



CAREERS EDUCATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

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Introduction

The Oaks Specialist College is committed to delivering a high-quality, personalised Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) programme that prepares learners for adulthood, employment, independence, and active participation in their communities. Our learners have a diverse range of strengths and needs, all supported by Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Our CEIAG programme ensures that all learners receive:

- impartial, accurate and accessible guidance
- meaningful exposure to employers and workplaces
- personalised transition planning aligned to EHCP outcomes
- opportunities that reflect their individual aspirations, support needs, and potential pathways

This policy aligns with all statutory requirements and is informed by the most recent legislation and guidance, including:

- Statutory Guidance and access for Further Education and Training Providers (May 2025)
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (Nov 2025)
- Updated Gatsby Benchmarks (2025 revision)

Scope

This policy applies to all staff involved in the delivery of information, advice and guidance, careers guidance, teaching, enterprise, and employability. All learners at The Oaks are eligible to receive CEIAG as part of their learning programme.

Aims and Objectives

Our CEIAG programme aims to:

- Ensure every learner transitions into their most appropriate destination (employment, supported employment, volunteering, community participation or further education), while continuously reducing NEET outcomes.
- Develop key employability skills across the curriculum and all work-related learning to prepare learners for the world of work.
- Develop and maintain a high-quality CEIAG programme aligned to the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Support learners to develop the skills, knowledge, confidence, and independence needed for adulthood and employment.
- Provide high-quality, impartial, age-appropriate careers guidance that reflects learners' aspirations and EHCP outcomes.
- Deliver a broad range of meaningful encounters with employers, workplace experiences, enterprise projects, and community engagement.
- Ensure every learner receives personalised guidance and transition planning that can prepare them for a wider range of onward routes including supported internships, voluntary work, further education, supported employment, or independent living.

The intent of the Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) policy is to ensure that all learners receive high-quality support and resources to make informed decisions about their future careers. This policy aims to:

- **Empower Learners:** Equip learners with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the world of work and make positive steps towards independence and employment.
- **Provide Comprehensive Support:** Offer a range of services including careers education, information, impartial advice, and guidance to help learners understand their options and make informed choices.

- **Develop Employability Skills:** Integrate employability skills into the curriculum and provide opportunities through workshops, enterprise projects, career events, community projects, and work placements.
- **Engage with Employers:** Foster strong partnerships with employers to create meaningful opportunities that meet the needs of the local and regional labour market.
- **Raise Aspirations:** Encourage high aspirations among learners, ensuring they leave with the skills, experience, and qualifications necessary to secure employment.

CEIAG in The Oaks' Curriculum

The Oaks Specialist College embeds Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) throughout its entire curriculum, ensuring that learners develop the skills, knowledge and experiences needed for independence and employment. Careers learning is integrated across all subject areas—including Maths, English, Life Skills, Digital Media and Technology—so that learners can connect academic and vocational learning with real workplace expectations, such as using money and time in the college's internal Tesco store or developing communication skills essential for all job roles. The curriculum is further strengthened through extensive work-related learning, including internal enterprise initiatives, external work placements, community projects, and volunteering opportunities, enabling learners to explore different job roles, build employability skills and gain authentic workplace experience. CEIAG is delivered through a comprehensive Careers Programme aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks, which the College has fully achieved, ensuring access to impartial careers guidance, employer encounters, and progression planning opportunities for all learners. This whole-college approach ensures that CEIAG is meaningful, personalised and embedded across study programmes, supporting learners to make informed choices and transition successfully into adulthood, employment, or further opportunities.

Internal Enterprise and Work-Based Learning

- **The Wardrobe Enterprise** – student-led clothing resale business developing retail, customer service, finance, and enterprise skills.
- **FEAST Hygiene Hub** – supporting community hygiene distribution, developing stock management, community service, and vocational skills.
- **Gardening and Horticulture** – learners work in the local community and within the college to plant, grow, maintain, and harvest fruits, vegetables, plants and flowers to sell to our local community.
- **Spill the Beans Café** – café operation enabling hospitality, catering, and customer interaction experience.
- **Carpentry and Upcycling** – opportunities for learners to learn wood work skills and create handmade products to sell to the local community.
- **In-College Tesco Store** – developing retail, stock rotation, visual merchandising, and money-handling skills.

External Work Experience and Employer Encounters

Learners benefit from a wide range of real-world opportunities with employers and community partners, including:

- Tonbridge Baptist Church/FEAST partnership
- Tesco (local stores and internal provision)
- Local cafés, restaurants, and hospitality venues
- Retail partners and charity shops
- Supported internship host employers across Kent
- NHS (local trusts and departments)
- Kent County Council
- Local charities and social enterprises
- Local Farms – Princess Christian Farm, Seal Farm, Bewl Rookery, and Constance Farm.
- SEND-friendly employers offering supported work placements

- National organisations including – Nando's, DPD, BNY, Waitrose, RBVE, Mitie, and Royal Mail.

The Gatsby Benchmarks

The CEIAG programme at The Oaks is structured around the updated **Gatsby Benchmarks (2025)**, including:

1. **A Stable Careers Programme** – published, planned, and evaluated.
2. **Learners Access Career and Labour Market Information** - accessible resources aligned with learner needs.
3. **Addressing the Needs of Each Learner** – personalised support and EHCP alignment.
4. **Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers** – employability and functional skills embedded across all subjects.
5. **Encounters with Employers and Employees** – internal enterprises, external visits, talks, and workplace activities.
6. **Experiences of Workplaces** – structured internal and external work placements.
7. **Encounters with Further and Higher Education Providers** - training providers and supported internship hosts.
8. **Personal Guidance** –Level 6 qualified Careers Lead delivering structured 1:1 guidance.

Study Programme/ Teaching, Learning and Assessing

Teaching, learning and assessment at The Oaks Specialist College are designed to develop every learner's career readiness, independence, and progression through personalised study programmes aligned to EHCP outcomes and Preparation for Adulthood. Each programme includes a core aim, appropriate English and maths, work experience, and non-qualification activities that build employability, confidence, and community participation, in line with DfE study programme requirements.

We embed a careers-rich curriculum that gives all learners access to impartial guidance, employer encounters, and workplace experiences, reflecting evidence that high-quality, personalised careers support in specialist settings improves progression and sustained outcomes.

1) Personalised Pathways with a Careers Core

Study programmes are tailored to each learner's aspirations and support needs, using EHCPs, baseline assessments and targeted employability outcomes. Pathways typically align to Independence, Discovery/Exploration, and Employment/Work-Readiness routes, with clear transition into supported internships, volunteering, or paid work. Each pathway includes planned careers learning outcomes mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks (e.g., Benchmarks 3–6 and 8), ensuring that curriculum learning is linked to careers.

2) Curriculum Teaching Approaches that Build Employability

Staff use differentiation, reasonable adjustments, assistive technology, and specialist communication approaches to ensure equitable access to careers learning and workplace tasks. Teaching prioritises transferable employability behaviours (teamwork, communication, problem-solving, resilience), contextualised through vocational themes and community-based learning. English and maths are embedded in authentic tasks (e.g., till reconciliation, ordering stock, scheduling), as required within study programmes to support progression and employability.

3) Internal Enterprises as Careers Classrooms

Learner participation in The Wardrobe, FEAST Hygiene Hub, College Café, In-College Tesco, Horticulture, and Carpentry/Upcycling provides authentic, scaffolded work environments to practise customer service, stock control, money handling, and health & safety before external placements—an approach widely used across specialist colleges to develop work behaviours safely. These activities explicitly deliver Gatsby 4 (Linking curriculum to careers) and contribute evidence towards Gatsby 5–6 (employer encounters & workplace experience).

4) Employer Encounters and Work Experience

Learners access structured external work experience and employer encounters (talks, workplace visits, job-carving tasters), which are planned, risk-assessed, and personalised to interest and support needs, meeting study programme expectations for work experience and Gatsby Benchmarks 5 & 6. Placement design and review adopt

specialist-setting best practice: voice of the learner, parental collaboration, and incremental exposure to workplace routines to build confidence and independence.

5) Personal Guidance and Action Planning

Learners receive independent, 1:1 careers guidance delivered by a Level 6 qualified Careers Lead, resulting in a Careers Action Plan with SMART employment and transition targets—fulfilling personal guidance expectations. Guidance sessions help learners and families understand local labour market information and progression routes (supported internships, FE, volunteering, adult social care), building informed, ambitious next steps.

Assessment

1) Career Development

We use various methods to assess strengths and barriers; plan reasonable adjustments and goals; do targeted teaching, coaching and placement experiences; and review employability progress and placement impact with learners and families.

Evidence includes observation records, employer feedback, learner self-reflection, and work readiness checklists, enabling timely curriculum adjustments and progression decisions.

2) Study Programme Progress & English/Maths

Progress is tracked against core aims, English and maths milestones, and non-qualification outcomes (behaviour, independence, enrichment), as required by DfE study programme guidance.

3) Careers Outcomes & Destinations

We monitor intended, actual and sustained destinations (supported internships, paid/voluntary work, FE/training, adult social care pathways) and use this data to improve provision—an approach echoed in specialist-settings careers evidence.

Accessibility & Safeguarding for Work-Related Learning

Accessibility needs are identified early; job-carving, communication aids, travel training, and graded exposure are built into placements to remove barriers to career participation.

Safeguarding, risk assessment, and reasonable adjustments are co-produced with employers to ensure safe, sustainable access to work environments for SEND learners.

The wider Teaching and Accessibility Teams contribute to the delivery of CEIAG through:

- The delivery of compulsory tutorials which include British Values, Prevent, My Safety, Equality and Diversity
- The importance of functional English & Maths in the workplace.
- Support for learners in preparing Individual Learning Plans (ILP) and ensure that learners are aware, monitor and review their individual targets and target setting
- Identify accessibility requirements of each learner and implement these in collaboration with the learners to ensure work placement and employment opportunities are sustainable.
- Conduct regular one to one review with learners
- Ensure that learners participate in careers events and industry days.

The Oaks' Job Coaches contribute to the delivery of CEIAG through providing:

- Support to curriculum staff by delivering careers and progression tutorials
- Delivery of employability sessions
- The preparation and participation of onsite careers events such as the Reverse Jobs Fair
- Organising career talks
- Assisting learners with enterprise activities and entrepreneurship
- Enterprise and Work Placement Coordinators within curriculum areas liaise and work with employers to provide opportunities for learners to access meaningful work experience
- Assist in searching and applying for apprenticeship opportunities.

Job Coaches will also support:

1. Preparing Learners

- Assess strengths, interests, barriers, and support needs
- Help identify suitable job roles or career pathways
- Build confidence and motivation through coaching
- Teach job-seeking skills (CV writing, applications, interview prep)
- Support development of soft skills (communication, teamwork, punctuality)
- Teach employability skills (professional behaviour, workplace expectations)

2. Employer Engagement

- Build and maintain relationships with local employers
- Identify job opportunities that match learners' abilities
- Advocate for reasonable adjustments and inclusive hiring practices
- Help employers understand how to support neurodiverse or disabled staff
- Arrange workplace visits, taster days, and trials
- Set up supported internships, placements, or part-time roles

3. On-the-Job Support

- Provide job-carving—breaking down tasks to match ability levels
- Deliver task analysis and step-by-step instruction
- Coach learners directly in the workplace until confident
- Use systematic instruction techniques (e.g., least-to-most prompting)
- Encourage independence and fade support over time
- Troubleshoot challenges or conflicts at work
- Model workplace behaviours
- Ensure health & safety understanding and compliance

4. Communication & Collaboration

- Collaborate with parents, carers, social workers, and other professionals
- Maintain regular contact with employers and HR teams
- Share progress updates with education/college staff
- Advocate for the learner while promoting independence
- Liaise around travel training, schedules, and workplace routines

5. Workplace Adaptations & Adjustments

- Identify needed accommodations (visual supports, schedules, simplified tasks)
- Create accessible tools (checklists, scripts, prompts)
- Recommend assistive technology if appropriate

- Train employers on disability awareness and inclusive practice

6. Travel & Life Skills Support

- Provide or coordinate travel training to the workplace
- Support development of time management and organisation
- Help learners navigate workplace routines (breaks, clocking in, etc.)

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Track progress toward employment goals
- Monitor productivity, independence, and satisfaction
- Identify new skill-building opportunities
- Complete required documentation and reports
- Review and update support plans regularly

8. Long-Term Support

- Provide check-ins after job coach fades from the workplace
- Help learners progress or increase responsibilities
- Offer ongoing problem-solving when needs arise
- Support job retention and career development

Learner Entitlement

All learners at The Oaks Specialist College are entitled to:

- Impartial, independent careers advice aligned to EHCP outcomes.
- Opportunities to explore a variety of pathways including employment, supported internships, training, further education, volunteering, and community engagement.
- Encounters with employers and training providers, in line with statutory requirements.
- Access to up-to-date labour market information.
- Supported work experience and workplace visits.
- A personalised study programme
- Information about progression routes and transition support beyond college.

Roles and Responsibilities

Careers Lead

- Designs and oversees the CEIAG programme
- Coordinates employer partnerships and work experience
- Lead and oversee the whole-college CEIAG strategy
- Ensure compliance with the Gatsby Benchmarks
- Coordinate the delivery of the Careers Programme
- Manage careers guidance provision and external careers advisors
- Organise and oversee employer encounters and careers events
- Oversee work-related learning opportunities
- Support progression planning for all learners
- Liaise with staff, families, and external agencies
- Ensure impartial, high-quality careers information is available
- Monitor and track learner destinations
- Lead on CEIAG reporting and quality assurance
- Maintain partnerships with employers and community organisations
- Contribute to staff training in careers and employability
- Promote equality of opportunity and challenge stereotypes

- Support the development of employability skills across the curriculum

Corporate development Lead

- Lead and oversee the Supported Internship Programme
- Build and maintain employer partnerships
- Promote disability-confident employment practices
- Work collaboratively with the Careers Team and external agencies
- Coordinate employer engagement activities
- Oversee employer-learner matching
- Ensure workplace safety, suitability and compliance
- Monitor learner progress throughout internships
- Support employers and job coaches
- Lead on data collection and reporting
- Represent the college with employers and partners
- Oversee quality assurance of the programme
- Contribute to staff training
- Responsibility for the alumni network (including events and on-going tracking and support)

Careers Coordinator

- Coordinate day-to-day delivery of the Careers Programme
- Arrange and schedule employer encounters and careers events
- Support the organisation of work-related learning and work experience
- Maintain careers resources and up-to-date information for learners
- Assist with tracking learner progression and destinations
- liaise with employers, careers advisors, and external partners
- Support learners with careers-related activities (CVs, applications, interviews)
- Manage administrative tasks relating to CEIAG delivery
- Support the Careers Lead with data reporting and quality assurance
- Communicate careers opportunities to staff, learners, and families
- Maintain records of employer engagement and learner participation
- Support job coaches and staff involved in employability activities
- Contribute to CEIAG-related staff training and briefings
- Promote equality of opportunity within all career's activities

Teachers and Support Staff

- Embed employability within curriculum
- Support learners during work experience
- Deliver careers learning opportunities

External Partners

- Provide meaningful encounters, visits, placements, employer insight, and supported internships.

Learner Outcomes

Learner/Carer Exploration

Learners will be able to, with appropriate support if required:

- Investigate careers and opportunities in learning, work, supported internships, apprenticeships and how these meet local and national priorities

- Access appropriate information, resources, help, and guidance
- Understand changes in education, training and employment and the impact of these on career and working life
- Understand the full range of options available to them from various sources of information

Learners' Self Development

Learners will be able to, with appropriate support if required:

- Understand self, key qualities and skills
- Develop key skills including speaking, listening, problem solving, aiming high, staying positive, teamwork, leadership, and creativity through the Skills Builder framework.
- Build confidence through real-world experiences

Learners' Progression

Learners will be able to, with appropriate support if required:

- Create career action plans
- Decide on next steps in their career development using action planning, reviewing, and setting smart targets
- Search for appropriate opportunities and develop networks
- Prepare for work, further or higher education through written/verbal application and selection interview.

Destinations and Transition

We track and support:

- Pathways into supported internships
 - Transitions into paid work, voluntary work, or community-based opportunities
 - Progression into further education or training
 - Movement into adult social care pathways where appropriate
- Destinations data informs programme improvement and is reviewed annually, in line with statutory guidance and Ofsted expectations.

The Oaks Careers Team

- Joshua Epstein – Careers Lead
- Graham Thomas – Corporate Development Lead
- Tracy Simmonds – Careers Coordinator/Skills for Independence Job Coach
- Julia Benstead – Learning for Life Job Coach
- Carmen Bailey – Preparation for Life and Work Job Coach

Monitoring, Evaluation, Quality Assurance

- Annual review of the CEIAG policy (each academic year).
- Gatsby Benchmark self-evaluation with support from CEC Kent and Medway Careers Consultant.
- Stakeholder feedback: learners, families, employers.
- CEIAG is evaluated as part of Ofsted's EIF requirements.

Impact Measurement Statement

The Oaks Specialist Colleges measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme by using the Compass evaluation tool to assess ongoing progress in relation to the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. And where possible through:

- **Life Skills Questionnaire** - Feedback from learners and families around Careers and Employability. (Start and end of academic year)
- **Observations** - Feedback from employers from Job Coaches (Termly)
- **Microsoft form for staff** – Feedback on the Careers Programme, Internal work placements at The Oaks (End of the academic year)
- **Work Placement data** – Percentage of learners in volunteering, work experience, community projects and employment.
- **Destination data** – Percentage of leavers in volunteering, Day services or Paid employment (Termly & End of the academic year)

- **Performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks** (Termly & End of the academic year)
- **Skills Builder** – Development of skills (Termly & End of the academic year)
- **Princess Trust Employability Qualification** (End of the academic year)
- **Event feedback** – After any event Career event The Oaks organise at the college e.g. Reverse Jobs Fair, Where's Next event. The Careers Team gather feedback from businesses, organisations, learners and parents to ensure the event has the greatest impact and continuously improves each time.
- **Stakeholder Feedback** – The Careers Team gather feedback from a range of stakeholders through a Microsoft form, via a QR code.
- **Learners** – Feedback from learners on the Careers Programme, Internal Work Placement offer, Job Coach Support, and Support from businesses (End of the academic year)
- **Parents** – Feedback from parents and guardians on careers and employability support from The Oaks, effectiveness of the Careers Programme and parental engagement (End of the academic year). A letter with a QR code that links to a Microsoft form is sent out to parents and guardians. A paper evaluation form is also available.
- **Businesses** – Feedback from employers on Job Coach support, Learner's readiness for work, employability skills and areas for development, training and support for businesses, reasonable adjustments in the workplace, and success stories of all the amazing work our learners do in the community.
- **Quality assurance and monitoring** – The Oaks' Principle and CEO has bi-termly Trustee meetings to review regular progress and monitoring processes.

The Careers Team collects a wide range of feedback from all stakeholders the college works with, at various points within the academic year. This helps the Careers Team, Careers Programme, and Job Coach support continuously improve each year to develop to meet the needs and aspirations of our learners and businesses. This feedback will help the college improve its service and provide support for businesses, which result further opportunities for work through our business partnerships. This feedback also helps develop our Careers Programme to focus on key skills gaps to meet the needs of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

Joshua Epstein (Careers Lead) reports to Ros (Principle), Gordon (CEO) and Board of Trustees. Joshua Epstein also has termly meetings with David Fretton (Careers and Enterprise Company – Kent and Medway Careers Consultant).

Review of Policy

This Policy is reviewed annually by the Careers Lead and Assistant Principal taking into consideration updated statutory guidance, changing labour market conditions and feedback from learners, families, staff, and employees.