The Link School

Provider Access Policy

Written by:	Lynn Shah
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The Link School Provider Access Policy Statement

Introduction

This policy statement sets out the school's arrangement for managing the access of providers to pupils at the school for the purpose of giving the pupils information about the providers' education or training offer. This complies with the school's legal obligations under section 42B of the Education Act 1997.

Rationale

High quality careers education and guidance in school or college is critical to young people's futures. It helps to prepare them for the workplace by providing a clear understanding of the world of work, including the routes to jobs and careers that they might find engaging and rewarding. It supports them to acquire the self-development and career management skills they need to achieve positive employment destinations. This helps students to choose their pathways, improve their life opportunities, and contribute to a productive and successful society.

As opportunities for our young people are changing every year (e.g. the number of apprenticeships is increasing every year) it is becoming increasingly important that all young people have a full understanding of the options available to them post-16 and post-18.

Commitment

All schools have a statutory duty to provide careers education in Years 7-11 (1997 Education Act, 2003 Education Regulations, 2011 Education Act) and to give students access to careers information and impartial information, advice and guidance. The Link School is committed to ensuring there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access students, for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. The Link School is fully aware of the responsibility to set students on the path that secures the best outcome and enables them to progress in education and work and also provides employers with the highly skilled people they require. That means acting impartially, in line with the statutory duty, and not showing bias towards any route, whether academic or technical.

The Link School endeavours to ensure that all students are aware of all routes to higher skills and are able to access information on technical options and apprenticeships (The Department of Education, July 2021: "Baker Clause": supporting students to understand the full range of education and training options, and the Provider Access Legislation, January 2023).

Aims

The Link School's policy for access to other education and training providers has the following aims:

- To develop the knowledge and awareness of our students of all career pathways available to them, including technical qualifications and apprenticeships
- To support young people to be able to learn more about opportunities for education and training outside of school before making crucial choices about their future options
- To reduce drop out from courses and avoid the risk of students becoming NEET (Young people not in education, employment or training)

Student Entitlement

Students are entitled to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) that both meets professional standards of practice, and which is person-centred, personalised and impartial. At the Link School careers is integrated into students' experience of the whole curriculum and based on a partnership with students and their parents or carers. The programme is structured to deliver explicit learning outcomes, raise aspirations, challenge stereotyping, and promote equality and diversity.

All pupils in years 8 to 13 are entitled:

- to find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships opportunities, as part of a careers programme which provides information on the full range of education and training options available at each transition point;
- to hear from a range of local providers about the opportunities they offer, including technical education and apprenticeships – through options events, assemblies and group discussions and taster events;
- to understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses.

For pupils of compulsory school age these encounters are mandatory and there will be a minimum of two encounters for pupils during the 'first key phase' (year 8 to 9) and two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (year 10 to 11). For pupils in the 'third key phase' (year 12 to 13), particularly those that have not yet decided on their next steps, there are two more provider encounters available during this period, which are optional for pupils to attend

These provider encounters will be scheduled during the main school hours and the provider will be given a reasonable amount of time to, as a minimum:

- share information about both the provider and the approved technical education qualification and apprenticeships that the provider offers
- explain what career routes those options could lead to
- provide insights into what it might be like to learn or train with that provider (including the opportunity to meet staff and pupils from the provider)
- answer questions from pupils.

In addition, through RSE lessons

By the end of Key Stage 3, students will be able to:

- Identify which subjects they are good at
- Discuss their strengths and weaknesses
- Know the options and choices they have for their future

By the end of Key Stege 4, students will be able to:

- Know their strengths and weaknesses
- Confidently plan for their options Post-16
- Know the options available for Post 16-and where to obtain further information
- Have taken part in a mock interview and careers day workshops and have a CV

- Know what subjects, skills and qualities are useful for careers options they are considering
- Identify skills and experience gained from any work experience
- Visited at least 4 colleges

By the end of Key Stage 5, students will be able to

- Know their strengths and weaknesses
- Confidently plan for their options Post-18
- Know the options available and where to get further information for Post-18 options
- Have taken part in a mock interview and careers day workshops and have an up-to-date CV
- Know what subjects, skills and qualities are useful for careers options they are considering
- Identify skills and experience gained from any work experience
- Visited at least 6 colleges

The Link School fully supports the statutory requirement for students to have direct access to other providers of further education training, technical training and apprenticeships. The school will comply with the new legal requirement to put on at least six encounters with providers of approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships. This will be done in assemblies in National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week, in addition to providers attending careers events at school.

Transition

As an SEN school we understand the transition from one key stage to another is difficult and it is part of the action plan to work with SENCO and the therapy team to support transitions.

Implementation Management

The Assistant Head, Liam Keane is responsible for the work of the career's leader.

Implementation Staffing

All staff contribute to CEIAG through their roles as tutors and subject teachers. CPD is provided to ensure that teachers are confident of delivering careers as part of their subject. RSE has a dedicated half-term for careers. All staff are supportive of careers visit and visitors.

Careers responsibilities:

Careers Lead	Lynn Shah
SENCO	Sian Jones, Sarah Rogerson
Careers Governor	Jane Gibbs

Implementation: The CEG Programme

The careers programme includes careers education, careers interviews, information and research activities, work-related learning and individual learning planning and tracking through Compass+. Careers lessons are part of RSE. Students are actively involved in the evaluation of activities.

Assessment and Monitoring

Students' activities and progress is tracked through Compass+. Compass+ is provided by the Careers and Enterprise Company and links to Arbor.

This programme allows the school to:

- Create careers-focused activities and interventions which can be populated in the pupil profile
- Evaluate and measure the school's performance and provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks
- Produce group or individual profile report to analyse and improve students' outcomes
- Track changes and progress through the Future Skills Questionnaire

The Link School tracks school leavers for up to 5 years ensuring that students remain on a path towards a positive destination, which is important for evaluation. The school also signposts support available for those who become NEET.

Monitoring, review, evaluation and development of CEG

The Link School is committed to a programme of education that meets the Gatsby Benchmarks for careers guidance:

1. A stable career programme
2. Learning from careers and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experience of workplaces
7. Encounters with further rand higher education
8. Personal guidance

The School's current Gatsby Benchmark report can be found in the Careers leaders digital files.

Development

This policy has been developed and is reviewed annually by the Careers Leader, Lynn Shah, and Assistant Head, Liam Keane, based on current good practice guidelines by the Department for Education.

Links with other policies

It supports and is underpinned by key school policies including those for Careers, Child Protection, Equality and Diversity, and SEND.

Equality and Diversity

Access to other providers is available and promoted to allow all students to access information about other providers of further education and apprenticeships. The Link School is committed to encouraging all students to make decisions about their future based on impartial information.

Requests for access

Requests for access should be directed to Lynn Shah Careers Leader. Lynn Shah may be contacted by telephone or email, lshah@thelinkschool.co.uk / Tel 0208 688 7691.

Grounds for granting requests for access

Access will be given for providers to attend during school assemblies, timetabled Careers or RSE lessons, and Careers or Raising Aspirations events that The Link School is arranging. Students may also travel to visit another provider as part of the trip to be organised.

Details of premises or facilities to be provided to a person who is given access

The Link School will provide an appropriate room or assembly hall to be agreed. All rooms have computers, projectors and screens provided. Computer rooms can also be arranged. The Careers Leader will organise this, working closely with the provider to ensure the facilities are appropriate to the audience. Appropriate safeguarding checks will be carried out. Providers will be met and supervised by a member of the Careers Team who will facilitate.

Live/Virtual encounters

The Link School will consider live online encounters with providers where requested, and these may be broadcast into classrooms or the school assembly hall. Technology checks in advance will be required to ensure compatibility of systems. These sessions must be as meaningful as face to face encounters.

Parents and Carers

Parental involvement is encouraged, and parents may be invited to attend the events to meet the providers.

Management

The Careers Leader coordinates all provider requests and is responsible to his/her senior management line manager.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints about this policy should follow the complaints procedure.

Monitoring review and evaluation

The Policy is monitored and evaluated annually via the Senior Leadership Team.

Policy Coordinator: Lynn Shah/Liam Keane

Policy Reviewed: March 2025

Appendix A

Providers who have been invited to date include:

Sutton and District Training

Orchard Hill College

MENCAP

John Ruskin College

Carshalton College

London Learnng Consortium

Destinations of previous pupils from The Link School include:

Nescot College

Carshalton College

Capel Manor

Orchard Hill College

Nescot College

Orpheus College

St Piers College

Appendix B How we meet the Gatsby Benchmarks

Benchmark	Practice
A stable careers programme	The Link has a careers programme which encompasses all the benchmarks. This document is published on our website. The school has a named career leader with support from SLT Information is available to parents and employers on the school website.
Learning from Careers and Labour Market Information	Students are exposed to information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions Where relevant, career and labour market information is used with students to teach about possible career paths and opportunities. Local services and opportunities are explored to ensure families and students understand what is possible and available to students when they transition from our setting. (Residential care, leisure opportunities within the community, relevant charities and organisations
Addressing the needs of each pupil	A bespoke careers programmes has been developed placing the school's student profiles at the centre of the programme. Aspirational opportunities are developed to ensure that each student's 'career learning' is facilitated throughout school's individual careers curriculum including residential opportunities, differentiated accreditation pathways, personal guidance, community learning opportunities, work placements opportunities. The careers team includes the SENCO team
Linking curriculum learning to careers	A cross curricula approach teaches the skills necessary for students to succeed within their future lives. The RSE program lead ensures careers is covered from year 7 upwards. The careers lead ensures opportunities in all subjects to develop careers are followed. CPD is provided to teachers. Students develop their independent life skills and gain accreditations based on their individual pathways in order for them to have the best possible placements, at and post college. The skills Builder Program is used to develop the employability skills of the students.
Encounters with Employers; and Experiences of Workplaces; and Encounters with Higher Education	The Link makes a supported work experience program for year 11 and 12/13 students tailored to their needs. If placements are not possible this in in-house Providers are invited into school to give talks or 10-week programmes such as those provided by MENCAP. We have a partnership with employers such as Newmarket Holidays who work with students. Post-16 Students visit college for taster sessions once per week
Personal Guidance	We work with students and families through transition evenings and EHCP meetings, where the views and needs of the students are advocated to ensure that student futures are supported throughout their time at The Link. We hold futures events for parents to inform about college and post 16/18 provisions