

Careers Policy



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Document History

Version	Comments/amendments	Name	Date
1.0	First Version	Chris Clements (Authoriser)	September 2025

Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Policy

Our nominated Careers leads are Emma Berryman (Personal Development Lead) and Sarah Chalmers-Thorpe (Assistant Headteacher and Quality of Education Lead).

Introduction

Copper Fields School is an independent specialist school providing education for children and young people aged 4–16 with a range of complex needs. Many of our pupils experience significant barriers to learning linked to autistic spectrum conditions, moderate to severe learning difficulties, associated health needs, and social, emotional and mental health challenges. All of our learners are highly vulnerable, and many have experienced disrupted access to formal education prior to joining us.

At Copper Fields, we believe that every young person deserves the right to an education that enables them to become happy, confident individuals with the skills, knowledge, and achievements that will support their future lives. Our curriculum and wider provision are designed to secure the best possible outcomes in terms of independence, personal growth, preparation for adulthood, and where appropriate access to paid employment.

We recognise that a robust programme of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) plays a vital role in raising aspirations and ensuring that all pupils are supported to identify pathways which reflect their interests, strengths, and needs. Careers learning at Copper Fields is embedded within our curriculum pathway approaches (Explore, Discover, Adventure) and delivered through our Futures strand, with clear alignment to EHCP outcomes and Preparation for Adulthood priorities.

Our Careers programme is guided by the Career Development Institute (CDI) Framework and measured against the Gatsby Benchmarks as part of the national Careers Strategy. Together, these provide the structure to ensure our learners receive high-quality, meaningful, and aspirational careers education throughout their time with us.

Rationale & Commitment

Copper Fields recognises that a positive career journey will look different for every learner. For some, this will include paid employment; for others, supported roles, volunteering or developing independent living skills. Our commitment is to:

- Provide impartial, up-to-date information and guidance.
- Challenge stereotypes and promote equality of opportunity.
- Embed careers education across the curriculum.
- Link CEIAG to Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes – our “golden thread.”
- Offer meaningful work-related learning on site and within the local community.
- Work closely with families, employers, governors, and providers to prepare pupils for successful transitions.

Aims

- Support pupils to develop skills, knowledge, and attributes that prepare them for adult life.
- Deliver structured and progressive CEIAG from EYFS through Post-16.
- Enable pupils to explore the world of work and understand the link between education and employment.
- Increase opportunities for learners to access accredited vocational qualifications.
- Track pupil destinations and use feedback to improve provision.

Student Entitlement

Every pupil at Copper Fields is entitled to:

- A stable, structured careers programme from EYFS onwards.
- Careers provision embedded in curriculum pathways (Explore, Discover, Adventure) and linked to EHCP outcomes.
- Access to impartial, independent careers guidance.
- Curriculum learning connected to the world of work.
- Encounters with employers, employees, and providers.
- Onsite and external work-related learning opportunities.
- Participation in an annual Careers Week.

Implementation

Careers learning is implemented through:

- **Curriculum** – explicit teaching through the *My Futures* strand and embedded across all subject areas using our whole-school concept maps, which span birth to KS5. These maps ensure a coherent structure for progression and allow differentiated routes across pathways.
- **Inquiry-Based Approaches** – CEIAG is delivered differently across pathways: sensory and experiential role play in Explore, scaffolded discovery and enterprise in Discover, and project-based vocational tasks in Adventure.
- **Work-Related Learning** – onsite vocational opportunities such as Copper Catering, Copper Crew, Copper Carers, Copper Enterprise, Copper Salon, and Copper Studio.
- **Employer Engagement** – guest speakers, careers fairs, mock interviews, and inspirational visitors.
- **Work Experience** – flexible internal and external placements, supported by risk assessments and tailored to learner need.
- **Accreditation** – AQA Unit Awards, Open Awards, Functional Skills, and Prince's Trust qualifications where appropriate.
- **Technology-Enabled Access** – adaptive tools (Clicker, Widgit, Numbots, HelpKidzLearn, switch-access apps) support pupils' engagement in CEIAG.
- **Guidance & Support** – 1:1 sessions with OFG Futures Advisor, group workshops, and transition planning embedded within EHCP reviews.

Gatsby Benchmarks – How We Achieve This at Copper Fields

Benchmark	National Expectation	How we achieve this at Copper Fields
1. A stable careers programme	A structured, published careers programme for all pupils	<i>My Futures</i> strand embedded across all pathways (EYFS–Post-16); programme

		published on website; reviewed annually through curriculum assurance cycle
2. Learning from career & labour market info	Pupils and parents access quality careers & labour market information	Adapted resources, parent workshops, and impartial advice from OFG Futures Advisor; information shared at EHCP reviews
3. Addressing needs of each pupil	Careers tailored to individual need, challenging stereotypes	CEIAG linked to EHCP outcomes and Preparation for Adulthood; Vocational Profiles and dual-pathway qualification routes reviewed using Learner Ambition Matrix
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	Teachers link subject learning to career pathways	Concept maps for Literacy, Maths, Science linked to vocational skills; inquiry-led delivery across Explore, Discover, Adventure
5. Encounters with employers	Pupils experience meaningful encounters with employers	Annual Careers Week, guest speakers, mock interviews, and workplace visits; governors and Futures Team support brokering links
6. Experiences of workplaces	Pupils experience the workplace first-hand	Onsite strands (Crew, Catering, Carers, Enterprise, Studio) plus supported external placements; flexible models (block week, day release, shadowing)
7. Encounters with FE & HE	Pupils explore a full range of learning opportunities	College visits, Skills Fairs, provider sessions; PAL compliance ensures six+ provider encounters across Y8–13
8. Personal guidance	All pupils receive impartial 1:1 careers guidance	1:1 sessions with OFG Futures Advisor; guidance recorded and reviewed at termly progress meetings and annual EHCP reviews

Work Experience at Copper Fields

Work experience and vocational learning are central to preparing learners for adulthood. At Copper Fields, we offer a range of **“Copper” strands** that provide structured opportunities for pupils to develop skills, independence, and confidence in meaningful contexts. Evidence of work experience and skills will be gathered through the schools’ progress systems using ‘Evidence for Learning’ (EfL).

Aim of Work Experience:

- To support and encourage an integrated work experience program.
- To enable the development and learning of students
- To provide students with records/documents to provide evidence of their experience.
- To ensure all placements are safe and secure.
- To provide students with direct experience of the world of work
- To give students the experience of relationships, routines and processes that are part of a working environment.

- To develop work related skills
- To contribute towards approved vocational and academic qualifications where necessary.
- To prepare students for adult and working life
- To encourage students to widen their horizons by viewing work experience as an opportunity to sample non-traditional areas of work.
- To prepare students by discussing equal opportunities
- To make clear the roles and responsibilities of all involved in work experience.
- Work experience can provide an excellent opportunity for students to develop an understanding of what an employer will expect of them and so enhance their employability.
- Various patterns and length of work experience placements need to be flexible to ensure that the learning needs of our students are met.
- The work will be appropriate to the student's capabilities.
- There will be an adequate level of supervision provided throughout the placement.
- Placements are assessed for risks and insurance checked. These checks will be carried out by school designated staff.

Our Onsite Vocational Strands

- **Copper Crew** – Admin, maintenance, and site support. Roles may include office helpers, message runners, resource organisation, recycling monitors and basic DIY/repair jobs. *Skills developed: responsibility, organisation, teamwork, independence.*
- **Copper Catering** – Hospitality and food service. Pupils take on roles such as barista, waiter/waitress, cleaner, pot washer, and preparing snacks and meals. *Skills developed: communication, hygiene, customer service, practical independence.*
- **Copper Carers** – Animal care, horticulture, and site environment. Pupils care for plants, animals, and outdoor spaces, contributing to community upkeep. *Skills developed: empathy, responsibility, teamwork, environmental awareness.*
- **Copper Enterprise** – Social enterprise and sales. Activities may include craft making, fundraising events, and small business projects. *Skills developed: creativity, money handling, teamwork, problem-solving.*
- **Copper Studio** – Digital creativity and media. Pupils engage in music production, podcasting, gaming projects, and design activities. *Skills developed: creativity, digital literacy, problem-solving, resilience, and collaboration.*

Stages of Work Experience Program

Preparation – the focus will be within the careers program. ‘Futures’ lessons will be stand-alone lessons.

1. Student to meet with careers lead and futures advisors.
2. Liaison with the pupils’ teacher. Student risk assessment carried out.
3. Futures tutor to make contact with suitable establishments, overseeing insurance checks and risk assessments.
4. Attendance – students may benefit from a block week/week’s attendance. Some students may benefit from several one-day placements over a period of time to build their confidence and to prepare them for an extended period. For others the

most appropriate way to meet their needs may be a pattern of one day a week over several weeks.

5. Diary/logbook to be kept by the student, showing what tasks are carried out each visit.
6. Support adult to accompany the student in placement, where appropriate.
7. **Evaluation** – we need to evaluate the placement. We should discuss with the student what they did, identify skills they have improved and acknowledge what they have learned.
8. **Follow up** – letter of thank you to be sent to employers.

External Opportunities

In addition to onsite strands, pupils access external work experience placements with local businesses, charities, and community organisations. These placements are carefully matched to learner strengths and aspirations, and delivered in flexible formats (e.g. day release, block weeks, or supported shadowing).

Safeguarding

All placements are risk assessed, supervised appropriately, and aligned to individual learner aspirations through their EHCP and Vocational Profile.

A letter of assurance will be issued by Copper Fields School to the placement to be completed and returned before the placement commences. If a member of staff accompanies a student, the DBS of the member of staff will supercede an requirement for further DBS checks. If a student is to be independent, DBS checks will need to be completed by the key member(s) of staff at the placement, funded by Copper Fields School.

If a close natural relative is providing the placement, a DBS will not be required.

Partnerships

We work with an increasing range of external partners including local employers, apprenticeship providers, and FE colleges. Governors and the OFG Futures Team actively support brokering links, ensuring pupils access personalised diverse opportunities.

Career events

All Key stage 4 & 5 students are given the opportunity to attend off-site careers events and college open evenings / events. Visits will also be arranged to other training providers so students are aware of as many options as possible. Where a student pathway is to attend a provision in a different local authority links will be made at the earliest opportunity with the relevant people and organisations. In house, pupils will attend the Aspirations event which will encourage making steps towards the future.

Pupils will be directed to relevant websites to enhance their Careers programme.

Assessment, Tracking & Monitoring

- Careers progress tracked using CDI framework, Skills Builder, and EHCP outcomes.
- Evidence gathered in EfL, floor books, and pupil portfolios.
- Destination data collected for at least three years post-16.

- **Curriculum Assurance Cycle** – CEIAG reviewed through learning walks, team planning reviews, moderation, and progress meetings. Pathway leads oversee consistency across Explore, Discover, and Adventure.
- **Dual Pathway Qualification Model** – reviewed termly in progress meetings and annually in curriculum audits, using a Learner Ambition Matrix to align qualifications with aspirations, PfA outcomes, and destinations.

Parents & Carers

Parents and carers are central to planning. We engage through EHCP reviews, person-centred planning, Futures events, newsletters, and Careers Week. Feedback from families informs provision and qualifications offered.

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Careers Lead (SLT):** Oversees strategy, monitoring, and statutory compliance.
- **OFG Futures Advisor:** Provides impartial 1:1 guidance and supports transitions.
- **Pathway Leads:** Ensure careers provision aligns with Explore, Discover, and Adventure approaches.
- **Teaching Staff & TAs:** Embed CEIAG in lessons and thematic projects.
- **Governors:** Monitor provision, support external partnerships, and ensure accountability.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with statutory guidance, pupil outcomes, and stakeholder feedback.