



# Careers Guidance Policy

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*Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed annually. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.*

Version Control		
Version	Date	Changes
1.0	26/03/2026	In-cycle policy review and re-approval

**Policy Purpose and Summary:**

E-ACT is committed to raising aspirations, achieving excellence, and opening doors for all pupils. High-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) enables pupils to understand the full range of pathways open to them and to make informed, ambitious decisions about their futures. This policy outlines how E-ACT academies will deliver outstanding, impartial careers guidance that reflects current statutory guidance, the 2025 government reforms, and the updated Gatsby Benchmarks Framework (2024).

This policy applies to all E-ACT academies.

**Summary of changes at last review:**

- Updated in line with the **2025 DfE Careers Guidance**.
- Revised to incorporate the **Gatsby Benchmarks Framework (2024)**.
- Aligns with strengthened **Provider Access Legislation** (six mandatory encounters).
- Includes digital skills, AI literacy and emerging labour market technologies.
- Enhanced website publication requirements.
- Strengthened expectations for meaningful encounters and work experience.
- Increased focus on disadvantaged, SEND and AP pupils.
- Updated expectations for FE/HE information including HTQs and T-Levels.
- Enhanced evaluation, monitoring and destination tracking.

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## 1. Introduction and purpose

- 1.1 In line with E-ACT's vision and values, we work in partnership with stakeholders and communities to raise aspirations, achieve excellence, and broaden opportunity. We believe firmly in social inclusion and widening access to academic, technical and vocational routes. High-quality careers guidance is central to securing successful outcomes for all pupils and supporting social mobility.
- 1.2 Every pupil should have a clear understanding of the academic, technical and vocational pathways available to them. Strong careers information, advice and guidance helps young people raise their aspirations, understand labour market needs, and make informed choices that support sustained progression.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all E-ACT Academies.

## 3. Legislation and regulations

- 3.1 This policy aligns with current statutory duties, including:
  - DfE Careers Guidance: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (2025)
  - Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (2024/25 implementation updates)
  - Sections 42A, 42B, 45 and 45A of the Education Act 1997
  - Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
  - School Information (England) Regulations 2008
  - Provider Access Legislation (updated 2024/25)
  - Digital and AI Skills in Education Framework (DfE, 2024)
  - Gatsby Benchmarks Framework (2024 update)
- 3.2 All registered pupils in Years 8–13 must receive independent careers guidance, which must be impartial, in the best interests of the pupil, and include information about technical education and apprenticeships.

## 4. Policy statement

- 4.1 Good careers guidance widens horizons, challenges stereotypes, raises aspirations and promotes social mobility. It ensures pupils understand the full range of routes available and supports successful transitions into sustained education, employment or training.
- 4.2 Through our careers guidance programmes, we aim to:
  - Support inclusion and promote equality of opportunity
  - Ensure pupils receive impartial information about all routes
  - Support successful transitions at post-11, post-16 and post-18
  - Help pupils understand the changing world of work
  - Provide meaningful interactions with a diverse range of employers
  - Equip pupils with digital, technological and AI-related skills
  - Develop pupils' research, decision-making and employability skills
  - Encourage participation in further learning including apprenticeships, HTQs, T-Levels and university routes
  - Increase motivation and engagement by showing the relevance of curriculum learning
  - Provide targeted support for those at risk of becoming NEET

- 4.3 Each academy has a designated Careers Leader who oversees careers provision, staff training and curriculum integration. While academies develop tailored programmes to meet their context, the Trust provides a strategic framework and shares examples of best practice.

## 5. Website requirements

- 5.1 All academies must publish clear and accessible information about their careers programme each academic year, including:
- Name, email address and phone number of the Careers Leader
  - A summary of the careers programme and how pupils, parents and employers can access information
  - How the academy measures and evaluates the impact of its careers programme
  - Progress towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks Framework (2024)
  - Evidence of compliance with the Provider Access Duty
  - The date of the next review of the published information
- 5.2 Academies must publish anonymised pupil destination data at KS4 and KS5, including:
- Percentages progressing to sixth forms, FE colleges, apprenticeships, T-Levels, HTQs, employment and higher education
  - Three-year destination trends
  - Analysis of destinations for disadvantaged and SEND pupils

## 6. Support and benchmarking careers information

- 6.1 Each academy will use the **Gatsby Benchmarks Framework (2024 update)** to develop, evaluate, and improve careers provision.
- 6.2 All academies are expected to achieve full implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- 6.3 Academies will work with Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) hubs, including Enterprise Coordinators and career advisers.
- 6.4 The Trust will use tools such as Compass and Compass+ to review provision, track progress, and benchmark against national averages.

## 7. Support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people

- 7.1 Academies will identify pupils requiring targeted support, including disadvantaged pupils, SEND pupils, children in need, looked-after children, care leavers, and those at risk of becoming NEET.
- 7.2 Academies will work with local authorities, children's social care and external agencies to provide tailored support.

### Pupils in Alternative Provision

- 7.3 Pupils in AP must receive personalised careers guidance, with high expectations and targeted support for accessing technical, academic or employment pathways.

### Looked After Children

- 7.4 Careers Leaders will work with the designated teacher to:
- Identify LAC and care leavers
  - Understand their needs
  - Ensure careers guidance aligns with Personal Education Plans

### Pupils with SEND

- 7.5 Careers Leaders and SENCOs will ensure pupils with SEND receive:
- Personalised transition plans from Year 9
  - Accessible employer and provider encounters
  - Support accessing specialist services such as mentoring or job coaching

## 8. Curriculum

- 8.1 Careers education must be embedded across the curriculum, ensuring all subjects contribute to pupils' understanding of career pathways, labour market needs and required skills. The curriculum must provide:
- Integration of careers learning into subject teaching.
  - Opportunities for pupils to understand the importance of maths, science and digital skills.
  - Exposure to technical, vocational and academic pathways by age 14.
  - Development of digital literacy, AI awareness, data skills and understanding of emerging technologies.
  - Curriculum planning must include a **careers impact statement** showing how subjects contribute to career readiness.

## 9. Engaging with employers, employees and workplaces

- 9.1 All our academies will help pupils gain the confidence to compete in the labour market by providing opportunities to gain the practical know-how and attributes that are relevant for employment.
- 9.2 Academies will engage with local employers, businesses and professional networks to ensure real-world connections with employers lie at the heart of their career's programmes. Visiting speakers might include junior employees, or apprentices, particularly alumni, with whom pupils can readily identify. Often, individual academies will have Academy Ambassadors who can provide or facilitate such real-world connections. Our academies will always seek to build and develop these links between academy staff and Academy Ambassadors.
- 9.3 Every pupil will experience at least one meaningful employer encounter each year from Year 1 to Year 13. Encounters may include:
- Employer talks and mentoring
  - Alumni talks
  - Careers fairs
  - Workshops and CV interviews
  - Mock interviews
  - Work-related competitions
  - Curriculum-linked employer activities
  - Virtual experiences (as supplementary, not replacement)
- 9.4 All our secondary academies will ensure that pupils get first-hand experience of the workplace. This work experience gives pupils a more realistic idea of the expectations and realities of the workplace. This is particularly valuable for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have access to a diverse range of role models.
- 9.5 Academies will ensure that pupils have:
- By age 14: Exposure to the workplace
  - By age 16: At least one workplace experience (virtual may supplement but not replace)
  - By age 18: An additional workplace experience

## 10. Sixth forms

- 10.1 All E-ACT academies with sixth forms will provide a 16–19 study programme that meets statutory requirements. Every student funded through the 16–19 methodology will be enrolled on an individualised programme combining qualifications and non-qualification activities that support their career goals and progression.
- 10.2 Study programmes will have a clearly defined core aim. This will typically include a substantial qualification—academic or technical—or a programme focused on preparing students directly for employment.
- 10.3 All study programmes will include work experience and non-qualification activities designed to develop character, wider skills, attitudes and confidence, and to support transition into further study, apprenticeships, technical routes, or employment. This includes opportunities linked to T-Levels, Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), and sector-based experiences.
- 10.4 If a student has not achieved a grade 4 or above in GCSE English or maths by the end of Key Stage 4, they will continue to work towards achieving this as part of their study programme, in line with statutory requirements.
- 10.5 Study programmes in E-ACT academies will provide:
  - A structured and challenging learning programme aligned to students’ future plans.
  - Substantial qualifications that stretch students and prepare them for the next level of study or employment.
  - Teaching and support for students who have not yet achieved a grade 4 in GCSE English or maths.
  - Work experience to develop understanding of career choices and real working environments.
  - Additional activities that support personal development and progression.

## 11. Further and higher education

- 11.1 E-ACT academies will ensure pupils understand how their subject choices affect their future education and career pathways. Pupils will be supported to consider how academic, technical and vocational routes open different opportunities.
- 11.2 Academies will encourage pupils to use a broad range of information tools, including digital platforms, FE/HE virtual tours, apprenticeship services, and current labour market information. Guidance will include information about T-Levels, apprenticeships, degree apprenticeships, Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), and higher education options.

## 12. Access to providers of technical education and apprenticeships

- 12.1 All pupils must have access to impartial information about all available education and training routes, including technical education and apprenticeships. E-ACT academies will ensure that pupils are informed about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeship opportunities.
- 12.2 Every academy will allow colleges, training providers and other relevant organisations access to pupils in Years 8–13 to share information about technical routes. Encounters must meet the criteria of the Meaningful Provider Encounters Framework (2024) and be integrated into the wider careers programme.

- 12.3 Academies will provide opportunities for information from a wide range of providers, including but not limited to:
- A levels
  - Applied General qualifications
  - Apprenticeships and technical options
  - T-Levels
  - Further Education colleges
  - Studio Schools
  - University Technical Colleges
  - Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)
- 12.4 Academies will ensure pupils have opportunities to meet:
- Sixth forms and sixth form colleges
  - Tertiary colleges
  - Further education colleges
  - Higher education institutions
  - Apprenticeship and technical training providers
- 12.5 E-ACT academies will comply with the statutory requirement to offer **six mandatory provider encounters**, delivered as:
- Two encounters during Key Phase 1 (Years 8–9)
  - Two encounters during Key Phase 2 (Years 10–11)
  - Two encounters during Key Phase 3 (Years 12–13)
- 12.6 Encounters must take place within normal academy hours and must include presentations, workshops, group sessions and one-to-one discussions where appropriate. Encounters must cover apprenticeships, T-Levels, HTQs and technical education routes. Evidence of compliance must be published on the academy website.

### 13. Personal guidance and parent/carer involvement

- 13.1 Every pupil will have access to personal guidance interviews from a qualified careers adviser during key transition points. Each pupil will receive at least one guidance interview by age 16 and the opportunity for a further interview by age 18.
- 13.2 E-ACT academies will actively involve parents and carers in careers education by providing:
- Regular updates through newsletters, websites and social media
  - Careers-focused parent evenings
  - Opportunities to meet with providers during events such as careers fairs
  - Webinars and digital sessions on technical routes, labour market information and post-16/post-18 options
  - Parent and carer feedback will be used to evaluate and improve communication.

### 14. Equality and inclusion

- 14.1 E-ACT is committed to ensuring all pupils can access every part of the careers programme. This includes ensuring accessibility for SEND pupils, removing digital barriers, and making sure all pupils are invited to all events. Monitoring will ensure disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils have equal access to all encounters, opportunities and experiences.

## 15. Responsibilities

- 15.1 The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:
- **National Director of Education:** Ensures Trust-wide compliance with this policy.
  - **Education Directors:** Ensure compliance at academy level.
  - **Headteachers:** Ensure academy-level implementation and compliance.
  - **Careers Leaders:** Coordinate the careers programme, provider encounters, staff training and evaluation of impact within the academy.

## 16. Quality assurance, monitoring and impact

- 16.1 The Trust recognises the value of internal and external evaluation. Ofsted inspections provide external validation of careers provision but do not replace internal evaluation systems.
- 16.2 Each academy will evaluate the impact of careers guidance using:
- Pupil feedback following encounters and activities
  - Engagement and outcomes for disadvantaged, SEND and vulnerable learners
  - Monitoring of KS4 and KS5 destinations
  - Analysis of engagement with technical and vocational routes
  - Provider feedback on pupil participation
  - Assessment of curriculum-linked careers learning
- 16.3 Academies will use destination measures to evaluate success in ensuring pupils progress to positive destinations such as apprenticeships, technical routes, sixth form, college, university or employment.
- 16.4 The Trust will monitor provision through:
- Governance Review Days
  - Pupil feedback
  - Partner and provider feedback
  - Quality assurance of careers sessions and events
  - Destination and progression data
- 16.5 Trustees, through the Extended Leadership Team (ELT), will review this policy regularly and update it in line with emerging evidence, statutory changes and national guidance.

## 17. Analysis of Destination Data

- 17.1 Academies will collect and analyse destination data for at least three years after a pupil leaves. This will include:
- Analysis by pupil group, particularly disadvantaged and SEND pupils
  - Monitoring progression into apprenticeships, T-Levels, HTQs and technical routes
  - Use of trends to evaluate the effectiveness of careers guidance
  - Development of alumni networks to support careers education and provide role models