autumn 2025, Ofsted inspects careers guidance under its revised Education Inspection Framework and report card, and we take this into account in our own self-evaluation.

The next review date is: Autumn Term 2027