

PRENTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

CAREERS POLICY

Updated draft for governor review / October 2026

Original reviewed and ratified: Spring 2026 / Revised draft: October 2026 / Next review: following approval / annually

CHANGE KEY: Yellow highlighting identifies updated or new wording. Changes reflect the DfE statutory guidance published 23 June 2026 and additional school-development proposals. The June 2026 guidance did not change the legislative framework.

Owned by:	Outcomes and Performance
Reviewed:	Autumn Term 2026
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) programme at Prenton High School for Girls is designed to inspire, inform and prepare students for their future pathways. Our aim is to equip every student with the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to make successful transitions into further education, training and employment. We are committed to raising aspirations, challenging stereotypes and promoting equality of opportunity for all learners.

This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (updated 23 June 2026).

2 STATUTORY DUTIES

2.1 Education Act 1997 (Section 42A)

The school secures independent and impartial careers guidance throughout secondary education. Guidance covers academic, technical and apprenticeship options, is free from bias, and is in pupils' best interests.

2.2 Education Act 1997 (Section 42B): Provider Access

The school complies with provider access legislation, including the strengthened requirements effective from January 2023. The June 2026 DfE guidance confirms that the legislative framework has not changed since the previous update.

2.3 Mandatory encounters for an 11–16 school

- Years 8–9: two mandatory encounters with two different providers, held in Year 8 or between 1 September and 28 February of Year 9.
- Years 10–11: two further mandatory encounters with two different providers, held in Year 10 or between 1 September and 28 February of Year 11.
- Encounters take place for a reasonable period during the normal school day and are available to all pupils, not only selected groups.
- Providers explain their organisation, approved technical qualifications or apprenticeships, possible career routes, what training is like, and respond to pupil questions.
- The same provider may contribute in different phases, but the two providers within each phase must be different.

The full six-encounter requirement in national guidance applies to schools with post-16 provision; Prenton's 11–16 entitlement is four encounters across Years 8–11.

3 PROVIDER ACCESS POLICY STATEMENT

This section is the school's published Provider Access Policy Statement under section 42B of the Education Act 1997. It sets out the circumstances in which education and training providers can access pupils to explain approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

All pupils in Years 7–11 can explore academic, vocational and technical pathways. All pupils will be offered at least one personal guidance interview with an appropriately qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11, with additional guidance based on need.

3.1 Requests for access

Providers should contact Charlotte Goode, Careers Lead, at goodec@prentonhighschool.co.uk or 0151 644 8113 (ext 213). Requests should identify the provider, proposed activity, target year group, intended learning outcomes, preferred dates and any facilities or accessibility needs.

3.2 Granting and refusing access

Requests will be considered fairly against pupils' entitlement and needs, educational relevance, safeguarding and visitor procedures, quality of information, practical capacity and available dates. Requests will not be refused solely because a provider offers technical or apprenticeship rather than academic routes. If a requested date cannot be accommodated, the school will seek a reasonable alternative. Any refusal will be explained to the provider.

3.3 Available premises and facilities

Subject to availability, providers may use classrooms, assembly spaces, presentation equipment, ICT and suitable smaller-group spaces. Materials, including prospectuses and digital information, may be shared subject to school safeguarding, accessibility and information-sharing arrangements.

3.4 Times when access may be given

Statutory encounters will be scheduled during the normal school day through assemblies, dedicated careers or personal-development sessions, workshops and curriculum-linked activities. Dates and times are agreed with the Careers Lead. Careers fairs and parent evenings outside the school day are valuable additional activities but do not count towards mandatory provider encounters.

3.5 Publication and annual review

The school will publish this statement in an easily accessible location on its Careers webpage, alongside the careers programme and contact information. The Careers Leader will review it annually and seek governing-body agreement.

4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCESS AND PLANNED ENCOUNTERS

The following is the planned structure for 2026–27.

Year group	Planned timing	Provider encounter	Statutory entitlement
Year 8	Spring Term	Introduction to technical education and apprenticeship pathways, delivered by an approved provider.	Encounter 1
Year 9	Autumn Term	Encounter with a different provider, exploring technical qualifications and progression routes.	Encounter 2

Year 10	Spring Term	Technical education and apprenticeship provider workshop, exploring sector pathways and entry requirements.	Encounter 3
Year 11	Autumn Term	Encounter with a different provider, focusing on post-16 technical pathways, applications and next steps.	Encounter 4

All four statutory encounters will take place during the normal school day, allow pupils to ask providers questions and involve different providers within each phase (Years 8–9 and Years 10–11). Year 9 and Year 11 encounters will take place no later than 28 February. This is a planned schedule: actual providers, dates and delivery must be confirmed and recorded.

Additional activities may include careers fairs, assemblies, curriculum-linked encounters, employer encounters and KS4 Futures Evening. These complement but do not automatically satisfy the statutory provider access requirement.

Key contacts:

- Charlotte Goode (Careers Lead), goodec@prentonhighschool.co.uk;
- N. Jones (Assistant Headteacher, Careers), jonesn@prentonhighschool.co.uk;
- James McCall (Link Governor for Careers).

5 STUDENT ENTITLEMENT

- A progressive CEIAG programme throughout Years 7–11.
- Impartial information on academic, vocational, technical and apprenticeship routes, including emerging post-16 reforms.
- Meaningful encounters with employers, employees and education and training providers.
- Support for applications, transitions and informed decision-making.
- Appropriate adaptations and additional guidance for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those at risk of becoming NEET.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CAREERS LEADER

6.1 Leadership

Lead careers strategy, partners and programme evaluation; advise SLT and governors; secure compliance with statutory duties; publish the careers programme and Provider Access Policy Statement; monitor guidance changes.

6.2 Management

Plan progressive CEIAG; support curriculum delivery; monitor Gatsby Benchmarks using Compass+; coordinate careers advisers, partners and CPD.

6.3 Coordination

Coordinate labour market information, employer encounters and work experience; work with SENDCo, pastoral colleagues and subject leaders; refer pupils for independent guidance.

6.4 Networking

Maintain partnerships with FE, HE, apprenticeship providers and employers; build an alumni network; identify suitable funding and support.

7 CAREERS AND SEND

CEIAG for pupils with SEND is tailored to individual needs, aspirations and abilities. The Careers Leader works with the SENDCo to provide supported exploration, family guidance, accessible encounters and information on supported internships, apprenticeships and appropriate technical pathways.

The school will consider accessibility and reasonable adjustments when planning every provider encounter and workplace experience, including support for pupils at risk of disengagement or becoming NEET.

8 THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

The school uses the updated Gatsby Benchmarks, introduced for implementation from the 2025–26 academic year and reaffirmed in the DfE guidance updated June 2026.

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

The programme incorporates meaningful employer encounters, workplace experiences, parent/carer engagement, careers learning across subjects, and student-level information to tailor support. The school will monitor its progress through Compass+ and evaluate outcomes, not solely activity volume.

The June 2026 guidance also reflects developing post-16 reforms, including planned V levels and revised level 2 pathways from September 2027. Information provided to pupils will be updated as implementation progresses.

9 MODERN WORK EXPERIENCE

9.1 Current provision

Prenton offers structured in-person placements, employer-led projects, virtual experiences, sector workshops and workplace simulations. Each activity will be judged for its meaningful workplace learning, not simply its title or duration.

9.2 Progressive development

The June 2026 DfE guidance sets out the government's ambition that every young person should have two weeks' worth of work experience across key stages 3 and 4. This is a policy ambition and developing offer, not a new statutory 50-hour duty.

Prenton is developing a progressive model towards approximately 50 hours of meaningful modern work experience across Years 7–11, including protected KS3 experiences and existing Year 10 placement opportunities. Planned examples include Year 7 discovery, Year 8 employer challenge, Year 9 sector exploration/virtual work experience and Year 10 placements.

Hours will be recorded only where activities genuinely provide qualifying workplace experiences; routine Unifrog research, careers fairs and general employer talks will not automatically be counted as work-experience hours. Activities will include preparation, meaningful interaction, reflection and evaluation.

10 EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Partners include FR Careers, Shaping Futures, Unifrog, relevant national careers information services, local employers and enterprise networks, FE and HE institutions. Partnerships are reviewed annually.

References to national digital careers services will be checked periodically to reflect changes to the government's careers support offer from October 2026.

11 TRACKING DESTINATIONS

The school tracks Year 11 intended and confirmed post-16 destinations, follows up where appropriate and uses published sustained destinations data to evaluate the effectiveness of CEIAG and transitions. These measures are reported separately and clearly labelled by cohort and reference period.

Where feasible, alumni follow-up provides insight into later education, training and employment journeys. Data is analysed to identify patterns, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND where group sizes allow responsible reporting, and to refine transition and NEET-prevention support.

12 MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

- Annual review of careers provision, statutory encounters and Gatsby Benchmark progress through Compass+.
- Student voice and annual Future Skills Questionnaire findings, alongside parent, provider and employer feedback.
- Evaluation of learning and impact after key activities, including work experience and provider encounters.
- Review of participation, access and destinations, with targeted action where groups are underserved.
- Reporting of strengths, development priorities and impact to SLT and governors; alignment with the School Development Plan.
- Continued commitment to quality assurance and the Quality in Careers Standard.

Inspection evidence will focus on coherent leadership, equitable access, implementation and impact of careers guidance within the current Ofsted education inspection framework, as reflected in the June 2026 statutory guidance.

13 BUDGET

Funding for CEIAG is allocated annually in line with school priorities. The Careers Leader manages effective deployment of resources.

14 POLICY REVIEW

This policy and its Provider Access Policy Statement will be reviewed annually, or sooner following material changes to guidance. The governing body will agree the provider access statement and the school will check that the published careers programme, contacts and planned encounter timetable remain current.

15 REFERENCES AND APPROVAL CHECKS

DfE, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, updated 23 June 2026:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers>