

Thinking Schools Academy Trust

“Transforming Life Chances”

Careers Education, Information & Guidance

The Portsmouth Academy
September 2026

Ratified on	
Ratified by	
Policy owner	Careers Leader
Review date	June 2027

1.0 CAREERS STRATEGY AND RATIONALE

A planned and progressive programme of careers education, information, advice, guidance and inspiration is a vital component in preparing young people for the world beyond The Portsmouth Academy. We aim to raise aspirations, challenge stereotypes, maximise students' academic and personal achievements and enable all students to consider a broad and ambitious range of careers and progression routes.

The Portsmouth Academy is committed to providing all students in Years 7–11 with a stable, structured and progressive programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance which is impartial, inclusive and appropriate to individual need. Careers education is a whole-school responsibility and is embedded within curriculum learning, Personal Development and the wider life of the Academy.

The Academy has regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, updated 23 June 2026, and uses the updated Gatsby Benchmarks as the framework for planning, delivering and evaluating careers provision.

2.0 AIMS

CEIAG enables students to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and understanding required to make effective decisions about their futures. The Academy aims to ensure that every student:

- develops an understanding of their strengths, interests, skills and aspirations;
- understands the full range of education, training and employment pathways available;
- has access to current careers and labour-market information;
- understands academic, technical and vocational routes, including apprenticeships;
- understands how curriculum subjects connect to careers and further study;
- has meaningful encounters with employers, employees and education and training providers;
- has progressive and meaningful experiences of workplaces;
- receives impartial personal careers guidance at appropriate transition points;
- develops employability, communication, decision-making and career-management skills; and
- is supported to make an informed and successful transition at the end of Year 11.

The Academy will actively seek to remove barriers to participation and progression, with particular attention to students who are disadvantaged, have SEND or an EHCP, are looked after or previously looked after, are young carers, or may otherwise be at risk of becoming NEET.

3.0 THE UPDATED GATSBY BENCHMARKS

From the 2025–26 academic year, the Department for Education expects institutions to use the updated Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance. The Portsmouth Academy will use all eight benchmarks to plan, evaluate and continuously improve provision.

Benchmark 1 – A stable careers programme

The Academy will provide an embedded, progressive careers programme with explicit support from Governors, the Headteacher and senior leaders. It will be known and understood by students, parents and carers, staff, employers and providers, and will be evaluated regularly.

Benchmark 2 – Learning from career and labour-market information

Students and parents/carers will have access to high-quality information about future study, careers and labour-market opportunities. Students will be supported to interpret and use this information when making decisions.

Benchmark 3 – Addressing the needs of each young person

Provision will respond to individual aspirations, needs and circumstances and will embed equality, diversity and inclusion. Information about aspirations, participation, career readiness and intended destinations will be used to target support.

Benchmark 4 – Linking curriculum learning to careers

Teachers and curriculum areas will help students understand how subject knowledge, skills and qualifications connect to careers, employment and further study.

Benchmark 5 – Encounters with employers and employees

Every student will have multiple meaningful opportunities to learn directly from employers and employees through activities such as talks, careers events, mentoring, workplace projects, enterprise activities, mock interviews and visits.

Benchmark 6 – Experiences of workplaces

Every student should have meaningful first-hand experiences of workplaces. The Academy will develop a progressive programme in line with the Government's work-experience reforms and the expectation of two weeks' worth of work experience by the end of Key Stage 4.

Benchmark 7 – Encounters with further and higher education

Students will understand the full range of learning opportunities available, including sixth forms, FE colleges, universities, apprenticeships, technical education and independent training providers.

Benchmark 8 – Personal guidance

Every student will have opportunities for impartial personal guidance with an appropriately trained careers adviser, including at key transition points and with additional support where appropriate.

4.0 DELIVERY AND CONTENT

CEIAG is delivered through Personal Development lessons, curriculum activities, workshops, employer encounters, workplace experiences, individual careers interviews, careers events, college and university visits, apprenticeship and technical education encounters and presentations from employers and external providers.

Careers provision will be progressive from Year 7 to Year 11. Personal careers guidance will be person-centred, impartial and delivered in accordance with appropriate professional standards. Careers information will also be made available to students, parents and carers through Parents' Evenings, Open Evenings, Options activities and post-16 transition events.

The Academy will maintain accessible careers information and digital resources, including Unifrog, and will keep careers information on its website current. Parents and carers will be recognised as important partners in career development.

5.0 STUDENT ENTITLEMENT

Students in Years 7–11 are entitled to:

- a stable and progressive careers programme from Year 7;
- access to appropriate careers and labour-market information;
- opportunities to understand how curriculum subjects relate to careers;
- multiple meaningful encounters with employers and employees;
- progressive and meaningful experiences of workplaces;
- encounters with the full range of post-16 education and training opportunities;
- information about sixth forms, colleges, apprenticeships, technical education and training;
- impartial personal careers guidance by age 16;
- support with applications for academic, technical and vocational routes; and
- additional careers and transition support where individual circumstances require it.

6.0 EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES AND WORK EXPERIENCE

From September 2026, the Academy will develop its work-experience programme in line with DfE guidance and work towards the Government's guarantee of two weeks' worth of work experience by the end of Key Stage 4.

- Years 7–9: the equivalent of one week of varied and meaningful work-experience activity, progressively developed across the three years, with meaningful employer engagement and workplace exposure.
- Years 10–11: the equivalent of one week of meaningful, in-person and immersive work-experience placement activity. This may be undertaken with one or more employers and may be delivered flexibly across Years 10 and 11.

Experiences will have clear learning outcomes, meaningful interaction with employers and employees, opportunities to undertake relevant tasks, appropriate feedback and reflection. The Academy will take reasonable steps to remove barriers to participation, particularly for disadvantaged students and students with SEND.

7.0 PROVIDER ACCESS STATEMENT

This section sets out The Portsmouth Academy's arrangements for managing access by providers to students for the purpose of providing information about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. It complies with the Academy's legal obligations under section 42B of the Education Act 1997.

The Academy is committed to ensuring that technical education and apprenticeships are presented alongside academic routes in an impartial manner.

8.0 STUDENT ENTITLEMENT TO PROVIDER ENCOUNTERS

The provider access legislation establishes six provider encounters across Years 8–13. As The Portsmouth Academy educates students to Year 11, it must provide the four encounters that fall within Years 8–11:

- two mandatory encounters for all pupils, taking place at any time in Year 8 or between 1 September and 28 February in Year 9; and
- two mandatory encounters for all pupils, taking place at any time in Year 10 or between 1 September and 28 February in Year 11.

Provider encounters will take place during the normal school day. Providers will be given reasonable time to explain their organisation, approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships, possible career routes, what learning or training is like, and to answer students' questions.

9.0 MEANINGFUL PROVIDER ENCOUNTERS

An encounter is a meeting or session between students and a provider. The Academy is committed to ensuring encounters are meaningful and enable students to engage directly with providers, ask questions and gain a realistic understanding of available opportunities. In-person encounters will be prioritised where appropriate; meaningful live online engagement may also be used where it adds value or improves access.

10.0 PROVIDERS AND PARTNERS

The Portsmouth Academy works with a range of local and regional education, training, higher education and apprenticeship providers. Recent partners have included City of Portsmouth College, UTC Portsmouth, HSDC, Fareham College, Sparsholt College, ASK Apprenticeships, the University of Portsmouth and PETA. This list is illustrative and will change as the programme develops and responds to students' needs and the local education and employment landscape.

11.0 DESTINATIONS

The Academy monitors intended, actual and, where available, sustained destinations of Year 11 students to evaluate the effectiveness of careers and transition support. Destination information will be reviewed annually to identify trends, assess impact, identify groups requiring additional support, inform future provision and support students at risk of becoming NEET.

Current destination data will be reported separately and updated annually rather than being fixed within this policy.

12.0 MANAGEMENT OF PROVIDER ACCESS REQUESTS

A provider wishing to request access should contact the Careers Leader through The Portsmouth Academy's published school contact details. No individual staff member is named in this policy so that the arrangements remain current when staffing responsibilities change.

Requests should, where possible, include the proposed activity, intended year group(s), preferred date or period, intended learning outcomes, staffing requirements and any facilities or equipment required.

Requests will be considered fairly and impartially, taking account of statutory requirements, student needs, curriculum and examination commitments, safeguarding, available facilities, reasonable notice, duplication of provision and whether the proposed activity will provide a meaningful encounter. A request will not be refused simply because a provider offers a technical or apprenticeship route rather than an academic route.

Once agreed, the Academy will provide appropriate accommodation and, where reasonably available, equipment required by the provider. Providers may also make appropriate prospectuses and course information available to students by agreement with the Careers Leader.

13.0 CAREERS PROGRAMME AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCESS

The Academy maintains a progressive careers programme across Years 7–11. The detailed programme will be reviewed annually and published separately or as an appendix so that activities, providers and dates can be updated without rewriting the substantive policy.

- Personal Development careers lessons and Unifrog activities;
- labour-market information and curriculum-linked careers learning;
- employer encounters, Careers and Apprenticeship events and STEM careers activities;
- Year 9 options and transition activities;
- college and post-16 provider visits;
- workplace experiences and work experience;
- apprenticeship, university and higher education encounters;
- personal careers interviews; and
- targeted support for students with additional needs.

14.0 PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers are important partners in career development. The Academy will provide accessible information about the careers programme, post-16 pathways, apprenticeships and technical education, further education, labour-market information, work experience, careers events and sources of impartial support. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be invited to contribute to careers activities and programme evaluation.

15.0 EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND SEND

Careers provision will promote equality of opportunity, challenge stereotypes and seek to prevent students' aspirations or choices being restricted because of protected characteristics, disadvantage or other circumstances. Students with SEND will receive appropriate personalised careers and transition support. For students with an EHCP, careers planning will contribute to preparation for adulthood and appropriate transition planning.

16.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION

The Academy will evaluate both delivery and impact. Evaluation will consider progress against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, career readiness, student and parent/carers feedback, employer and provider

feedback, participation, intended and sustained destinations, workplace experiences, personal guidance and differences in access or outcomes between groups.

In line with DfE guidance, the Academy will self-report progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks termly. From September 2026, Compass+ will be used where appropriate to support this process. Unifrog and other suitable Careers & Enterprise Company tools may also support planning, tracking and evaluation.

17.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors

Governors will provide strategic oversight, ensure statutory careers and provider-access duties are met, challenge leaders on quality and impact, monitor Gatsby Benchmark progress and consider participation and destination information.

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will provide explicit support for careers provision, ensure it is embedded strategically, promote a whole-school approach, provide appropriate leadership support and resources, and ensure statutory duties are fulfilled.

Careers Leader

The Careers Leader will lead CEIAG strategy; coordinate the careers programme; monitor Gatsby Benchmark progress; coordinate employer, workplace and provider encounters; oversee work experience; coordinate personal careers guidance; engage parents and carers; monitor participation and destinations; maintain appropriate website information; work with the Careers Hub, Portsmouth City Council and relevant partners; and report to senior leaders and Governors.

Teaching and Pastoral Staff

All staff contribute to careers education by promoting high aspirations, challenging stereotypes, connecting learning to future opportunities, signposting appropriate careers information and supporting students to develop transferable and employability skills.

18.0 SAFEGUARDING, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND DATA PROTECTION

All careers activities will operate within The Portsmouth Academy's safeguarding arrangements. External employers, providers, speakers, careers advisers and work-experience arrangements will be managed in accordance with relevant safeguarding, health and safety, data protection and risk-management procedures. Arrangements will be proportionate to the activity while enabling safe access to meaningful opportunities.

19.0 NATIONAL CAREERS SUPPORT

The Academy will signpost students and families to current government-approved careers information and support. From 1 October 2026, the Government is bringing together the National Careers Service and Jobcentre Plus in England as part of a new jobs and careers service. Website links and careers resources will be reviewed as the service develops.

20.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Careers Leader and Senior Leadership Team will review careers provision annually using Gatsby Benchmark assessment, participation information, student and stakeholder feedback, destination information and other evidence of impact. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier where significant changes are made to legislation, DfE statutory guidance or Thinking Schools Academy Trust requirements.

Next scheduled review: June 2027.

APPENDIX 1 — ANNUAL CEIAG PROGRAMME 2026–27

The Academy's detailed Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Overview 2026–27 will sit as an annual appendix or separately published programme. The existing programme should be reviewed to:

- identify explicitly the four mandatory provider encounters applicable to Years 8–11;
- map activities against the updated Gatsby Benchmarks;
- incorporate the Years 7–9 and Years 10–11 elements of the work-experience reforms;
- distinguish universal entitlement from activities offered to selected students;
- identify targeted provision for disadvantaged students and students with SEND;
- include parent/carers engagement; and
- identify how the impact of major activities will be evaluated.

REFERENCE

Department for Education, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, statutory guidance for England, updated 23 June 2026.