



# Careers Policy & Programme

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THE WOODLANDS SCHOOL | THE ASPIRE FEDERATION, MILTON KEYNES

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“Where being unique is celebrated”

# The Woodlands School Careers Policy and Programme

## Introduction

At The Woodlands School we provide a relevant and engaging careers curriculum that meets the differing needs and requirements of our pupils, preparing them for adulthood with high aspirations for a fulfilling adult life. This curriculum is developed throughout each pupil's time at school and is always supportive of their abilities, strengths and skills.

In preparation for life, our students are given opportunities beyond the classroom environment for real work and to develop the independence needed for success beyond The Woodlands School.

Our **Bridging Year** (Year 14 provision) is designed to better prepare our young adults for life beyond The Woodlands School, with a strong focus on work and life skills. (This pathway can be accessed earlier where appropriate, as determined through the student's EHCP.)

The overall organisation of work experience and employer engagement is undertaken by the **School Careers Leader, Rebecca Brown**, who liaises with school staff, parents/carers and external partners to ensure that opportunities are meaningful, inclusive and relevant.

## Legislation and Guidance

The careers provision at The Woodlands School is compliant with statutory guidance developed by the Department for Education (DfE), which refers to **Sections 42A, 42B (Baker Clause) and 45A of the Education Act 1997**.

This requires that all schools provide independent careers guidance from Years 8–13 and that this guidance must:

- Be **impartial**
- Include information on a **range of education and training options**, including apprenticeships and technical routes
- Be **adapted to the needs** and aspirations of each individual pupil

We also comply with the DfE document *Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers* (January 2023), which mandates that all schools must give education and training providers the opportunity to talk to pupils about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships. (See the school's **Provider Access Policy**.)

The school's careers education also meets the expectations set out in the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)**, ensuring equality of access and outcomes for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

## Aims and Purpose

The school's careers programme aims to:

- Provide individualised pathways based on each pupil's **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** outcomes.
- Support and prepare students and families through **successful transitions** at key stages.
- Encourage students to have **real-life experiences** and engage meaningfully with their community.
- Promote **high aspirations and inclusion** by encouraging all young people to experience success and purpose in adult life.
- Develop a **shared vision** across education, local business, health, social care, families and young people, focused on improving life chances.
- Prepare pupils for adult life so that they are as independent as possible, making informed decisions appropriate for them.
- Consolidate and extend existing skills and knowledge, developing **positive attitudes towards learning and work**.
- Support pupils to **achieve recognised qualifications** and personal development awards where appropriate.
- Foster an understanding of **spiritual, moral, social and cultural** issues relevant to adult life.
- Enable pupils to make **informed and appropriate choices** about their career and life aspirations.
- Develop key personal characteristics such as **social skills, communication, independence and resilience**.
- Provide access to **career learning experiences, visits, work experience** and encounters with employers and employees.
- Ensure every student can **record their progress**, reflect on learning and plan their next steps.

## Links to the Gatsby Benchmarks

The Woodlands School's Careers Programme meets all eight **Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance**:

Benchmark	How We Meet This at The Woodlands School
<b>1. A stable careers programme</b>	A structured, whole-school careers education scheme runs from EYFS–KS5, led by the Careers Leader and reviewed annually by SLT and Governors.
<b>2. Learning from career and labour market information</b>	Pupils access visual and symbol-supported information about local job roles, employers, and labour market trends, appropriate to their needs.
<b>3. Addressing the needs of each pupil</b>	All planning is personalised, based on EHCP outcomes. Careers guidance is inclusive, accessible, and differentiated for our SEND learners.
<b>4. Linking curriculum learning to careers</b>	Careers learning is embedded across subjects, especially STEM and life skills, showing how learning connects to real-world employment. All links are <i>Italic</i> in our teaching plans.
<b>5. Encounters with employers and employees</b>	Regular encounters take place through visits, virtual sessions, enterprise projects and guest speakers from different sectors.
<b>6. Experiences of workplaces</b>	Work-related learning and internal/external experience of workplaces are organised for Years 7–14. Supported by Job Coaches.
<b>7. Encounters with further and higher education</b>	Providers such as colleges, supported internships and training organisations visit the school and attend transition events.
<b>8. Personal guidance</b>	Every student in KS4 and KS5 has access to 1:1 careers guidance and transition planning with a qualified advisor.

## Alignment with the CDI Framework

Our programme also aligns with the **CDI Career Development Framework (2021)**, supporting students to build competencies in the six key learning areas:

- 1. Grow throughout life** – recognising their strengths, interests and needs through ongoing self-reflection.
- 2. Explore possibilities** – learning about different careers, pathways and community roles.
- 3. Manage career** – developing decision-making and planning skills through structured guidance.

4. **Create opportunities** – taking part in enterprise, volunteering, and work experience.
5. **Balance life and work** – understanding how personal choices, values and responsibilities influence their future.
6. **See the big picture** – understanding how the world of work changes and affects life choices.

## Monitoring and Review

The Careers Policy and Programme are monitored by the **Senior Leader for Careers**.

Evaluation methods include:

- Compass+ tracking and self-evaluation
- Student and parent questionnaires
- Feedback from employers and education providers
- Review of pupil outcomes (EHCP transition goals, work experience feedback, qualifications)
- Annual SLT review and Governor approval

The policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leader for Careers and approved by the **Headteacher** and **Governing Board**.

## Careers Programme Overview

At The Woodlands School, our personal development programme ensures that all students are well prepared for transition. Careers learning builds progressively from **EYFS through Year 14**, ensuring every pupil can access a pathway suitable to their strengths and ambitions.

<b>Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: Exploration and play</li> <li>• Developmental goals: communication, teamwork, curiosity</li> <li>• Careers exploration through <b>imaginative play and role models</b> (e.g. “people who help us”)</li> </ul>
<b>Key Stages 1 and 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: Building core academic and social skills</li> <li>• Visitors from local professions (nurse, firefighter, shop assistant, gardener)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple classroom projects exploring “What I might like to do when I grow up”</li> </ul>
<b>Key Stage 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus: Discovery and self-awareness</li> <li>Introduction to accredited and vocational learning pathways</li> <li>STEM projects and enterprise events</li> <li>Peer leadership and community participation</li> </ul>
<b>Key Stage 4 (Years 9–11)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus: Preparation for transition and developing employability</li> <li>Annual <b>Preparing for Adulthood</b> plan updates</li> <li>Enterprise and work-skills projects</li> <li>Health and safety at work</li> <li>Careers encounters through visits, virtual employer talks, and internal job roles</li> <li>Individual transition roadmaps and work experience (1–5 days)</li> </ul>
<b>Key Stage 5 (Years 12–14)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus: Independence, work-readiness and transition</li> <li>1:1 careers advisor sessions and mock interviews</li> <li>CV and job application workshops</li> <li>Young Enterprise and community volunteering</li> <li>External work placements (for example: John Lewis, Nifty Lift, Parks Trust, Food Cycle, Willen Hospice, Buttons Nursery)</li> <li>Internal placements (catering, administration, teaching assistant, maintenance, refuse, gardening, valeting, postal)</li> <li>Life skills (money management, rights and responsibilities, travel training)</li> <li>EHCP reviews focus on next steps: supported internships, further education, social enterprise, social care or employment</li> </ul>

## Impact and Evaluation

Impact is measured through:

- Progress towards EHCP outcomes
- Compass+ Gatsby tracking
- Completion of careers units and employability projects
- Feedback from students, parents and employers
- Tracking of post-16 and post-19 destinations



## Equality and Inclusion

All careers education and guidance at The Woodlands School is designed to be **accessible and inclusive** for pupils with autism and other learning differences. Visual supports, structured teaching, and communication aids (including Widgit symbols) are used to ensure understanding. Every pupil has access to impartial advice and equal opportunity to explore meaningful adult pathways.