

Saffron Walden County High School



Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

Date re-adopted by the Governing Board: September 2026
Next Review date: September, 2028

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Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

Our Aims as a school are to:

- Develop all students so they are aspirational, confident and enabled about their future life choices
- Ensure all students make excellent progress and attain their full academic potential.
- Deliver excellent teaching of subject knowledge and develop the learning skills, habits and attitudes necessary to enable students to value, enjoy and further their learning.
- Promote the outstanding personal and cultural development of all students through a rich and varied programme including trips, extra-curricular activities and community engagement.
- Maintain a secure and caring community which builds confidence and encourages academic ambition alongside respect and responsibility for all.
- Provide students with facilities that encourage great learning, whilst being aware of the school community's responsibility for its impact on the wider environment.
- Be motivational leaders of education at a school, regional and national level, inspiring all to achieve high standards, to be personally ambitious and mindful of well-being.

Rationale for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

A young person's career reflects the progress they make in learning and work. All learners need a planned programme of activities to help them choose age 13-19 pathways that are right for them, and to be able to manage their careers, sustain employability and to achieve personal and economic well-being throughout their lives. Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance therefore makes a major contribution to preparing young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life, and therefore helps them to make a successful transition to adulthood through:

- Preparing students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of work
- Supporting young people to achieve their full potential thereby maximising progression opportunities
- Developing the work-related skills of students, as defined by the SkillsBuilder suite of skills
- Empowering young people to plan and to manage their own progression through and beyond school
- Providing comprehensive and impartial information on all progression options available to students
- Raising aspirations
- Promoting equality, diversity, social mobility and challenging stereotypes
- Enabling young people to develop and to sustain employability, and to achieve personal and economic well-being throughout their lives

Purpose

SWCHS is committed to providing structured learning opportunities for work-related learning and economic well-being and intends to fulfil statutory obligations. Provision is part of the school's overall vision to provide an exceptional local education for its students and is linked to the School Development Plan. Senior leaders have a key role in developing and approving both policy and practice, which ensures a high profile and a secure place for CEIAG within the school curriculum. Governors approve school policy and practice, which is reported to the LGB Standards and Education Committee. The CEIAG policy supports and is itself underpinned by a range of key school policies, particularly those relating to teaching and learning, curriculum, assessment, PSHE, PPG, and SEND.

Commitment

SWCHS endeavours to follow best practice guidance from the CEIAG profession, from other expert bodies such as Ofsted and from Government departments that might appear from time to time.

SWCHS recognises its statutory duty to provide careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in accordance with the Education Act 1997, as amended by the Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Act 2022.

The school is required to secure independent and impartial careers guidance for all pupils in Years 7–13, in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (most recently updated May 2025).

SWCHS is committed to delivering a planned programme of impartial CEIAG for all learners, aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks, and to providing additional support for learners with additional needs.

The statutory duty (as amended in 2025) requires governing bodies to ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from Year 7 to Year 13, and emphasises that independent careers guidance provided should be presented in an impartial manner, including information on the whole range of post-16 and post-18 education and training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways. Guidance should promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given. The significance of inspiring every pupil through real-life contacts with the world of work is emphasised. To meet the school's legal requirements therefore requires combining in-house arrangements with advice and guidance from independent and external sources.

The DfE published a Careers Strategy in December 2017, followed by statutory guidance "Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers" in January 2018. This statutory guidance has been updated several times, most recently in May 2025, to reflect changes in legislation and developments in careers education policy, including the extension of duties to all pupils in Years 7–13. The guidance sets out the statutory responsibilities for schools and incorporates key developments, including the updated Gatsby Benchmarks, provider access legislation, and strengthened expectations around leadership, accountability and outcomes.

- Every school and academy providing secondary education should use the **Gatsby Charitable Foundation's Benchmarks** to develop and improve their careers provision. The revised statutory guidance is structured around the Benchmarks: "The Gatsby Benchmarks are not a statutory framework but by adopting them, schools can be confident that they are fulfilling their legal duties". The Government originally set an expectation that schools would work towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks by 2020. The Gatsby Benchmarks are now embedded within statutory guidance and remain the framework for developing high-quality careers provision. Schools are expected to **use and continuously develop their careers programmes in line with the updated Gatsby Benchmarks** (most recently revised and incorporated into statutory guidance in 2025).

A summary of the Gatsby Benchmarks is attached as an Appendix to this policy.

- Schools should use '**Compass**', and now '**Compass Plus**' as online self-evaluation tools, to assess how their careers support compares against the Gatsby Benchmarks and the national average. Schools should baseline themselves using this tool, consider the opportunities to improve their careers programme based on their confidential results, and track their progress against the Benchmarks over time
- The **Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC)** will provide external support to schools by giving young people more opportunities to connect with employers of all sizes, and from all sectors. It is intended that the CEC will take on a more ambitious role by co-ordinating support for schools across all of the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- From September 2018 every school should have a nominated **Careers Leader**, "who has the energy and commitment, and backing from their senior leadership team, to deliver the careers programme across all eight Gatsby Benchmarks".

- The way in which careers guidance is considered during Ofsted inspection is set out in the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and associated School Inspection Handbook (most recently updated 2025, with ongoing updates). Careers provision is reflected particularly within evaluation areas such as personal development, curriculum and outcomes. Destination measures at ages 16 and 18 continue to provide important information about the effectiveness of schools in supporting pupils to progress to education, employment or training.
- The Technical and Further Education Act 2017 introduced Section 42B into the Education Act 1997 (commonly known as the Baker Clause), requiring schools to allow education and training providers access to pupils to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- This has since been strengthened through updated Provider Access Legislation (from January 2023), which requires schools to provide a minimum of six encounters with technical education or apprenticeship providers for all pupils across Years 8–13. These encounters are intended to ensure that all young people are fully informed about the range of academic and technical pathways available to them.

SWCHS has implemented procedures to manage and facilitate access for education and training providers in line with these statutory requirements.

Entitlement

The CEIAG programme is designed to meet the needs of all learners at SWCHS. Activities are adapted and personalised to ensure progression in career learning and development, and to strengthen students' motivation, aspirations and attainment. All learners are entitled to a core CEIAG programme which meets professional standards of practice, which is delivered by trained staff and external providers, and which is impartial and confidential. The programme will seek to develop work-related skills, raise aspirations, challenge stereotyping and to promote equality and diversity.

Management

This aspect of curriculum provision is accountable to the LGB Standards and Education Committee and is supported by a Link Governor. The Lead Teacher for CEIAG/PSHEE has strategic responsibility for CEIAG, is the nominated Careers Leader and works closely with the Sixth form CEIAG team and SEND link, with access to administrative support as required. The Careers lead reports operationally to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The school contracts external careers guidance provision, equivalent to 3 days per week, from Directions and this secures a programme of independent and impartial careers inputs.

The CEIAG Co-ordinator plan and deliver careers-related inputs to the School's PSHE carousel in Years 7 to 11.

Members of the Sixth Form Collegiate team have specified roles in developing careers and employment education, (life lessons), as well as the progression programmes for students applying to all possible final destinations, such as university, (including early applications and international studies), apprenticeships, direct employment and gap years. There is a bespoke programme on each destination type, including the non-academic pathway, known as Career Apps., which like the other pathways, strengthens its internal resources by working with external organisations and companies.

CEIAG/EWB Coordinator, Director of Sixth Form, and relevant Year Achievement Co-ordinators review and evaluate provision with all stakeholders including young people and the external IAG service, taking into account the school's known destination measures from Years 11, 12 and 13. An internal review of CEIAG provision is undertaken yearly, to inform subsequent Development Plans.

The School is outward-looking in terms of CEIAG provision and seeks to work collaboratively with other local education and employment providers:

- The CEIAG Lead represents SWCHS on the 14-19 Uttlesford Consortium Operations Board, which co-ordinates aspects of CEIAG provision across Uttlesford secondary schools, including careers/apprenticeship fairs.
- The CEIAG Lead represents the Consortium on the Stansted Airport College Advisory Board.
- The school has adopted the SkillsBuilder framework
- The School engages Directions to co-ordinate and delivers independent careers guidance – this meets the need to have a level 6 trained advisor
- In the Sixth form, after highlighting possible non-academic pathways at first contact in both year groups with parents and students, there is regular communication which shares external and independent information on academic and non-academic pathways and their potential providers. This covers topics like the benefits of apprenticeships from sources such as the government and High Fliers Research.
- Our CEIAG leads are trained through the Teach First Careers leaders programme.
- We work collaboratively with a range of local and national employers , including as part of our annual Uttlesford Careers fair , Rotary Interviews, Employers Breakfast and Insight event.
- We work collaboratively with a range of post 16 and further education establishments to provide impartial advice on next steps and to provide support in understanding technical and vocational courses including T levels and apprenticeships.

Curriculum Provision

Since September, 2020 the CEIAG delivery has been increasingly built around taught curriculum inputs, with repeated opportunities for all students in Years 7 to 13 to develop SkillsBuilder work-related skills through subject-based delivery. It is intended that this programme will enable SWCHS to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks and to attain relevant external quality approval thresholds. There is a planned programme of learning experiences from Years 7 to 13 that is intended to enable young people to:

- Develop themselves through career and work-related education
- Learn about careers and the world of work
- Develop career management and employability skills
- Make informed progression decisions
- Experience 'employer encounters'
- Learn about finances and personal wealth – essentially to make them ready to be financially fit as a young person

In Years 7 to 11 this programme includes taught inputs as part of the PSHE Education carousel. These lessons are used in part to develop students' ability to use the Unifrog careers programme to research future careers options and to record their development of work-related skills plus to cover, for Years 10 and 11, budgeting, tax, cost of living, apprenticeships etc.

In Years 12 and 13, there is a curriculum of life lessons taught through regular classes and lectures, provided by both internal staff and external speakers. These build on learning in the lower school and in part, focus on the wider world of work and the preparations for it. CV writing, an externally conducted work interview and a week of work experience are key elements of year 12 for all students. In year 13, more bespoke content is provided to Career Apps. Key guidance therefore is delivered both as a whole cohort and also in small, targeted groups. This includes using staff and external contacts who have specific knowledge and experience in certain sectors to meet with and to act as mentors to students that are making career related progression decisions.

In addition, all staff contribute to CEIAG through their roles as tutors and subject teachers. Further specialist inputs are planned and delivered in conjunction with external providers such as a SkillsBuilder enterprise day. Careers information in the Learning Centre is maintained by the Learning Centre staff, and in the Sixth Form Study Centre by the Study Centre Supervisor.

A strategic aim of the CEIAG programme is to address aspects of 'gender-bias' that can be prevalent in some options subjects, and consideration of career options. This continues to be addressed through a range of external inputs, assemblies, displays and presentations to students and parents at key options times.

Students with SEND and PPG students are actively included in opportunities to undertake careers-related activities and receive supported guidance as required in order to ensure inclusivity. The work of the Careers lead and Key Stage 4 pastoral leads are closely interlinked to achieve this.

Parents receive a detailed communication at the start of each academic year which outlines the careers-based education, opportunities and experiences their child will receive. These are also included in Welcome Ahead and parent information evenings. A series of progression webinars aimed at parents is delivered online across Year 12 and 13 to help parents understand how best to help support their young people at key decision points.

Personal Provision

Elements of the CEIAG Programme require access to individual information advice and guidance through:

- The Unifrog careers programme, to which the School subscribes for all students and parents, and which offers an 'all through' careers package for students from Years 7 to 13
- Inputs from internal staff, external visitors, local employers and partner institutions and the Uttlesford Careers Fair.
- Weekly drop-in support for sixth form students wanting to follow both academic and non-academic pathways
- The contracting of external, qualified, independent careers advice from Directions
- Planned inputs delivered by Tutors during registration periods
- Assemblies and life lectures
- Use of other external sources such as websites and other resources available through subscriptions to the Careers & Enterprise Company, careers-related software, the National Careers Service, the National Apprenticeship Service, the National Apprenticeship Week, UCAS, and other providers
- Access to careers resources online, in the Learning Centre and Sixth Form study area, and around the school
- Planned visits to organisations providing progression opportunities
- Displays around the school
- Use of social media to advertise CEIAG-related information
- Provision of a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure a wide range of course provision through KS3 and for KS4 and KS5 options to ensure that students can maintain interest in a wide range of subjects to maximise their progression options

Gender Bias

The School has adopted a strategic objective to develop and to implement strategies to address a recognised gender bias that exists in option choices for some subjects made at GCSE, post-16 and post-18 progression points. It is recognised that in some employment sectors (and in related courses) this is an embedded national problem, but the School aims to ensure that its students are aware of such gender bias, and make progression choices that are not affected by gender-based stereotypes.

Progression

Personal guidance on progression opportunities is available for students and their parents at key progression points, specifically:

- Year 8 options and Year 9 GCSE options – parents' options information evening; student

options assembly; workshop led by Form the Future focussing on Pathways and Decision-Making; preferential appointments with Independent Careers Adviser; parental tutorials as required; tutorial inputs; options booklet; subject inputs; structured support for SEND students

- Year 11 – tutor-led CEIAG inputs on progression options; workshop led by Form the Future focussing on Pathways and Employability Skills; assemblies; visits to FE colleges; talks by visiting speakers from other institutions eg SAC, CRC; guidance discussions; preferential appointments with Independent Careers Adviser; displays and external inputs on apprenticeships; Apprenticeship information to parents via Parentmail; tracking via ECC Intended Destinations survey; ‘results day’ inputs; structured support for SEND students
- Sixth Form – a two-year programme starting early in year 12, which builds on the guidance discussions in year 11 and incorporates raising aspirations, progression week and then targeted and bespoke support dependent on destination choices. This includes parental and student information evenings and ongoing direct information sharing; assemblies; life lessons and lectures – including career insights; university and apprenticeship related visits; employer and other external direct advice on careers, non-academic options and key areas such as CV, interviews and the world of work; 1:1 appointment with an independent career advisor; entrance exam and university interview support; individual support on all applications; daily targeted notifications of opportunities; tracking student destinations.

Resources

SWCHS will provide resources for the successful implementation of this policy through securing:

- An annual budget to cover internal costs, CPD opportunities and the commissioning of external sources
- Adequate staffing for curriculum provision
- Training of Year Teams and teaching teams as appropriate
- Student and staff access to information (electronic and hardcopy)
- Designated space for individual, group and research sessions
- Strong relationships with external organisations and partners including facilitators, employers and training providers

Partnerships

The policy recognises the range of partners that support the CEIAG offer within our school/academy. These include:

- formal arrangements with our external provider of careers guidance and others
- liaison with post-16 providers and higher education institutions
- liaison and joint planning with secondary schools within the Uttlesford Consortium
- employers and training providers
- parents and carers
- others specific to our school

Evaluation

The DfE recommends that all schools should self-evaluate as an effective means of carrying out a review and evaluation of the school's programme. SWCHS uses the CEC Compass+ programme termly and uses the results to action continual improvements.

Approvals and Review

This policy is reviewed annually in discussion with relevant staff and external partners, and key priorities for action are identified and included in the school Development Plan.

Appendix One - The Gatsby Benchmarks

Please use this link to access the most up to date version of the Gatsby Benchmarks:

<https://cdn.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/11/good-career-guidance-the-next-10-years-report.pdf>