

2025

Careers Policy and Strategy



**SOUTHCHURCH
HIGH SCHOOL**

Review Framework

The policy should be reviewed **every two years** (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance)

| | Date |
|--|------------------|
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1. Our Vision

Our aim as a school is to provide an inclusive, effective and stable careers strategy which raises our students' aspirations throughout the entirety of their school career. This is important in order to ensure that students are able to be adaptable, dynamic, innovative, flexible, resilient, self-initiating and collaborative to accommodate and thrive in workplaces, or to create work for themselves. To achieve this we strive to address the needs of each student by providing them with enriching career and educational related experiences and guidance, to ensure they are fully equipped with the knowledge they are entitled to, to enable them to make informed decisions about important life and school choices.

2. Our Commitment

We are committed to meeting national and local expectations in relation to careers and work by:

- Providing independent and impartial careers guidance for students 11-16, that includes information on the range of education and training options, including apprenticeships and vocational pathways.
- Decreasing the number of students not staying in education or training or entering employment for at least 2 terms after Year 11. Current NEET figures are 3.7% (for students who finished Year 11 in 2024). The national average in the UK is 12.5%. Young people who have 4 or more meaningful encounters with employers/employees are 86% less like to become NEET.
- Striving to meet all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks (see Appendix 1). This will be measured using the Compass+ Tool.
- Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is mainstreamed through careers provision, breaking down gender stereotypes and raising aspirations for all students.
- Recognising the importance of providing young people with real-life contacts and experiences from the world of work.
- Working closely with our Enterprise Advisor and other providers to assist with Raising Aspirations.
- Updating the school website with the latest information to support both parents/carers and students

3. Management and review

The Deputy Headteacher responsible for Raising Aspirations/Careers will oversee the strategic vision, working closely with the Careers Leader to ensure delivery of the strategy. In turn working closely with Heads of Subject and pastoral leaders, parents/carers and external providers to ensure the above objectives are met.

The review of the strategy and policy will be conducted annually with the Deputy Headteacher and the Careers Leader.

The current Careers Leader is Ali Smith: asmith@southchurchschool.com (01702) 900 777

4. Implementation

The implementation will be achieved through a team approach, according to the activity and year group (see detail against each activity). All staff have a responsibility to involve careers within their teaching, to work towards raising the aspirations of students. They have received training in the form of CPD linked to careers in the curriculum. The Careers Advisor will work closely with external providers such as Colleges and Training Providers.

Delivery will be via workshops, whole class discussions, the PSHE programme, and external and internal events.

Where possible, learning will be assessed and accredited. Impact of the learning will be measured via pre and post evaluations. The funding for activities will be via school funds such as Pupil Premium, 'Make Happen' (eligibility criteria dependent) and additional funding as required, eg from providers such as Universities [which might fund coaches etc.]

5. Student Entitlement

Year 7 - An Introduction to Careers

- Students will attend workshops/assemblies designed to help them discover the different industries of work, with a particular emphasis on STEM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).
- The Year 7 careers programme will introduce students to learning through self-reflection, explore the career possibilities available, and begin to build positive relationships with others.
- Students are invited to sign up for **Unifrog**, an online careers website and app with a whole host of resources to help inspire and inform students about the many different career options.

Year 8 – Career Discovery

- The Year 8 careers programme will look at helping students to identify their personal skills and interests, learn about the challenges and rewards of work and make a vision board for their future.
- Some students will visit a university campus in order for them to get an understanding of what it would be like to go to university and meet current student ambassadors.
- Students will attend workshops/assemblies designed to help them discover different industries of work with particular emphasis on STEM subjects.
- Students will take part in a careers carousel, where they will have meaningful encounters with employers and training providers to provide them with exposure to various careers and sectors

Year 9 – Choosing the right options for me

- Students will have the opportunity to meet with our Careers Advisor to discuss their career aspirations and help them to decide on the right subject options to take to support their goals.
- Parents/carers and students will get the opportunity to attend the school Careers Fair to give them the opportunity to explore a range of different job roles with emphasis on local businesses and speak with local colleges/sixth forms/universities and training providers.
- The Year 9 careers programme will focus on choosing what to study at Key Stage 4, working and managing money and why labour market information is so important when choosing a career path.
- Students will have an options evening designed to give students and parents/carers the opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss which GCSE subjects are right for them.
- Subject teachers will give students the opportunity to visit workplaces, exploring the types of careers available in that subject and a variety of job sectors.

Year 10 – Post-16 and Beyond

- Students will take a closer look at post-16 options including apprenticeships, vocational qualifications/A-Levels and T-Levels.
- Students will receive support in writing a CV and completing job applications through a series of workshops designed to equip them with the skills they will need for the future.
- Parents/carers and students will get the opportunity to attend the school careers fair to give them the opportunity to explore a range of different job roles with emphasis on local businesses and speak with local college/sixth forms/universities and training providers.
- Some students will visit colleges and attend taster days which gives them the opportunity to experience ‘a day in the life of a college student’.
- Some students will visit a university campus in order for them to get an understanding of what it would be like to go to university and meet students who currently attend.
- Students will get the opportunity to undertake a one-week work experience placement to help them learn about the expectations in the world of work, and gain valuable skills.
- The Year 10 careers programme will focus on reflection, wellbeing in the workplace and preparation for going on work experience.

Year 11 – Planning for the Future

- All Year 11 students will have a 1-2-1 meeting with our Careers Advisor to discuss their options when they leave school and begin the application process for their chosen pathway, with priority given to those students who have additional needs.
- Students will get the opportunity to attend the school careers fair to give them the opportunity to explore a range of different job roles with emphasis on local businesses and speak with local college/sixth forms/universities.
- Further and higher education talks/assemblies will take place, aimed at supporting students in their decision making so they feel full equipped in whichever pathway they choose.
- The Careers Advisor will be present at the Year 10 and 11 Parents' Evenings, to help students and parents/carers with any questions or support that is needed.
- The Year 11 careers programme will focus on choosing a post-16 pathway, employability skills and researching paid work and volunteering opportunities.

6. SEND Students

Students who are identified as SEND will receive additional 1-2-1 support both with the in-school Careers Advisor.

7. Staff Development

Staff training needs are identified in conjunction with the SLT Link for training, and with a continual awareness of local and national careers agendas. The school will endeavour to meet training needs within a reasonable period of time.

8. Resources

The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for the effective deployment of resources. Sources of external funding are actively sought, and shared provision is used where appropriate and efficient, particularly in conjunction with our local network of providers. The careers provision at the school includes a Careers Leader and Careers Advisor, Careers Budget allocation and Workspace for Careers related matters.

9. Evaluation of programme and delivery

The careers programme will be reviewed on a termly basis in September/January/June, using the Gatsby Benchmarks via the Careers & Enterprise Company Compass+ Tool.

The effectiveness and impact of this strategy and the career provision action plan will be based on the following evaluation methods:

- Compass+ Tool assessment to evidence plans and impact on achieving the Gatsby benchmarks. To be re-evaluated every year.
- Termly feedback via Student Voice.
- Activity evaluation forms. To record initial reactions of students, teachers and employers of each activity.
- Impact assessment built into the tutorial programme to show learning from the tutorial programme in relation to careers.
- Parent/carers surveys to be completed during Parent Evenings.
- All Career activities will be logged on Compass+ and Unifrog and reports will be accessible to all students.

10. Partnerships/Service Level Agreements

The school currently works very closely with the Careers and Enterprise Company via the Greater Essex Careers Hub. We also continue to work with the designated Enterprise Advisor, IPECO, and ensure we are engaged in the careers' workshops provided to us. We also work closely with Southend City Council which currently support the school through a mentoring programme.

11. Engaging the Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to get involved in the progress of their children through:

- Yearly information evenings aimed at key decisions points eg GCSE Options, Post-16 Options.
- Access to school website with supporting information and resources.
- Yearly parents' consultation evenings.
- Information provided through newsletters.
- Booking a meeting with the Careers Advisor.

12. Relationship to other Internal Policies

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy

13. Statutory Guidance

This careers strategy is in line with the national [Careers Strategy](#) (December 2017) and [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers statutory guidance](#) (Updated May 2025).

Appendix 1

Gatsby Benchmarks

The 8 Gatsby Benchmarks (updated in 2025) have been widely accepted across government, schools and education organisations as an assessment tool that allows schools to compare their current careers and enterprise advice and guidance (CEIAG) with what is deemed to be a satisfactory level. The benchmarks have been adopted in the national [Careers Strategy](#) and [school statutory guidance](#). For the full report on the benchmarks visit the [Gatsby foundations website](#).

| BENCHMARK | SUMMARY | CRITERIA |
|--|---|--|
| 1 A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME | Every school should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, employers and other agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of governors, the headteacher and the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained careers leader responsible for it. • The careers programme should be tailored to the needs of pupils, sequenced appropriately, underpinned by learning outcomes and linked to the whole-school development plan. It should also set out how parents and carers will be engaged throughout. • The careers programme should be published on the school's website and communicated in ways that enable pupils, parents and carers, staff and employers to access, and understand it. • The programme should be regularly evaluated using feedback from pupils, parents and carers, teachers and other staff who support pupils, careers advisers and employers to increase its impact. |
| 2 LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION | All pupils, parents and carers, teachers and staff who support pupils should have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers may require different or additional information. All pupils will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During each Key Stage, all pupils should access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options or next steps. • Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported to access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their support for pupils in their care. |

| BENCHMARK | SUMMARY | CRITERIA |
|---|--|--|
| 3 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH YOUNG PERSON | <p>Pupils have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help pupils navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities should be tailored to the needs of each pupil, including any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, young people with SEND and those who are absent.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical thinking, showcase a diverse range of role models and raise aspirations. • Schools should keep systematic records of the participation of pupils in all aspects of their careers programme, including the individual advice given to each pupil, and any subsequent agreed decisions. • For pupils who change schools during the secondary phase, information about participation and the advice given previously should be integrated into a pupil's records, where this information is made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition. • All pupils should have access to these records and use them ahead of any key transition points to support their next steps and career development. • Schools should collect, maintain and use accurate data for each pupil on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations to inform personalised support. • Schools should use sustained and longer-term destination data as part of their evaluation process and use alumni to support their careers programme. |
| 4 LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS | <p>As part of the school's programme of careers education, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every year, in every subject, every pupil should have opportunities to learn how the knowledge and skills developed in that subject helps people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers. • Careers should form part of the school's ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support pupils. |

| BENCHMARK | SUMMARY | CRITERIA |
|--|---|---|
| 5 ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES | Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and could include pupils' own part-time employment where it exists. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer. |
| 6 EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES | Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful experiences of workplaces. • By the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further meaningful experience. |
| 7 ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION | All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes. This should incorporate learning in schools, colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), universities and in the workplace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful encounters with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and ITPs. • By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying to higher education should have had at least two visits to higher education providers to meet staff and learners. |
| 8 PERSONAL GUIDANCE | Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance meetings with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These meetings should be available for all pupils whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be scheduled to meet their individual needs. The careers leader should work closely with the careers adviser, SEND coordinator (SENDCO) and other key staff to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded in the careers programme. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every pupil should have at least one personal guidance meeting with a careers adviser by the age of 16, and a further meeting by the age of 18. Meetings should be scheduled in the careers programme to meet the needs of pupils. • Information about personal guidance support and how to access it should be communicated to pupils and parents and carers, including through the school website. |