



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

Aspiration – Respect – Excellence

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policy/policies:

- Provider Access Policy Statement
- PSHCE Policy

Introduction

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre is committed to providing an inclusive careers program which provides all students with the knowledge and employability skills they will need to be successful in the ever-evolving world of work. Throughout their time at Highdown, students will receive personalised, well-informed advice and guidance and to support decision making and planning for next steps. The whole curriculum is enriched by relevant and up-to-date labour market information and we aim to expose students to at least one meaningful encounter¹ with an employer and a workplace in each year they are studying at Highdown. We support students in exploring opportunities in a variety of settings for Further and Higher education. The careers program at Highdown is inclusive and challenges stereotypical thinking.

Statutory requirements and expectations

In accordance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education (Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, July 2021²), Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre secures independent careers guidance from a Level 6 qualified professional and provides opportunities to a range of providers to inform students about technical education qualifications or apprenticeships and publishes information about the careers program on the school website, together with the name of the Careers Leader. The careers program is developed from the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life in accordance with the Education Act, 2002.

Learner entitlement

Throughout their Highdown learning journey, students will have the opportunity to develop themselves through careers, employability and enterprise education. Throughout the curriculum, Highdown students will learn about careers and the world of world of work and have regular exposure to a variety of employers and workplaces. Students will receive timely and bespoke advice and guidance and be shown how to successfully manage changes and transitions. All students will have the opportunity to develop the key skills and qualities needed for employability and managing a successful career.

¹ Updated Gatsby Benchmark for Secondary schools states a meaningful encounter must include a variety of encounters and experiences, giving young people time to prepare and reflect using technology alongside in person activity.

² [Gatsby Benchmarks](#)

Key Stage 3

During KS3, the key focus is to raise awareness of different career paths and the types of employment available, locally, nationally and globally. Students learn how to research up-to-date career information and how to access impartial face-to-face and digital careers information, advice and guidance services.

Key Stage 4

By KS4, students should be able to reflect on and then evaluate the information being presented to them and take ownership of the choices and decisions they are making. Students will appreciate and develop the different skills needed for a successful career and understand that they will need to be flexible and resilient in an evolving labour market. Students will evaluate the financial issues related to further and higher education or training in relation to future earnings. All students will have a 1:1 guidance session with a Level 6 qualified careers adviser with additional support and supervised visits to different post-16 providers for all vulnerable students (including those with SEND).

Post-16

Students will be guided to think deeply about the personal, social and economic impacts of career choices and will reflect on their perceptions of career satisfaction and the resulting personal well-being. They will be supported in finding relevant work experience, work shadowing, workplace encounters and volunteering opportunities which will aid them in making decisions about their future careers. PSHCE will have clear focus on the development of employability skills, personal financial capability and on preparing for different selection processes. All students will have a 1:1 guidance session with a Level 6 qualified careers adviser, visits to universities and specialist input on vocational pathways and apprenticeships.

Management and delivery

At Highdown, we recognise the importance of putting in place effective arrangements for the management and delivery of the program including Year 12 Careers Enrichment sessions and extended careers sessions with form mentors. Five Careers Weeks across the academy calendar will allow for focused provision which coincides with national or local development weeks. The stable careers program will be constructed and overseen by the Careers Leader who works closely with the teacher responsible for Work Related Learning. All teachers have a responsibility to understand and implement the provision for careers, employability and enterprise education both in their curriculum lessons and as part of the role of the mentor. The program coordinators will signpost career-related information and resources to support subject teaching. All staff will ensure that vulnerable students (including those with SEND) are given the support they need to access the program and receive specialized advice and guidance according to their individual needs.

Opportunities for careers and employability learning will be clearly signposted in departmental schemes of work and in PSHCE lessons plans. The curriculum areas have nominated a Careers Champion who will ensure information is up-to-date and that career-related projects embedded into the schemes of work are innovative and engaging. Up-to-date Labour Market Information (LMI) will be sourced from reputable organisations (e.g. Office for National Statistics) and used to inform curriculum and PSHCE lessons.

Drop-down sessions, STEAM lessons and assemblies will be enriched by visits from employees from a wide range of organisations to provide instructive talks and interactive experiences to engage students with the variety of the world of work. The destinations of Highdown Alumni will be published annually (and tracked for 3 years post-16) and displayed to inspire students in their career journeys. Where possible, former students will be warmly invited to visit to speak to students and parents (e.g. at the annual Careers Fair or Apprenticeship Show) to challenge stereotypical thinking and to provide ideas and inspiration for all our learners.

The Careers Leader will work closely with the Thames Valley Berkshire Careers and Enterprise Coordinator and Enterprise Adviser to ensure that Highdown is working to ensure all eight Gatsby Benchmarks are embedded with the key aim of attaining Quality in Careers Standard. The academy is part of the Reading Careers Leaders group and also a member school in the Thames Valley Careers Hub.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body are responsible for ensuring that the academy is delivering the eight Gatsby Benchmarks to a high standard and to hold the Careers Leader to account. A named governor will meet three times per year and support the school at careers events and in establishing networks in the local labour market.

The senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring that statutory duties regarding the provision of impartial careers guidance are fulfilled and that the quality of any advice given to students is monitored and evaluated. All students are offered information on the full range of education, training (including apprenticeships) or technical pathways available to them. [See also Provider Access Policy Statement, December 2024].

The Careers Leader is responsible for

- Leading the development of the careers program and ensuring that all staff have a common understanding of what is expected of them in implementing the Gatsby Benchmarks
- Seeking out sources of funding and opportunities to enhance the experience of all students
- Collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data to inform the next steps in the evolution of the careers program at Highdown
- Organise professional learning for all staff involved in the careers program
- The Careers Leader will work closely with external providers such as the Careers Adviser, the Enterprise Coordinator and the Enterprise Adviser
- Complete the Compass Evaluation regularly and embed the use of the Compass+ tool
- Liaise with the TLR holder for PSHCE to ensure the two programs complement each other

Subject leaders are responsible for ensuring that careers-related learning is embedded within schemes of work from years 7-13. Students should be given the opportunity to develop the employability skills through their curriculum learning and understand how to evaluate labour market intelligence (LMI). Subject leaders should ensure that the curriculum is enriched by encounters with employers and workplaces and that they inform the Careers Leader of careers-related experiences they source or organise.

Heads of Achievement should ensure that all mentors are guiding the students in their care to make considered decisions about next steps based on relevant and up-to-date information. The pastoral team

are based placed to recognise when students are in danger of becoming NEET (Not in Education, employment or training) and should intervene at the earliest stage to prevent this outcome. The Assistant Head of Achievement is responsible for developing and sharing appropriate PSHCE resources for the careers section of the provision.

The SENDCO is responsible for meaningful conversations and attention for the support of vulnerable students with SEND. The SENDCO will advocate for and support students with SEND and provided meaningful guidance on progression. For students with Education, Health, Care Plans (EHCPs), the SENDCO will lead on career guidance and wider opportunities.

Staff Development

All staff are expected to contribute to the career learning and development of students in their different roles. To meet the training needs that arise from this we will

- Provide regular briefings to the whole staff to ensure that everyone involved in careers education stays up-to-date with current policy and practices
- Provide time for staff to develop careers resources in advance of Spotlight sessions or Enrichment activities
- Recruit and train Careers Champions who will support staff in broad curriculum areas to develop engaging and relevant projects
- Provide targeted training for mentors to support their guidance of students as they approach transition points in their education
- Offer JPL (Joint Professional Learning, i.e. staff training) sessions on specific sections of the careers program

Funding and resourcing

Funding for the careers program will be allocated in the school budget at the level needed to achieve the aims of this policy. The Careers Leader will work with the TLR holders (Work Related Learning, STEAM Coordinator, Careers Across the Curriculum) to seek out funding streams and opportunities to enhance the program for all Highdown students.

Teaching, learning and assessment

All lessons are planned in accordance with the Highdown Learning and Teaching policy. It is also recognised that the following are examples of best practice in career education and guidance:

- Dialogic teaching (harnessing power of discussion with peers and a range of employees and employers)
- Enquiry-based learning
- First-hand experiences
- Reflective learning (prior to and following encounters with employers and workplaces)

Assessment as and for learning is also essential. In addition, all schemes of learning have clearly sign-posted opportunities for the development of employability skills and attributes and relevant and up-to-date labour market information.

Information, advice and guidance

All students receive a 1:1 careers interview in Y10/11 and another in Year 12 from a Level 6 qualified, impartial careers adviser who will ensure that students explore all options. All Year 11 students receive a follow up interview with a member of the Senior Leaders team.

In addition, students may seek out the Careers Adviser during 'drop-in' sessions and targeted group work will happen for key groups in Years 9 & 10. The Careers Adviser also gives presentation to whole year groups and supports key events such as Careers Fair, Parents Evenings and Next Steps events.

Stakeholders and partners

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers are vital in the career development of their child and will be supported to develop the confidence and capability needed to guide planning and inform decision making. Education for parents and carers is a high priority as it has been shown that they are the single most influential group in a young person's decision making. The landscape is a rapidly evolving and it is important that families are fully aware of the opportunities offered by apprenticeships at all levels and newer qualifications such as T Levels.

Careers support agencies

The school is supported by the Careers and Enterprise Company (Thames Valley Berkshire) and by an Enterprise Adviser. In addition, we are developing a relationship with Elevate for 16-19 support and have a fully funded contract with EBP to provide Spotlight on Careers events and Work Experience placements.

Employers, community partners and learning providers

Highdown has developed successful relationships with a number of providers to support students in a wide variety of activities. These vary from those volunteers involved in Mock Interviews (Rotary Club) and Careers Fair to service level agreements with Activate Learning to ensure our students are supported in accessing courses not available in the academy's post-16 provision.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

To evaluate the effectiveness of the careers program, all stakeholders should be given opportunities to provide feedback in order that the provision continues to evolve. Feedback will be gathered following key events (e.g. Careers weeks, Work Experience) and also as part of the evaluation cycle of the academy through learning walks, student focus groups and by the analysis of participation data. Further

information for planning is derived from analyzing the relationship between intended and actual destinations for years 11 & 13 annually.

All students will receive a certificate of participation annually which is a record of their careers experiences and reflections.

Alongside these, the academy will make use of Compass+ to provide external evaluation and validation of provision. This will include a student 'future skills' questionnaire to allow for greater tracking of careers understanding across the student populus.