

Introduction

This policy underpins and supports The Duston School's (TDS) CEIAG Strategic Plan, aligning with the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers (Updated 2025)".

Its purpose is to ensure that clear standards, consistent practices, and appropriate resources are in place to deliver outstanding CEIAG for every student.

TDS is committed to meeting national and local expectations for careers education by:

Securing independent and impartial careers guidance for all students in Years 9–13, as required by the Education Act (2011), with particular emphasis on Gatsby Benchmark 8 (Personal Guidance).

Fulfilling duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity, foster positive relationships, eliminate harassment or discrimination, and ensure equity for all learners, including those with protected characteristics, SEND, and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ensuring the Trust's CEIAG strategy aligns with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) "Growing People" Skills Plan, supported by the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), with a focus on employer engagement and labour market awareness.

The CEIAG policy is informed by national best practice, including the refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks (2025) and the CDI Framework for Careers, Employability and Enterprise Education, which collectively define what high-quality, impartial CEIAG looks like.

Benchmark 1 – A Stable Careers Programme

Benchmark 2 – Learning from Career and Labour Market Information

Benchmark 3 – Addressing the Needs of Each Pupil

Benchmark 4 – Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers

Benchmark 5 – Encounters with Employers and Employees

Benchmark 6 – Experiences of the Workplace

Benchmark 7 – Encounters with Further and Higher Education

Benchmark 8 – Personal Guidance (quality assured and impact evaluated)

The TDS Trust's planned CEIAG provision reflects the CDI Framework for Careers, Employability and Enterprise Education, as well as the National Curriculum programme of study for PSHE.

Rationale

Careers education and guidance programs play a major part in helping young people choose programs that suit their interests, abilities and individual needs. A robust careers programme helps avoid disengagement, puts school learning into a wider and more relevant context, and helps raise aspirations.

The Duston School programme will help our students to plan and manage their careers effectively, ensuring progression which is ambitious and aspirational. It will promote equality of opportunity, embrace diversity and challenge stereotypes. The policy will be guided by the Gatsby benchmarks and conform to statutory requirements.

By working with key stakeholders our aim is for every child and young person to fulfil their potential and be inspired to achieve a successful future, develop high aspirations and be ambitious. It is with this objective that our CEIAG policy has been developed.

We are committed to providing a planned programme of high-quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to all students and recognise the important role that careers education / work-related learning plays in:

preparing and supporting young people to sustain employability and achieve personal and economic wellbeing

throughout their lives
empowering young people to plan and manage their own futures
contributing to strategies for raising achievement, especially by increasing motivation
raising aspirations and inspiring young people to achieve their full potential
developing core competencies, such as communication, resilience, team working, problem solving and personal management
promoting equality, diversity, social mobility and challenging stereotypes

Context

From 01 September 2022, The Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Act 2022, placed schools under a duty to ensure that all registered pupils in Years 7 -13 have access to independent, accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance. Schools are free to plan for careers guidance which best suit the needs of their students, engaging where appropriate with independent providers. Those schools, such as ours, that have already developed their own arrangements for providing impartial careers advice and guidance may continue to do so as long as they ensure students have access to a source of guidance which is independent and external to the school. This could include website or telephone helpline access and/or face to face support from a specialist provider where needed.

A further addition to the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 states that schools in England “must ensure there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access registered pupils during their secondary education, for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships”.

The updated provider access legislation introduced in January 2018, came into force in January 2023. This requires us to set out opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to access Year 8-13 pupils.

This specifies we must provide at least six encounters for all students:

Two encounters for pupils during the ‘first key phase’ (Year 8 or 9) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend.

Two encounters for pupils during the ‘second key phase’ (Year 10 or 11) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend.

Two encounters for pupils during the ‘third key phase’ (Year 12 or 13) that are mandatory for the school to put on but optional for pupils to attend.

We intend to achieve these encounters, by organising one per year. They will be well publicised to parents and carers.

To promote the quality and consistency of provider encounters, the legislation includes a new set of minimum information that the school must ask the provider to give pupils during each encounter.

At the Duston School, a high percentage of Year 11 stay on to begin courses in the Sixth Form. They are joined by a number of pupils from other schools at the start of Year 12; of these in the region of 90% of the cohort go on to tertiary education.

At each point where we deal with ‘leavers’ we strive to ensure that they have access to purposeful advice and guidance, including information and support regarding apprenticeships, employment, or re-commencement of study with another provider.

Aims & Objectives

Our Vision – *“At the Duston School, our vision is to empower students to Dream big, Believe in themselves, and Achieve their full potential. We strive to create a learning environment that fosters innovation, creativity, and critical thinking, where students are inspired to pursue their passions and develop the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen career paths. Through rigorous academic programs, personalised support, and real-world experiences, we aim to equip our students with the knowledge, aspiration and resilience they need to make a positive and respectful impact in their communities and achieve their wildest dreams”*.

To this end, TDS’s CEIAG programme is structured around the Career Development Institute (CDI) Framework for Careers, Employability and Enterprise Education (2021), which identifies six key learning areas:

- *Grow throughout life – grow throughout life by learning and reflecting on yourself, your background, and your strengths*
- *Explore possibilities – explore the full range of possibilities open to you and learn about recruitment processes and the culture of different workplaces*
- *Manage career – Manage your career activity, make the most of opportunities and learn from setbacks*
- *Create opportunities – Create opportunities by being proactive and building positive relationships with others*
- *Balance life and work – Balance your life as a worker and/or entrepreneur with your wellbeing, other interests and your involvement with your family and community*
- *See the big picture – see the big picture by paying attention to how the economy, politics and society connect with your own life and career*

These learning areas underpin all careers provision across The Duston School and are embedded through the taught curriculum, enrichment activities, and individual guidance. Careers education forms an integral part of the curriculum at TDS and is supported by a comprehensive programme of organised activities. Careers guidance is personalised to meet the specific needs of each student, promoting self-awareness, aspiration, and personal development.

Commitment

The Duston School is committed to providing all students in Years 7–13 with a comprehensive and progressive programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance, supported by a wide range of related enrichment activities. This will be guided by the Gatsby benchmarks for ensuring best practice. To ensure TDS is delivering the best possible careers guidance we are going to start the process of working towards a 'Quality in Careers Standard'. This is in accordance with the Government's recommendation that "all schools should work towards a quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance as an effective means of carrying out a self-review and evaluation of the school's programme." And as advocated by the Department for Education in their '[Careers guidance and inspiration in schools' policy](#) issued in March 2015.

Aims

To help students develop the skills and confidence to make realistic and informed decisions about their futures and to manage the transitions from one stage of their education, training and work to the next.

Objectives

- To ensure that students develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success in adult and working life.
- To make students aware of the range of opportunities which are realistically available to them in continued education and training at 14+, 16+ and 18+.
- To equip students with the necessary decision-making skills to manage those same transitions.
- To develop in students an awareness of the wide variety of education, training and careers opportunities both locally and nationally.
- To encourage students to make good use of the paper-based, virtual and staff resources available to them, in order that they can make informed and appropriate choices throughout their school journey. These can include subject specific careers lessons within curricular and extra-curricular time.
- To foster links between the school, local businesses and further/higher education establishments.
- To ensure there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access registered pupils during their secondary education, for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships.
- To enable students to experience the world of work and develop transferable skills, for example; independence; resilience; personal learning and thinking skills.
- To ensure that wherever possible, all young people leave the school to enter employment, further education or training.
- To maintain a culture of high aspirations.
- To promote equality of opportunity, embrace diversity, challenge stereotypes and ensure all students who require any extra assistance and guidance to reach their potential, such as SEN students or students eligible for pupil premium.

Careers and Employability Programme

The current programme is delivered through a combination of methods; including Character Culture, taught careers education lessons, assemblies, drop down days, presentations, employer visits, independent work experience, seminars, workshops and 1:1 sessions. This policy is delivered through The Duston School Careers Programme 2025–2026, which maps provision across Years 7–13 against the refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks (2025) and the CDI Framework. The full Duston School Careers Programme (2025–2026) is published annually on the school website alongside this policy and the Provider Access Statement.

Every year group, from years 7 onwards, has at least one industry day for the whole cohort, alongside access to 'industry specific' talks and events.

To enable students to track their progress throughout their time at The Duston School, and have a record of their achievements and goals with regards to careers, we have bought into an online platform 'Unifrog'. Unifrog enables students to:

- Have access to live apprenticeships.
- Complete MOOCs (massive open online courses).
- Access live labour market information against jobs.
- Keep information in their own 'locker' about their careers journey.
- Add their own information about activities they have undertaken and competencies they have achieved against a set of criteria.
- Compare every university course, every apprenticeship, and Further Education courses - then apply successfully.
- Empowers teachers and counsellors to manage the progression process effectively.

The following outcomes summarise the progressive learning objectives detailed in The Duston School Careers Programme 2025–2026, ensuring coherence and progression from Year 7 through Year 13.

By the end of Key Stage 3 all students will have:

- A better understanding of the full range of 14 - 19 opportunities for progression.
- A better understanding of their strengths and areas for development, and support to evaluate how these might inform future choices in learning and work.
- An understanding of some of the qualities, attitudes and skills needed for employability.
- Used online careers resources to research information about opportunities and apply their findings to help to make informed choices for Key Stage 4 Options.
- Received appropriate advice and guidance on Key Stage 4 options, and prepared an individual learning plan that sets broad learning goals for the 14 - 19 phase.

By the end of Key Stage 4, all students will have:

- Enhanced their self-knowledge, career management and employability skills.
- Used online resources and other sources to investigate and explore future choices and progression routes.
- Experienced the world of work through visiting a local employer.
- Been given direct access to employers, colleges, training providers and universities.
- Been given guidance to help identify a range of post-16 options and support networks that they can use to plan and negotiate their career pathways.
- Been provided with the resources to complete the post-16 application procedures, including CVs, personal statements, and preparation for interview.
- Produced a challenging but realistic plan for their future learning and work, by relating their abilities, attributes and achievements to the goals they have set themselves.
- Been offered a 1:1 career interview with an external Careers Adviser during key stage 4.

By the end of Key Stage 5 all students will have:

- Enhanced their self-knowledge, career management and employability skills.
- Used ICT software and other sources to investigate and explore future choices and progression routes.
- Received guidance on the UCAS application procedure and degree apprenticeship recruitment processes.
- Been given direct access to employers and universities.
- Been given guidance to help identify a range of Post-18 options.
- Been provided with the resources to develop their CVs, personal statements, and interview preparation.

Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- Assess their achievements, qualities and skills.
- Present this information as appropriate.
- Use this information for personal development.
- Set career and learning targets.
- Recognise and deal accordingly with influences on their attitudes, values and behaviour in relation to work.
- Recognise the value and impact their activities at school can have on their future.

Staff Development and CPD

Staff training needs for the planning and delivery of the CEIAG programme are identified through the school's appraisal process, and activities are planned to address these needs.

The Careers Leader regularly attends conferences, networking forums, and sector-specific events to remain up to date with current industry trends and local labour market information.

All staff receive annual 'Careers Across the Curriculum' CPD aligned to Gatsby Benchmark 4. Training focuses on embedding career-linked learning within subject teaching, integrating up-to-date labour-market intelligence, and using Unifrog resources effectively in lessons and tutor time.

Every member of staff contributes to the implementation of this policy through their role as a tutor and subject specialist. Careers information and resources are available in both the Sixth Form and main school libraries, providing impartial and current materials in a range of formats. These are reviewed and refreshed regularly by the Careers Leader.

Throughout Key Stages 3–5, independent training providers and local colleges are invited to The Duston School to engage with students, parents, carers, and staff. Where direct attendance is not possible, promotional materials and digital information are displayed at school events to ensure all students remain informed about local opportunities.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

From September 2025, impact will be measured using Compass+ and Unifrog analytics to evidence progress against the refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks and inform continuous improvement.

An annual CEIAG Impact Report — incorporating student voice, employer/provider feedback, and outcomes — is presented to the Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

A full review of CEIAG provision is conducted annually as part of the school's self-assessment cycle. Parents are invited to provide feedback through the school website, and students participate in regular voice activities across year groups.

Each CEIAG event or activity is evaluated to determine how effectively it supports intended learning outcomes, with findings used to refine future provision.

Recording, Assessment and Reporting

Students' progress is monitored via their Unifrog profile and remains with them for their entire duration at The Duston School. The work is individual and personal to the student and is a log of activities completed and employability skills gained - these skills are not graded.

Entitlement

Every student at The Duston School is entitled to a thorough, personalised, and aspirational programme of careers events throughout their time at the school. They receive tailored support for whichever route they choose, whether this occurs at the end of KS4 or the end of KS5.

They will come into contact with Careers, Employability and Enterprise in the following ways:

Through a variety of year group assemblies.

Through their Character Culture lessons, which run for a term, half an hour per week, each academic year. Parents/carers are welcome to speak to their child's form tutor, Head of Year, a member of the sixth form team, SENCO or the careers leader if they have any questions or concerns about their child's progress and their child's participation in careers events.

Students, parents/carers are entitled to have access to information about the options processes - provided via letter, on the school website and on information evenings.

Each KS4 student will have at least one individual careers interview with an independent, qualified careers practitioner by the end of KS4.

Each KS5 student receives at least one interview with a qualified careers advisor, in addition to at least one with a member of the sixth form team during their time in sixth form.

All students can self-refer for a career's appointment, with a qualified advisor, via email to cmccarthy@thedustonschool.com

Partnerships and Business Links

The CEIAG programme is greatly enhanced through links with several partners who ensure the students' learning is up to date and relevant. We strive constantly to expand and improve links with employers and other local groups. Parental involvement is encouraged at all stages. The Duston School recognises that parents/carers remain the biggest influence on a young person's career choices and as such we offer parents help and guidance at critical stages in the students' time with us; for example, in Year 9 with KS4 options decisions, Year 11 with 16+ choices and Years 12 and 13 with UCAS and other applications. Parents also have the opportunity to speak to the Careers Leader by phone or by appointment. We also have a dedicated section for parents on our school website on Careers.

TDS has relationships with a wide range of business from different industries; these relationships are used to ensure CEIAG is relevant and where possible delivered by those in industry. These relationships are reviewed annually, and new partnerships are constantly being sought. We are also members of Northampton Chamber of Commerce as well as working with All Things Business and other local Business networking groups.

Links with the Local Authority:

The Local Authority has a duty under Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable, and assist the participation of young people in education or training. This includes maintaining oversight of those aged 16–18 and supporting them to remain in learning.

The Duston School works in partnership with the Local Authority to fulfil these duties by sharing relevant information on student destinations and participation. In line with Section 13 of the Act, the school notifies the Local Authority whenever a 16- or 17-year-old leaves an education or training programme before completion.

Links with the Governing Body:

All changes to the Careers policy are approved by the school Governing Body and they are regularly informed about the progress of the careers programme via visits to the school and reports/presentations delivered by the careers leader.

Management of provider access requests

Procedure

A provider wishing to request access should contact the Careers Leader Diane Fisher via email dfisher@thedustonschool.org

Opportunities for access

A range of events integrated into the school's careers programme provides approved education and training providers with opportunities to engage with students and their parents/carers.

These include scheduled assemblies, themed careers events, and Year 11 guidance appointments where members of the Senior Leadership Team meet with students and parents to discuss post-16 options.

During these events, local colleges, apprenticeship providers, and training organisations are invited into school to share information and advice with parents and students as they arrive or leave their appointments.

This approach ensures that all pupils and families can access high-quality, impartial information about the full range of post-16 pathways available.

Please speak to our Careers Leader to identify the most suitable opportunity for you.

Premises and facilities

The school will make the Careers Hub, main hall, classrooms, or private meeting rooms available for discussions between providers and students, depending on the nature of the activity. The Careers Hub offers a dedicated, professional space equipped for small-group sessions, one-to-one guidance, and employer or provider presentations.

Audio-visual and specialist equipment will be made available to support presentations or interactive workshops. All logistical arrangements will be discussed and agreed in advance with the Careers Leader or a member of the Careers Team.

Providers are also welcome to leave a copy of their prospectus or other relevant course literature within the Careers Hub and the Library careers section, both of which are managed by the school's independent careers adviser. These resources are accessible to all students during break and lunchtime.

Governor Assurance Statement

This policy has been reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with the Department for Education's 'Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers' (2025 update), the refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks (effective September 2025), and The Duston School Careers Programme 2025–2026.

Date of Next Review: Sept 2026

