



MEPA ACADEMY

CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE POLICY

Policy information	Detail
Policy owner	Careers Leader
Careers Leader	Lewis Muir - lmuir@mepatraining.com - 01622 756644
Applies to	All pupils in Years 7 to 11
Statutory guidance	DfE careers guidance updated 23 June 2026
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1. CAREERS VISION

MEPA Academy will provide a progressive, high-quality careers programme that prepares every pupil for a successful and fulfilling life beyond school. The programme values academic, technical, vocational, apprenticeship, employment and entrepreneurial pathways equally and draws on the academy's distinctive connection between education and the creative and performing arts.

Pupils will build the knowledge, skills, experiences, confidence and networks needed to make informed decisions and manage transitions. The programme will broaden horizons beyond pupils' immediate experience, challenge stereotypes and support pupils facing barriers to participate, belong and achieve.

- Raise aspiration while keeping guidance realistic, impartial and centred on the pupil's best interests.
- Help pupils understand themselves, the world of work, local and national labour-market trends, future pathways and the implications of subject choices.
- Connect curriculum knowledge and skills to a wide range of careers in every subject and every year.
- Provide meaningful encounters with employers, employees, the self-employed, education and training providers, and workplaces.
- Ensure qualified personal guidance is available at significant decision points and for every pupil by age 16.
- Engage parents and carers as influential partners in career decision-making.
- Evaluate access, career readiness, transition and sustained destinations, not activity counts alone.

2. LEGAL AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The governing body and academy will have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (updated 23 June 2026). Relevant duties arise principally from sections 42A, 42B and 45A of the Education Act 1997, section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 and the academy's funding agreement.

- Provide independent careers guidance throughout pupils' secondary education.
- Ensure guidance is impartial, considers pupils' best interests and covers the full range of academic, technical, vocational, apprenticeship and training options.
- Give providers of technical education and apprenticeships the required access to pupils and publish a provider-access policy statement.
- Publish required careers information, including the careers programme and Careers Leader details, and review it at least annually.
- Work with the local authority to support participation in education or training and notify it where a young person leaves education or training before completion, as applicable.
- Make reasonable adjustments, comply with the Equality Act 2010 and support SEND transitions, including careers discussion within EHC plan annual reviews from Year 9.
- Safeguard pupils during encounters, visits and workplace experiences in line with current Keeping children safe in education and proportionate health and safety requirements.

Raising participation age Pupils will be taught that they must continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday. This does not mean they must remain in school: suitable routes include full-time education, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or qualifying part-time education or training alongside employment, self-employment or volunteering.

3. OFSTED AND QUALITY EXPECTATIONS

Under the education inspection framework in use from November 2025, careers education is considered principally within personal development and well-being. The academy's normal evidence will demonstrate whether pupils are well prepared and supported to progress, including whether the programme meaningfully meets the updated Gatsby Benchmarks.

- Impartial advice and guidance from an appropriately qualified careers adviser.
- Meaningful employer encounters, experiences of workplaces and engagement with colleges, universities and education or training providers.
- Pupils' understanding of relevant local and national employment trends and how their choices affect future routes.
- A broad, coherently planned programme matched to the academy context and to individual needs, including pupils with SEND and those facing disadvantage or other barriers.
- Successful transitions and positive, sustained destinations, with significant weaknesses already identified and prioritised.

4. UPDATED GATSBY BENCHMARKS

Benchmark	MEPA Academy commitment
1. A stable careers programme	A published, progressive programme with explicit leadership, learning outcomes, resources, staff development, annual review and evaluation of impact.
2. Learning from career and labour-market information	Current, trustworthy local and national information is taught and interpreted with pupils; parents/carers are supported to use it.
3. Addressing the needs of each young person	Participation, aspirations, intended destinations and guidance are recorded; provision is tailored and stereotypes and barriers are challenged.
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	Every year, in every subject, every pupil learns how subject knowledge and skills connect to a wide range of occupations and progression routes.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	From age 11, pupils participate each year in at least one meaningful encounter, with clear outcomes, two-way interaction, preparation and reflection.
6. Experiences of workplaces	Pupils have multiple, meaningful and varied first-hand experiences by age 16, including real tasks, interaction, feedback and reflection.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	By age 16, pupils encounter the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, FE, universities and independent training providers.
8. Personal guidance	Every pupil has at least one meeting with an appropriately trained careers adviser by age 16, with additional guidance at significant decision points and according to need.

5. PROGRESSIVE CAREERS PROGRAMME: YEARS 7 TO 11

Year	Priority learning and entitlement
Year 7	Self-awareness, aspirations, transferable and essential skills; introduction to career sectors, creative industries, workplace behaviours and impartial sources of information; meaningful employer encounter and workplace activity.

Year 8	Labour-market information, stereotypes, subject and pathway implications; first mandatory technical/apprenticeship provider encounter (or scheduled in the first half of Year 9); meaningful employer and workplace experiences.
Year 9	Post-14 choices and their implications; full range of academic, technical and vocational routes; further provider and employer encounters; EHC annual-review careers discussion where applicable; workplace activity and reflection.
Year 10	Post-16 pathways, applications, CVs, interviews, employability and workplace rights/responsibilities; mandatory technical/apprenticeship encounter; meaningful in-person workplace placement(s) and personal guidance according to need.
Year 11	Impartial comparison of sixth forms, colleges, independent training providers, apprenticeships and other routes; second Key Stage 4 provider encounter where required; personal guidance for every pupil by age 16; applications, offers, contingency plans, results-day and transition support.

The annual programme will specify activities, learning outcomes, intended cohorts, responsible staff and evaluation. Timings may change where the statutory encounter windows and pupil entitlement remain secure.

6. CAREERS EDUCATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Careers learning is a whole-academy responsibility. Dedicated careers lessons are complemented by subject teaching, vocational training, personal development, enrichment, performances, projects and employer engagement. Subject leaders will identify authentic connections without narrowing curriculum content or presenting careers as an occasional add-on.

- Explain the occupations, sectors and progression routes in which subject knowledge and skills are used.
- Use accurate and diverse role models, including creative, technical, self-employed and portfolio careers.
- Teach the labour-market value of English and mathematics and explain relevant post-16 continuation requirements.
- Develop career-management and employability skills through genuine curriculum tasks, performances, collaboration, critique, communication and problem-solving.
- Help pupils recognise transferable learning and record or reflect on significant experiences.
- Participate in relevant careers professional development and share useful employer or alumni links with the Careers Leader.

7. IMPARTIAL INFORMATION AND PERSONAL GUIDANCE

Careers information will be current, accessible and drawn from trustworthy sources. It will include the range of local and national academic, technical, vocational, apprenticeship and employment routes. Guidance will not favour MEPA Academy, a particular provider, qualification type or occupational sector.

- All pupils receive at least one personal guidance meeting by age 16; Year 11 pupils will normally be prioritised so guidance informs post-16 applications and transition.
- Meetings are also available when significant study or career choices are being made and are scheduled according to individual need.
- Personal guidance is delivered by an adviser trained to an appropriate professional level; the Careers Leader qualification alone does not qualify a person to provide personal guidance.
- Guidance is prepared, personalised, recorded and followed up. Pupils can access their record and agreed actions before key transitions.

- Parents/carers and pupils are told how to request additional guidance.
- The Careers Leader, adviser, SENCo, designated teacher, safeguarding and pastoral staff coordinate support while preserving appropriate confidentiality.

8. INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND TARGETED SUPPORT

Every pupil receives the core programme. Leaders will analyse who participates and benefits, then provide additional or different preparation, reasonable adjustments, guidance, experience or transition support where needed. This includes disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils known or previously known to children's social care, persistently absent pupils, young carers, pupils with protected characteristics and any pupil at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET).

- Pupil passports, EHC plans and annual reviews inform access and transition without limiting aspiration. From Year 9, EHC annual reviews include education, training and career options, including supported internships where relevant.
- Activities challenge assumptions linked to disability, sex, race, socioeconomic background, family circumstances or creative-industry stereotypes and use diverse role models and alumni.
- Attendance or SEND is not used as a reason to omit entitlement. Missed critical encounters or guidance are rearranged wherever practicable.
- The academy works with pupils, parents/carers, the local authority, virtual school, social workers, post-16 providers and specialists to secure planned transitions.
- Destinations and intended destinations are reviewed early enough to identify pupils requiring coordinated support or a robust contingency plan.

9. EMPLOYER ENCOUNTERS AND EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES

A meaningful encounter or workplace experience has a clear purpose and learning outcomes, prepares the pupil and employer, involves substantial two-way interaction, and is followed by reflection. Workplace experiences additionally enable pupils to explore working conditions and valued skills, undertake a real task or produce relevant work, meet different employees and receive feedback.

9.1 REFORM FROM SEPTEMBER 2026

The academy will reform its programme in line with the June 2026 statutory guidance so that pupils can benefit from two weeks' worth of meaningful work experience by the end of Key Stage 4: approximately one week of varied employer-led workplace activities across Years 7 to 9 and one week of in-person, immersive placement experience across Years 10 to 11. Delivery may be accumulated flexibly and with more than one employer. Remote or hybrid activity is used exceptionally to remove barriers and alongside, not instead of, in-person experience wherever possible.

This is a programme-development expectation in current statutory guidance rather than a new change to the legislative framework. The Careers Leader will publish an implementation plan, evaluate capacity and access, and report progress to governors.

9.2 PLACEMENT SAFETY AND QUALITY

- The academy or organiser checks that the employer has suitable risk-management, safeguarding and welfare arrangements.
- DBS decisions for adults working with pre-16 pupils are made by reference to the regulated-activity provisions in current Keeping children safe in education; checks are not imposed indiscriminately.

- Placement providers retain primary responsibility for workplace health and safety and manage significant risks; the academy follows proportionate HSE work-experience guidance.
- Pupil needs, travel, accessibility, medical information, emergency contacts, supervision and reporting arrangements are considered and shared lawfully on a need-to-know basis.
- Pupils and parents/carers receive clear expectations and know how to report a safeguarding, welfare or placement concern.
- The academy verifies participation, obtains pupil and employer feedback, supports reflection and follows up absence or breakdown.

10. PROVIDER ACCESS POLICY STATEMENT

10.1 ENTITLEMENT AND ENCOUNTERS

MEPA Academy provides education to Years 7 to 11 and has no sixth form. The academy will therefore secure the four mandatory provider encounters applicable to its pupils. The two post-16 encounters required of schools with Years 12 and 13 are not applicable.

Statutory window	Minimum academy provision
Year 8, or 1 September to 28 February in Year 9	Two encounters mandatory for all pupils to attend.
Year 10, or 1 September to 28 February in Year 11	Two encounters mandatory for all pupils to attend.

Each encounter will take place for a reasonable period during the standard school day and enable the provider to explain its organisation, approved technical qualifications or apprenticeships, related careers, what learning or training is like, and to answer pupils' questions. Encounters outside the school day may supplement but do not count toward the statutory minimum.

10.2 REQUESTS FOR ACCESS

Providers should contact the Careers Leader, Lewis Muir, at lmuir@mepatrainig.com or 01622 756644. Requests should normally be made at least six school weeks in advance and state the proposed date, target year group, duration, learning outcomes, programme content, staff attending, resource/technology needs and any safeguarding or accessibility requirements.

10.3 GRANTING, REFUSING AND RESCHEDULING ACCESS

Access will be considered impartially and in pupils' best interests. The academy may agree, combine, reschedule or refuse a request because of the statutory encounter calendar, curriculum or examination commitments, duplication, age relevance, provider quality or approved status, safeguarding, health and safety, accessibility, premises capacity or insufficient notice. A refusal will not be based on bias against technical education or apprenticeships. Reasons will be provided, with a suitable alternative considered where practicable. A provider may raise an unresolved concern through the academy complaints procedure.

10.4 PREMISES, FACILITIES AND SAFEGUARDING

By agreement, access may use classrooms, studios, the hall or another suitable space, with available presentation equipment and moderated online access where appropriate. Providers must comply with visitor, safeguarding, behaviour, equality, data protection, photography and health and safety procedures. Academy staff will remain present unless a risk-assessed arrangement says otherwise. Providers may leave approved prospectuses or digital information for pupils and parents/carers.

10.5 PUBLICATION AND REVIEW

The Careers Leader reviews this statement at least annually, agrees it with the governing body and ensures that it is published on the academy website with the careers programme and contact information.

11. ROLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Role	Responsibilities
Principal and SLT	Give explicit strategic backing; align careers with academy improvement; resource the programme, qualified advice and staff development; allocate protected Careers Leader time and sufficient budget.
Careers Leader	Lead the progressive programme and strategic plan; manage budget and partnerships; coordinate staff, providers and encounters; engage parents; maintain records; evaluate impact; review website and provider statement.
Qualified careers adviser	Deliver ethical, impartial and personalised guidance; maintain current pathway and labour-market knowledge; record agreed outcomes and identify follow-up or safeguarding concerns appropriately.
SENCo / designated and pastoral leaders	Identify additional needs; coordinate EHC and care-planning links, adjustments, targeted support and successful transitions.
Subject leaders and teachers	Link learning to diverse careers annually; develop pupils' relevant knowledge and skills; prepare and debrief encounters; share concerns or opportunities.
Pupils	Participate, prepare, ask questions, reflect, keep agreed actions and seek help when needed.
Parents/carers	Engage with information, events, choices and guidance; support applications and transitions; share relevant needs or concerns.

12. RECORDS, EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The academy maintains secure, systematic records from pupils' first careers contact or transition into the academy. Pupils can access their own participation and guidance records before key decision points. Personal data is processed lawfully, proportionately and for a clear education or transition purpose.

- Participation in careers learning, provider and employer encounters, workplace experiences, personal guidance and follow-up.
- Aspirations, career readiness, intended destinations, applications, offers, immediate destinations and sustained destinations where available.
- Access and impact for relevant pupil groups, including missed entitlement and actions taken.
- Pupil, parent/carer, employer, provider and staff feedback; quality of preparation, interaction and reflection.
- Progress against all eight updated Gatsby Benchmarks, reviewed at least termly through Compass+ or an equivalent method.
- Destination patterns, including unknown, unsuitable or NEET risk, used to improve early support and programme design.
- A concise annual evaluation for SLT and governors identifying strengths, legal compliance, impact, priority actions, owners and timescales.

Success measures Success is not the number of events alone. Leaders will test whether pupils can explain pathways and labour-market implications, make informed and ambitious choices, access their entitlement, develop career readiness, complete appropriate next-step actions and move into positive, sustained destinations.

13. COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Questions should first be directed to the Careers Leader. Concerns about impartiality, missed entitlement or provider access that remain unresolved may be raised through the academy complaints procedure. Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately through the academy's safeguarding arrangements and are not delayed by the complaints process.

14. REVIEW AND REFERENCES

This policy is reviewed annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, the Ofsted framework or the academy's age range changes. Named contacts and the published programme will be updated promptly when personnel or provision changes.

- Department for Education, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (updated 23 June 2026).
- Ofsted, Education inspection framework: for use from November 2025.
- Ofsted, State-funded school inspection toolkit, version 1.1.
- Gatsby Foundation, Good Career Guidance: The Next Ten Years / updated Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education (current edition).
- Health and Safety Executive, Work experience guidance.
- Equality Act 2010; Education Act 1997; Education and Skills Act 2008; Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.