



Cheshire Academies Trust
Inspiring hearts and minds

Careers Policy

1. Introduction

Hebden Green is an all-age (4–18) special school for pupils with PMLD, SLD and MLD. Around 45% of our pupils are working at the engagement model and approximately 80% are working at Year 1 of the National Curriculum or below.

Most of our pupils will not move directly into open employment or high-level academic courses. Our current destination profile is:

- **Around 20%** of pupils move into **adult social care / social care-led day provision**
- **Around 70%** move into a **SEND college or Independent Specialist Provider (ISP)**
- **Around 10%** progress to a **mainstream FE college**, usually on **Entry Level 3 or Level 1** study programmes, sometimes with access to supported internships or other supported pathways.

Our approach to careers is therefore broader than preparation for paid employment alone. It is rooted in **Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)** and is designed so that every pupil, whatever their starting point, can:

- communicate preferences and make informed choices
- develop independence and life skills
- participate meaningfully in their community
- move on to an appropriate, meaningful **post-18 destination**, whether that is social care, specialist FE, mainstream FE or supported employment.

Careers learning is developed from the Early Years through to Post-16 and is embedded across the curriculum, in the wider life of the school and in partnership with families and external agencies.

The school's careers programme is structured around the **Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance** and delivered in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance "**Careers guidance and access for education and training providers**" and current provider access legislation. It strives to equip young people with the best opportunities to make informed decisions for the future.

Hebden Green School has a comprehensive and high-quality transition, careers advice and guidance programme to support our high achieving and ambitious students. This is developed throughout a student's time at the school and is supportive of their aspirations, strengths and skills. Staff work with pupils to identify and develop key areas of strength and skills for the future.

Hebden Green School work with the Cheshire and Warrington Pledge to enhance opportunities for students and keep up to date with Local Market Information (LMI) and forge links with local employers.

2. Aims

Through our CEIAG and PfA programme we aim to:

1. **Prepare pupils for adulthood**, with a strong focus on realistic post-18 destinations: social care provision, SEND colleges/ISPs, and, for a small minority, mainstream FE and supported employment.

2. **Support all pupils to make informed, realistic and ambitious decisions**, in partnership with parents and carers, that are right for their needs and circumstances.
3. **Provide personalised pathways** that reflect the complexity of need in school, including pupils working at the engagement model and significantly below age-related expectations.
4. **Meet and, where possible, exceed the Gatsby Benchmarks**, adapting them for a special school context and our destination profile.
5. **Comply fully with statutory duties** for independent careers guidance and provider access, including the requirement for at least six encounters with providers of technical education and apprenticeships for pupils in Years 8–13.
6. **Develop key skills and attributes** such as communication, self-advocacy, social skills, problem-solving, resilience and reliability, which are essential for success in adult life and any setting.
7. **Ensure equality of opportunity** and actively challenge stereotypes and low expectations around disability and adult outcomes, while staying grounded in realistic pathways.

Government guidance and research highlight the importance of ensuring that:

- young people develop a clear understanding of career choice, progression and the potential impact on their long-term earnings
- young people understand the responsibilities and choices associated with relationships, family life and, where appropriate, parenthood
- pupils, particularly girls and young women, have well-planned opportunities to meet professionals working in non-stereotypical roles and to learn about what such work entails
- staff have strong knowledge and understanding of the wide range of progression routes available so that pupils can make informed choices
- curriculum content and skills are regularly linked to real career, community and adult-life opportunities.

3. Statutory and Policy Framework

This policy is underpinned by:

- Education Act 1997 – sections 42A, 42B, 45 and 45A
- Education and Skills Act 2008 – section 72
- School Information (England) Regulations 2008 – Schedule 4 (15)
- Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 – strengthened provider access legislation and the requirement for a minimum of six provider encounters in Years 8–13
- DfE statutory guidance: *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*
- Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance, including SEND-focused interpretations.

The governing board must ensure that **independent careers guidance** is provided to all learners throughout their secondary education (11–18) and to learners up to age 25 who have an EHCP, and that the guidance is impartial, covers the full range of routes and promotes the best interests of pupils. At Hebden Green we source private Independent Careers Guidance from a professional with Level 6 training and SEND background.

The policy also reflects the Department for Education white paper *Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth (2021)*, which emphasises high-quality technical

education, clear progression routes and strong links between education, training and the needs of the economy.

4. School Context and Principles

Given our pupil profile and destination data:

- For a significant proportion of pupils, **“careers” means developing agency, communication, independence and meaningful daytime activity** within adult social care or community-based provision.
- For most pupils, the primary progression route is a **SEND college or Independent Specialist Provider**, where they can continue to work on life skills, independence, communication and (where appropriate) employability skills.
- A **small minority** of pupils will progress to **mainstream FE** on Entry Level 3 or Level 1 courses, sometimes with the potential to access supported internships, traineeships or paid employment in the longer term.
- Careers learning must be **highly differentiated**, with multi-sensory approaches, visual supports and careful attention to communication needs and cognitive levels.

Our guiding principles are:

- **Start early, build slowly** – careers-related learning begins in the Early Years through play, role-play and community exploration.
- **Every encounter counts** – everyday routines, community visits and in-school “jobs” are recognised, planned and recorded as part of careers and PfA learning.
- **Person-centred** – aspirations and next steps are developed through EHCP reviews and PfA outcomes, alongside pupil and family voice.
- **Inclusive, ambitious and realistic** – we aim high for every pupil, while remaining honest about likely destinations and recognising health, care and safeguarding needs.

All pupils at Hebden Green have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Transition from one key stage to another and on to post-school destinations is therefore an integral part of annual review and action planning at every age and stage. PfA outcomes are embedded within each EHCP and are used to shape personalised careers and transition planning. Hebden Green School adheres to guidance on good careers guidance for young people with SEND, including publications from the National Careers Service, the Gatsby Foundation and Disability Rights UK.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board

- Ensures compliance with statutory duties for independent careers guidance and provider access, including the six required provider encounters in Years 8–13.
- Receives regular reports on careers provision, destinations (with a focus on social care, SEND colleges/ISPs and mainstream FE) and progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Designates a **link governor for careers and PfA**.

Headteacher (Helen Ashley)

- Has overall responsibility for CEIAG and PfA.
- Ensures the Careers Leader has sufficient status, protected time and budget to carry out the role.

Careers Leader (Danielle Lamb)

- Leads on the design, implementation and evaluation of the careers and PfA programme across the whole school.
- Ensures the programme is aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks, but tailored to our pupils and likely destinations.
- Coordinates work experience and workplace encounters in partnership with the Job Coach and external partners.
- Maintains up-to-date information on local specialist FE, ISPs, mainstream FE and adult social care pathways.

PfA / Post-16 Lead (Faye Bye / Sarah Birkenhead)

- Leads the PfA curriculum and ensures that careers learning is embedded in all aspects of 14–19 provision.
- Coordinates college links, supported internship pathways (where appropriate) and adult social care transitions.

Independent Careers Adviser (Level 6)

- Provides impartial, personalised careers guidance in line with DfE expectations (at least one interview by age 16 and another by 18).
- Focuses strongly on realistic options – social care, SEND colleges/ISPs and mainstream FE Entry Level 3/Level 1 routes for the small number for whom this is appropriate.
- Contributes to EHCP annual reviews and supports the creation of individual careers/action plans, using accessible formats.

Class Teachers and Tutors

- Embed careers- and PfA-related learning across the curriculum in age- and stage-appropriate ways.
- Prepare pupils for encounters with employers and providers and support reflection afterwards.

Job Coach / Employability Lead (Angela Spruce)

- Sources, risk assesses and supports suitable work-related experiences (in-school, community and, where appropriate, external).
- Works closely with employers and community partners to ensure experiences are meaningful and inclusive.

External Partners

- Local Authority careers service, social care and transitions teams: THE PLEDGE
- SEND colleges, Independent Specialist Providers and mainstream FE colleges
- Supported employment services and voluntary sector organisations all contribute to pathways and enrichment for our pupils.

6. The Careers and PfA Programme (Intent – Implementation – Impact)

6.1a Intent

Our programme aims to:

- deliver a **stable, all-age careers and PfA programme** that is visible on the school website and understood by pupils, families and partners
- provide **progressive learning**, from early awareness of the wider world through to supported decision-making about post-school destinations
- ensure every pupil has opportunities to **explore, experience and rehearse adult roles**, including roles in the home, community and (where appropriate) workplace
- use **local information** about social care, specialist FE, ISPs, mainstream FE and supported employment to inform realistic planning
- explicitly prepare pupils and families for one of three main pathways:
 - **adult social care / day provision**
 - **SEND colleges / Independent Specialist Providers**
 - **mainstream FE at Entry Level 3 or Level 1** (for a small minority).

6.1b Core Careers Offer

All pupils will, as appropriate to their needs, have access to:

- extra-curricular visits and trips which broaden their understanding of different subjects, community roles and adult environments
- high-quality, impartial careers guidance through the Local Authority careers service and a Level 6 qualified independent Careers Adviser
- high-quality outside speakers (in person and virtually), including employers, social care providers, FE and specialist colleges, supported employment services and alumni
- opportunities to participate in vocational and enterprise-style activities which develop employability and transferable life skills
- a curriculum that is externally accredited where appropriate and clearly linked to preparation for life, living and, where realistic, employment.

6.2 Implementation by Phase

Early Years and Key Stage 1 (4–7)

Focus: curiosity; awareness of self and others; communication and choice-making.

- Topics such as “People Who Help Us” and “The World of Work” introduced through **stories, role-play and dressing up**, with a strong sensory focus.
- Regular **community-based learning** (e.g. shops, libraries, parks) to build familiarity with different adult roles.
- Early focus on **independence skills** (self-care, tidying, making choices, simple routines) as foundations for PfA.

Key Stage 2 (7–11)

Focus: understanding strengths and interests; community roles; structured experiences.

- Continued community visits with explicit links to “jobs people do” and “what adults do all day”.
- Opportunities for simple **in-school jobs** (messenger, library helper, snack bar assistant), supported with visuals and timetables.
- Use of **visual timetables, social stories and objects of reference** to prepare pupils for new environments and people.
- Initial introduction to **LMI and pathways** through highly accessible resources, including pictures and videos.

Key Stage 3 (11–14)

Focus: self-knowledge, aspirations, introduction to formal guidance.

- Pupils begin to **reflect on “what I am good at” and “what I like”**, linked to future adult life, not just jobs.
- Curriculum subjects make clear links to **real-life applications in the home, community and workplace**, so pupils see why learning matters.
- From Year 8, pupils begin to receive **independent careers guidance** which starts to introduce realistic pathways: specialist FE, ISPs, social care and (for a few) mainstream FE.

Key Stage 4 (14–16)

Focus: making choices; accredited learning; work-related learning; PfA.

- Access to **accredited and non-accredited programmes** (e.g. ASDAN, Entry Level, life-skills programmes) clearly linked to future settings such as SEND colleges, ISPs or social care.
- Structured programmes around **enterprise, community participation and social action**, helping pupils to understand purposeful daytime activity.
- **Work-related learning** that may include:
 - in-school roles (office, library, site team, catering, hospitality)
 - supported community visits and volunteering-type experiences
 - carefully matched external placements for pupils who can manage these.
- **Taster sessions and visits** to SEND colleges, ISPs and mainstream FE to support realistic decision-making.
- Annual **personal guidance interviews** which explicitly explore which of the three destination pathways is most likely and what steps are needed.

Post-16 / PfA (16–18)

Focus: transition planning; independence; destination-specific. Highly personalised programmes focusing on:

- **independent living skills** (self-care, travel training where appropriate, domestic skills, money, personal safety)
- **community inclusion** (accessing community facilities, clubs, day opportunities and social care providers)
- **health and wellbeing** (managing appointments, medication, healthy routines).
- For many pupils, the core focus is on preparing for **social care and community-based provision**, including visits and link programmes with adult day services.
- For a large group of pupils, the programme prepares them for transition to **SEND colleges or Independent Specialist Providers**, including extended link courses and transition plans.
- For a small group of pupils, programmes will include preparation for **mainstream FE at Entry Level 3 or Level 1**, and, where realistic, **supported internships or supported employment**.
- Continued independent careers guidance ensures that pupils and families understand the full range of post-18 options in social care, specialist FE, mainstream FE and supported employment.

6.3 Adaptation for Pupils with PMLD and those at the Engagement Model

- For these pupils, success criteria focus on **communication, engagement, anticipation, preference-making and participation**, which are critical skills for adult social care and community provision.
- Experiences and routines are used to help pupils become familiar with the kinds of places and people they are likely to meet in adult life (e.g. care settings, community venues, key workers).

7. Personal Guidance

- Every learner should have **at least one guidance interview by age 16 and another by age 18**, delivered by a suitably qualified adviser.
- Guidance is **impartial** and focused on the pupil's best interests, with a strong emphasis on realistic outcomes: social care, SEND colleges/ISPs and, for a small minority, mainstream FE and employment-related routes.
- For pupils with complex communication needs, the adviser will work closely with familiar staff and families and use appropriate communication systems.

8. Encounters with Employers and Experiences of Work

- From age 11, pupils will have **meaningful encounters with employers and adults in different roles**, which may include:
 - visitors to school (e.g. local businesses, community organisations, social care providers, supported employment teams)
 - visits to workplaces and community settings
 - employer-led projects or in-school enterprise activities.
- Experiences of work will be **carefully matched to pupils' needs and likely destinations**. For many pupils, this will include:
 - **in-school work experience** and structured "jobs"
 - **community-based learning** that develops confidence in adult environments
 - for some, **external work placements** or **supported internships** linked to FE provision.

Alumni

Former pupils are encouraged to maintain contact with the school and, where appropriate, to act as speakers and role models. Alumni are invited to share their experiences of college, social care provision, supported employment or community programmes with current pupils, for example through visits to PfA events, cafés, celebration evenings or transition activities.

Experience of Work

The aim of work experience is to provide opportunities for pupils to learn in real or simulated workplaces and community settings, in ways that cannot be fully replicated in school. All pupils are offered access to work-related experiences where appropriate to their needs, health and safety considerations and likely destinations.

The Job Coach, working with the Deputy Headteacher and PfA team, coordinates work experience. Parents and carers are kept informed throughout the process and a work experience agreement and information form are completed for each placement. All placements are checked to ensure that pupils will be treated fairly and undertake meaningful activities. Workplaces are risk assessed and all pupils on placement are covered by the employer's insurance.

9. Provider Access Policy Statement

9.1 Pupil Entitlement

All pupils in Years 8–13 are entitled to:

- information about the **full range of post-16 and post-18 options**, including:
 - SEND colleges and ISPs
 - adult social care / day opportunities
 - mainstream FE Entry Level 3 and Level 1 programmes
 - supported internships, traineeships and apprenticeships (where realistic and appropriate)
- **at least six meaningful encounters** with providers of approved technical education and apprenticeships across Years 8–13, in line with statutory requirements.
- independent, impartial guidance that helps them and their families understand how different options relate to their EHCP outcomes and PfA plans.

9.2 Management of Provider Access Requests

Providers wishing to request access should contact:

Careers Leader: Danielle Lamb

Role: Deputy Head Teacher

Telephone: 01606594221

Email: admin@hebdengreen.cheshire.sch.uk

Requests should include:

- the **name and type of provider**
- proposed **date and time**
- the **year groups** to be targeted
- a brief outline of the **content and format** of the session
- any **resources or equipment** required.

The school will aim to acknowledge requests within **10 working days** and to offer a suitable date, taking into account timetable constraints and pupil needs.

9.3 Opportunities for Access

A range of events are built into the school's careers and PfA programme. These may be suitable opportunities for providers to access pupils, such as:

- transition events or information evenings
- EHCP transition review meetings
- careers / PfA weeks and themed events
- college and provider taster days
- in-school careers fairs or provider carousels
- assemblies or tutor-time sessions (where appropriate).

Providers may request additional bespoke slots, which will be considered where they offer clear benefit to pupils.

9.4 Facilities

The school will make the following facilities available, subject to need and suitability:

- classrooms or meeting rooms
- the school hall or larger spaces
- specialist rooms (e.g. ICT suite) where appropriate
- audio-visual equipment and online platforms for virtual encounters.

All visitors must comply with **school safeguarding procedures**, including signing in, wearing a visitor badge and (where appropriate) providing evidence of DBS clearance.

9.5 Grounds for Granting or Refusing Access

Access may be **refused or alternative dates offered** where:

- the timing conflicts with key school events or examinations
- the content is not appropriate for the needs or age of the pupils
- the provider cannot meet safeguarding or health and safety requirements
- the school judges that the encounter does not add value to the existing programme.

Where access is refused, the reason will be recorded and providers signposted to alternative dates or formats where possible.

9.6 Monitoring Compliance

The school will:

- record all provider encounters and monitor whether **each pupil in Years 8–13 receives the required six encounters** – we will use Compass+ to record this information
- use feedback from pupils, families and providers to improve future events
- respond promptly to any concerns raised by the DfE or Careers & Enterprise Company in relation to provider access.

10. Working with Parents, Carers and Multi-Agency Partners

The school works closely with **social care teams, adult day services, SEND colleges, Independent Specialist Providers and mainstream FE colleges** to ensure that parents and carers have clear, honest information about likely pathways and support available.

Parents and carers are key partners in planning for adulthood. The school will:

- provide **regular information** about careers and PfA via reviews, newsletters, the website and information events
- involve parents/carers in **all key transition points**, especially at Years 9, 11 and 14 (and beyond where pupils remain on roll)
- work closely with Local Authority teams, social care, health, supported employment services, DWP, voluntary organisations and FE providers to build coherent pathways.

11. Labour Market and Local Provision Information

We will use information not only about employment but also about:

- **local social care and day provision offers**
- **specialist FE and ISP provision**
- **mainstream FE Entry Level and Level 1 programmes**
- **supported internships and supported employment** where available locally.

The school will use accessible LMI from:

- the **National Careers Service** and government sources
- the **Cheshire and Warrington Pledge / Careers Hub**
- local employers and community organisations

to help pupils and families understand realistic opportunities in the local and regional labour market, particularly around sectors that commonly employ disabled adults and those offering supported internships and inclusive workplaces

12. Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Careers Leader, in partnership with SLT and governors, will:

- evaluate the careers programme at least **annually**, drawing on:
 - progress against the **updated Gatsby Benchmarks** using Compass+
 - the **Future Skills Questionnaire** or similar tools, where appropriate [The Careers and Enterprise Company+1](#)
 - feedback from pupils (including alternative communication), parents, staff, employers and providers
 - **destination data** at 1, 3 and (where possible) 5 years after leaving.
- report annually to the governing board, including strengths, gaps and priorities.
- work towards or maintain recognition through the **Quality in Careers Standard** or equivalent. [Quality in Careers+1](#)

Our Enterprise Co-ordinator from the Cheshire and Warrington Pledge works termly with the Careers Leader to review the programme against the Gatsby Benchmarks using Compass+, identify gaps and plan next steps.

13. Publication and Review

- This policy and a summary of the school's careers programme, including the name and contact details of the Careers Leader and information on how impact is measured, will be published on the school website in line with DfE expectations. [The Careers and Enterprise Company+1](#)
- The **Provider Access Policy Statement** (section 9) will be reviewed annually and agreed by the governing board. [GOV.UK+1](#)
- The full policy will normally be reviewed **every two years**, or sooner if there are significant changes to statutory guidance, Gatsby Benchmarks or the school's context.