



Abbey Gardens School Careers Education and Information,
Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy
2026–27

Rationale

At the heart of Abbey Gardens School's (AGS) Careers Policy is our founding principle - We Are Brave. We believe that meaningful Careers education and guidance is a major contributor to reaching each student's goals and we aim to prepare our students for the opportunities and experiences of life and help them make a successful and positive transition to their next destination.

Statutory Requirements and Commitment

Abbey Gardens School is an independent special school. The Independent School Standards require us to provide pupils of secondary age with accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented impartially, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps them to fulfil their potential. The Department for Education's statutory guidance, [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#) (updated June 2026), applies directly to maintained schools and academies; we use it, together with the updated Gatsby Benchmarks, as the standard for our own provision, and Ofsted uses the same framework when it inspects careers guidance.

The eight Gatsby Benchmarks are:

- A stable careers programme
- Learning from career and labour market information
- Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

AGS is committed to working towards all eight benchmarks, to recording its progress against them each term in the Careers & Enterprise Company's Compass+ tool, and to providing all students with good quality careers education supported by personalised information, advice and guidance delivered by qualified professionals throughout their education.

AGS follows the DfE guidance above, the Career Development Institute's Career Development Framework, and the government's expectation, from September 2026, that every young person has two weeks' worth of work experience by the end of Key Stage 4: one week's worth of activities in Years 7 to 9 and one week's worth of placements in Years 10 and 11. How we are building towards this is set out in the school's Work Experience Policy (section 8.0) and in Appendix 1 of this policy.

Aims

The purpose of CEIAG at Abbey Gardens School is to contribute to the achievement of the following objectives:

- Motivating students and empowering them to plan and manage their futures, including their learning journey
- Responding to students' individual needs and promoting their personal development, including enabling them to use individual learning planning to assist their progression
- Supporting students to make informed learning and career choices by providing them with information, resources, and access to multiple providers throughout their education.
- Raising students' aspirations through practical activities that enable them to explore opportunities in learning and work, including higher education, that they might not otherwise have considered
- Promoting inclusion, equality of opportunity and challenging stereotypes
- Improving attainment by providing curriculum activities that develop students' career exploration and management skills and supporting this with personalised information, advice and guidance

Delivery

Every student follows a planned programme of careers learning and experiences with four strands:

- **Careers learning.** A careers strand within PSHE lessons in every year group, following the learning outcomes in Appendix 1 and using Unifrog, the school's online careers platform. Every student has a Unifrog account, which records their interests, skills, activities and guidance and follows them through the school.
- **Careers in the curriculum.** Subject teachers highlight where the knowledge and skills in their subject lead. Each subject's curriculum plan identifies where careers links are made, with at least one explicit link per year group each term, and careers forms part of the staff CPD programme every year.
- **Experiences and encounters.** Encounters with employers (visitors, employer-led workshops, the employer challenge day and National Careers Week); work experience activities in Years 7 to 9 and placements in Years 10 and 11, which may be external, supported by school staff, within the school or a combination, as set out in the Work Experience Policy; and encounters with colleges and training providers.
- **Personal guidance.** Careers conversations with staff, and access to a qualified careers adviser in every year group: an encounter with the adviser every year in Key Stage 3 — the format may vary (a small-group session, a meet-and-greet on a visit day, or a careers event with the adviser present) but it is recorded for every pupil — and one-to-one guidance interviews in Key Stage 4, with one-to-one guidance earlier where an EHCP review or a transition need identifies it. The minimum every pupil receives each year is set out under Entitlement.

Appendix 1 sets out the programme for 2026–27 by year group and Appendix 2 shows how it maps to the Gatsby Benchmarks. The programme is also published for families as "Careers and Work Experience at Abbey Gardens School – a guide for parents and carers". This is the first full year of the programme on a new site: the appendix lists only what is planned and resourced for this year, and it will be extended in 2027–28.

Staffing

CEIAG is planned, monitored and evaluated by the Careers Leader and Careers Team with the support of teachers in other curriculum areas, external IAG providers, SLT and governors.

The Careers Team is Philip McMahon, Careers Leader (Philip.mcmahon@abbeygardensschool.co.uk), who is currently undertaking the Level 6 Careers Leader qualification, and Kay Park, Headteacher (kay.park@abbeygardensschool.co.uk), who holds the Level 6 Careers Leader qualification and provides senior leadership backing for the programme. The Careers Team works together to ensure that all students have a comprehensive careers education at AGS.

Mark Jeffries is the Link Governor for Careers at AGS.

Impartial one-to-one careers guidance is provided by Acorn Education's Level 6 qualified personal guidance staff.

AGS is a member of the Norfolk and Suffolk Careers Hub (formerly the New Anglia Enterprise Adviser Network) and works with the Hub for Enterprise Adviser support, employer contacts and experiences of workplaces.

The school's careers platform is Unifrog. It is being set up for all staff and students during the autumn term 2026 and is the record of every student's careers activities, guidance and work experience. Provision is recorded against the Gatsby Benchmarks in Compass+ each term by the Careers Leader.

Entitlement

ALL pupils at AGS are entitled to a careers programme that helps them to:

- Understand their education, training, employment and other progression opportunities and have the information they need to make decisions about learning and career options.
- Develop the skills they need to plan and manage their own personal development and career progression with appropriate support.
- Overcome any overt and hidden barriers to progress that they may encounter, celebrating diversity and equality of opportunity.
- Access relevant information about the world of work.
- Make and maintain individual plans to help them improve their prospects of success.

In practice this means that every pupil has, each year: careers lessons within PSHE; a Unifrog account and an up-to-date careers record; at least one meaningful encounter with an employer; at least one experience of a workplace (an activity in Years 7 to 9, placement time in Years 10 and 11); a careers conversation with a member of staff; and an encounter with the qualified careers adviser – in Years 7 to 9 in whatever form works best that year (a small-group session, a meet-and-greet or a careers event with the adviser present, recorded for each pupil), and in Years 10 and 11 a one-to-one guidance interview. This list is the minimum; the Delivery section describes how the programme is organised and Appendix 1 shows what each year group does.

Pupils will have access to and support by using Careers Information that is:

- Easy to find and accessible in a variety of formats (e.g., hard copies of prospectuses, online materials, face-to-face information).
- Comprehensive; giving details of all progression opportunities and support.
- Impartial and up-to-date.

Pupils will obtain careers guidance that is:

- Impartial and independent.
- Focused on individual needs.
- Supportive of equal opportunities.
- Provided by people with relevant professional training and experience.

Parents and Carers of pupils at AGS can expect to:

- Receive the annual guide "Careers and Work Experience at Abbey Gardens School", which is sent home each September and published on the school website.
- Be able to speak to a member of staff to discuss their child's progress and future prospects (via parents' evenings, phone conversations or meetings requested by parents).
- Have access to this policy online and request a hard copy if required.
- Be involved in planning their child's work experience placement, including giving their views on suitable placements, seeing the risk assessment and giving written consent.

- Be kept up to date about their own child's guidance interviews and placements by letter or phone from the Careers Team, and about the wider programme through the school's regular updates to families.
- Have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Careers Programme and offer suggestions for improvement through a short feedback form each summer term.

Monitoring, Approvals and Review

This policy is overseen by the Careers Leader, SLT and school governors.

This policy is reviewed annually in discussion with staff and external partners and key priorities for action are identified and included in the School Development Plan.

The programme is evaluated each summer term using the Compass+ benchmark results, feedback from pupils, parents and carers and employers, records of participation on Unifrog, and the intended and actual destinations of Year 11 leavers. The Careers Leader reports to the Headteacher each term and to the Link Governor at least once a year.

Effective from	September 2026
Approved by	Kay Park, Headteacher 21/09/2026
Review date	September 2027
Review leader	Philip McMahon, Careers Leader

Appendix 1 – Careers Programme Overview 2026–27

Vision statement: to ensure that all students are fully prepared to leave school and go out and lead happy and healthy lives.

Contact: Philip McMahon, Careers Leader – Philip.mcmahon@abbeygardensschool.co.uk – Telephone: 01284 630 926

The milestones and learning outcomes are delivered through the PSHE careers strand and Unifrog. The experiences and guidance columns list what is planned and resourced for 2026–27; they are also published in the parents' and carers' guide with a term-by-term timetable. Exact dates are confirmed to families during the year.

Year	Milestones and learning outcomes	Experiences and encounters	Guidance
Year 7	Developing skills and aspirations. Careers, teamwork and enterprise skills: what are they and how can we develop them? Raising aspirations: what are my interests? Where can they take me? Introduction to labour market information. Top 5 jobs.	“Careers on our site”: meeting the staff who work in different roles around the school (autumn). An employer visiting school to talk about their work (autumn). An employer-led workshop in school (spring). One accompanied visit to a local workplace (summer). National Careers Week (March) and the employer challenge day (summer term).	Careers sessions in PSHE, in small groups. A careers conversation with their tutor, recorded on Unifrog. An encounter with the careers adviser during the year, for example a small-group meet-and-greet on one of the adviser's visit days, recorded on Unifrog.
Year 8	Community and careers. Equality of opportunity in careers. Different types and patterns of work. Raising aspirations: what are my interests? Where can they take me? Labour market information and what it means.	An employer-led workshop with a practical task set by the employer (spring). An accompanied workplace visit with a task to complete (spring). Two encounters with a college or training provider during the year, the first in the autumn term. National Careers Week and the employer challenge day.	Careers sessions in PSHE, in small groups. A careers conversation with their tutor, recorded on Unifrog. An encounter with the careers adviser during the year, for example a group session or a careers event in school, recorded on Unifrog.
Year 9	Setting goals. What are my strengths? Career options. Raising aspirations: what are my interests? Where can they take me? Labour market information and what it means. Planning for Key Stage 4.	Two encounters with a college or training provider during the year, the first in the autumn term. An accompanied workplace visit with a task (spring). A work-shadowing day (spring). A short in-school placement made up of half-days across a week (summer). National Careers Week and the employer challenge day.	Careers sessions in PSHE and a careers conversation with their tutor. An encounter with the careers adviser during the year, for example a group session about Key Stage 4 choices, recorded on Unifrog. Careers input to the Year 9 EHCP review, which must include preparing for adulthood. A one-to-one interview with the careers adviser where the review identifies a need, or on request.

Year	Milestones and learning outcomes	Experiences and encounters	Guidance
Year 10	Employability skills. Learning strengths. CV writing and interview preparation. What are my goals? Online presence. Career options. Raising aspirations. Labour market information about my area. Preparing for work experience; post-16 routes.	Work experience preparation lessons and induction (spring). Placement time – external, supported, in school or a combination – mainly in the summer term: at least three days in 2026–27, with the balance completed in Year 11. Employer visitors. At least two encounters with colleges or training providers during the year. National Apprenticeship Week (February) and National Careers Week (March). Attendance at a local careers or apprenticeship fair where one takes place during the year.	A one-to-one guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser in the spring term, before placement matching. Careers conversations before and after the placement. EHCP review with a preparing-for-adulthood focus.
Year 11	Application processes and interview preparation. Skills for further education and the world of work. Employment and careers progression. CV writing. Online presence. Raising aspirations. Labour market information about my area.	Post-16 options session (autumn) and support with college, apprenticeship and training applications. College open events and taster days. Interview practice (spring). Placement time to complete their week's worth, timed around exams and linked where possible to their next step. National Apprenticeship Week, National Careers Week and employer visitors. Attendance at a local careers or apprenticeship fair where one takes place during the year.	A one-to-one guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser in the autumn term and a follow-up in the spring. EHCP review with a transition focus. A confirmed post-16 destination before leaving, with destinations recorded.

Whole school: National Careers Week activities (March) and an employer challenge day (summer term) involve every year group, and assemblies with a careers focus take place at least once a term.

Appendix 2 – How the programme meets the Gatsby Benchmarks in 2026–27, and how it is evidenced

Benchmark	What we do in 2026–27	How it is evidenced
1. A stable careers programme	A named Careers Leader with the backing of the Headteacher and a Link Governor. The programme is published in this policy and in the parents' and carers' guide on the school website. Progress is recorded in Compass+ each term and the programme is reviewed every summer term.	Website; Compass+ termly record; termly report to the Headteacher; governor minutes; feedback summaries.
2. Learning from career and labour market information	A labour market information strand in the PSHE careers programme in every year group, using Unifrog, the National Careers Service and local information from the Careers Hub. Parents and carers are signposted to Talking Futures and Skills for Careers in the guide.	PSHE scheme of work; Unifrog activity records; the parents' and carers' guide.
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil	Every pupil's activities, advice given and agreed actions are recorded on Unifrog. EHCP outcomes inform each pupil's work experience route and guidance. Intended and actual post-16 destinations are recorded for every Year 11 leaver, and pupils at risk of not progressing are identified and supported with the local authority.	Unifrog records; EHCP review paperwork; destinations record.
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	Each subject's curriculum plan shows at least one explicit careers link per year group each term. Careers is part of the staff CPD programme every year.	Curriculum plans; CPD calendar and attendance.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	At least one meaningful encounter with an employer for every pupil every year: employer visitors, employer-led workshops, the employer challenge day and National Careers Week, with support from the Careers Hub.	Employer and visitor log (date, year group, purpose); Unifrog records; pupil reflections.
6. Experiences of workplaces	Years 7 to 9: work experience activities building towards a week's worth, with at least two days' worth per year group in 2026–27, including a workplace visit. Years 10 and 11: placement time building to a week's worth, with at least three days for every Year 10 pupil in 2026–27. All placements follow the Work Experience Policy.	Placement records and plans; risk assessments; Work Experience Policy Appendix 1 and 2 forms; Unifrog records; employer feedback.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	At least two encounters with a college or training provider for Years 8 and 9 and at least two for Years 10 and 11 each year, including college visits and taster days. Information about apprenticeships, technical routes and higher education through Unifrog and guidance interviews.	Visitor and visit log with dates and providers; Unifrog records.

Benchmark	What we do in 2026–27	How it is evidenced
8. Personal guidance	A one-to-one guidance interview with a Level 6 qualified adviser for every Year 11 pupil in the autumn term (with a spring follow-up) and every Year 10 pupil in the spring term; earlier in Key Stage 3 where a need is identified or on request. An encounter with the adviser for each of Years 7, 8 and 9 every year — a small-group session, a meet-and-greet or a careers event with the adviser present, recorded for each pupil — so every pupil meets the adviser before their first one-to-one. A careers conversation with a member of staff for every pupil every year.	Adviser reports and action plans on Unifrog; interview schedule; adviser visit log with each Key Stage 3 year group's encounter recorded per pupil; careers conversation records.