



Careers Policy

Issue No.	Author/Owner	Date of Issue	Reviewed	To be Reviewed	Approved by Governors on
001	Matt Rushton (Careers Lead)	11/2023	-	09/2024	
002	Matt Rushton (Careers Lead)	-	09/2024	09/2025	09/2024
003	Matt Rushton (Careers Lead)	05/2026	05/2026	09/2026	05/2026



There has never been a time when careers guidance has been as important for young people as it is today. At Dowdales, we have a critical role to play in preparing our learners for the next stage of their education or training and beyond. Our learners will be embarking upon a career pathway, which is more challenging and complex than that faced by previous generations. Global opportunities and increasing technological advances will result in young people having several careers during their working life and potentially working in a career that does not currently exist.

With the greater choices of education, training and employment, our aim is to prepare learners for these ever-changing opportunities, responsibilities and experiences and to equip them with the skills to manage the choices, changes and transitions ahead of them.

Our Values and Ethos

We want Dowdales to be a proud, thriving and ambitious community and want each and every student to aim high.

- **Proud:** We are proud of our school and so are our students. We also want them to be proud of themselves.
- **Ambitious:** We have the highest expectations of both ourselves and our learners. We believe that all of our learners can make progress and achieve academically, socially and emotionally.
- **Thriving:** We have created a safe, secure and happy learning environment in which all learners can thrive. We equip learners with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well in life. We acknowledge and celebrate their successes widely.

Entitlement

We want a whole school approach to careers education with every member of staff helping to deliver quality and impartial Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance, allowing learners to access the necessary information to help them make informed decisions about their futures. Our careers programme throughout the year supports our careers education curriculum and in line with the most recent careers guidance strategy (updated May 2025), our careers plan supports the achievement of the eight Gatsby benchmarks. We want careers education at Dowdales to not just be a stand-alone strand; we want it integrated into every area of the school and woven into the school curriculum. Our aim is that Dowdalianians understand how what they are being taught will link to their future pathways.

We work closely with The Careers Hub and Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and have developed ties with Ullswater Community College to share ideas and advice with CEIAG. Our independent careers advisor is Inspira who support us with one-to-one guidance for KS4 students, focusing on our PP cohort initially and then other students. We are always keen on developing new partners to further develop our provision for our students.



Aims and Objectives

The careers education, information and guidance programme is designed to meet the needs of each and every student at Dowdales. It is differentiated to ensure progression through activities that are appropriate to our learners' stages of career learning, planning and development.

The main aims of the careers provision at Dowdales are to:

- Develop and maintain a culture of high aspirations through a fully embedded careers education, advice, information and guidance programme.
- To raise and track learners' engagement within the careers programme during their journey through their time at Dowdales and evaluate to ensure that learners are supported in raising their aspirations whilst being mindful of the ever-changing and competitive world around them.
- Build a continuously increasing and relevant network of partners and providers who can engage learners in developing their career pathways. These partners will work in partnership with subject areas/key stages to develop collaborations enabling opportunities for learners to see clear links between their subject learning and the world of work.

Careers as Part of Whole-School Improvement

Careers education at Dowdales is not a standalone programme. It supports wider school priorities, including attendance, behaviour, inclusion, attainment, aspiration and successful post-16 transition.

High-quality careers education helps students understand the relevance of school, the curriculum and positive learning behaviours. It is used to raise aspirations, strengthen motivation, improve engagement and support students to make informed decisions about their future pathways.

The careers programme will therefore link directly to whole-school priorities by:

- supporting attendance through purposeful engagement with future pathways and meaningful employer/provider encounters;
- supporting behaviour and attitudes by helping students understand the skills, habits and conduct needed in education, training and employment;
- supporting inclusion by ensuring SEND, disadvantaged, vulnerable and at-risk students receive targeted guidance and appropriate access to careers opportunities;
- supporting attainment by helping students understand the value of subject learning and qualifications in relation to future choices;
- supporting destinations by reducing the risk of students becoming NEET and improving the quality and suitability of post-16 progression.



Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

DfE Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (statutory guidance, current version)

- Education Act 1997
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Technical and Further Education Act 2017

Provider Access Legislation (PAL) 2023

The Gatsby Benchmarks, including the updated expectations implemented from September 2025



Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all registered learners are provided with independent careers guidance from Year 7 to Year 11
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to allow a range of education and training providers to access all learners and inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Ensuring that the independent careers guidance is presented impartially, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option.
- Ensuring that the guidance includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes such as T-Levels.
- Ensuring the Careers Policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to:
ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedure Policy.
- Providing clear advice and guidance to the Head Teacher on which they can base a career education strategy and guidance that meets the school's legal requirements.
- Our Careers link governor is Caren Hindle.
- Receiving and reviewing an annual Careers Impact Report, including Gatsby/Compass+ progress, provider access compliance, destination data and analysis of participation by key pupil groups.
- Monitoring equality of access and outcomes for SEND, disadvantaged, vulnerable and at-risk learners.

The careers leader is responsible for:

- Managing the provision of careers information.
- Communicating to students via our Teams platform the relevant provision available for them as it arises, e.g. careers talks and provider deadlines.
- Liaising with the Head Teacher and career adviser to implement and maintain effective career guidance.
- Liaising with the PSHE leader and other subject leaders to plan careers education in the curriculum.
- Liaising with Heads of Year, mentors, the pastoral team, and the SENCO to identify students needing guidance.
- Referring students to careers advisers.
- Establishing, maintaining and developing links with FE colleges, universities, apprenticeship providers and employers.
- Providing students with effective careers guidance and supporting social mobility by improving opportunities for all young people.
- Advising Senior Leadership on policy, strategy and resources for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG).
- Preparing and implementing a development plan for CEIAG.



- Reviewing and evaluating the programme of CEIAG.
- Encouraging school staff training to promote careers guidance to their students.
- Using the [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) to improve the school's careers provision and ensure compliance with legal duties, with an ultimate aim to meet all benchmarks.
- Allowing students to have access to providers of technical education, such as colleges, and apprenticeships to ensure every student is well-informed about their future options at every stage.
- Using the Compass+ for self-evaluating the careers provision the school offers.
- Maintaining learner-level records in Compass+ for employer encounters, provider encounters, workplace experiences and personal guidance.
- Reviewing careers provision termly with SLT and the link governor, using evidence to identify gaps and improve the programme.
- Ensuring the careers programme is linked to the school improvement plan and wider priorities, including attendance, behaviour, inclusion and attainment.
- Publishing details of the school's careers programme and a policy statement on provider access on its website.
- Engaging with Inspira to ensure they know which students are in care/are care leavers, to understand their additional support needs and to ensure that any personal education plans can inform careers advice and ensure they have one-to-one guidance sessions.

The careers adviser is responsible for:

- Reporting regularly to the careers leader, regarding student progress and the effectiveness of the school's career plan.
- Staying up-to-date with relevant CPD and developments in the CEIAG sector.
- Attending regular meetings with the careers leader to discuss the school's career plan.
- Arranging meetings and follow-up appointments with students.

Teaching and support staff are responsible for:

- Promoting careers guidance in the classroom through visual aids.
- Creating a learning environment that allows and encourages students to tackle real-life challenges, manage risks and develop skills that can be applied to the workplace.
- Making explicit links between subject learning, transferable skills and future pathways where appropriate.
- Supporting students to reflect on how curriculum learning, positive attendance and positive behaviour contribute to future opportunities.

Addressing the needs of students

Our careers programme will aim to raise the aspirations of all learners whilst being tailored to individual needs. The programme will inform learners of the range of opportunities available to them, encouraging them to aim higher and make choices relevant to what they feel they can achieve.



All forms of stereotyping will be prohibited in the careers advice and guidance that is provided, to ensure learners from all backgrounds, gender and diversity groups, and those with SEND, can consider the widest possible range of careers.

Comprehensive and accurate records will be kept to support the career development of learners. Destination data will be retained by the school for three years.

Targeted support

The school will work with Inspira to identify learners who need targeted support or those who are at risk of not participating in post-16 pathways and becoming NEET. Agreements will be made over how these learners can be referred for support drawn from a range of education and training support services available locally.

Measuring Impact and Evidencing Difference

The school will evaluate the impact of its careers programme through a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence. This will include:

- Compass+ and Gatsby Benchmark review data, reviewed termly;
- learner-level records of participation in employer encounters, provider encounters, workplace experiences and personal guidance;
- analysis of participation by key groups, including SEND, disadvantaged pupils, looked-after children, previously looked-after children and pupils at risk of NEET;
- intended and actual destination data, including the suitability and sustainability of post-16 pathways;
- student voice following key careers activities, including structured reflection after meaningful encounters;
- parent/carer feedback at key decision points, including options and post-16 transition;
- employer, provider and staff feedback following careers events and curriculum-linked activities;
- reporting to governors through an annual Careers Impact Report.

The Careers Leader, Senior Leadership Team and Link Governor will use this evidence to identify gaps, evaluate impact, inform the school improvement plan and refine the careers programme each year.