# PROVIDER ACCESS POLICY

2025/2026

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| *Written by:* | Annabelle Thomas |
| *Agreed by Governors:* | June 2024 |
| *Date of last review:* | February 2026 |
| *Date of next review* | February 2027 |

## Rationale

High quality careers education and guidance in school or college is critical to young people's futures. It helps to prepare them for the workplace by providing a clear understanding of the world of work including the routes to jobs and careers that they might find engaging and rewarding. It supports them to acquire the self-development and career management skills they need to achieve positive employment destinations. This helps young people to choose their pathways, improve their life opportunities and contribute to a productive and successful economy.

As the number of apprenticeships rises every year, it becomes increasingly important that all young people have a full understanding of all the options available to them post-18 including Apprenticeships and Vocational Qualifications (where applicable).

## Commitment

Unified Academy is committed to ensuring opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access our students, for the purpose of informing them about approved education qualifications and apprenticeships. Unified Academy is fully aware of the responsibility to set students on the path that will secure the best outcome which will enable them to progress in education and work and give employers the highly skilled people they need. That means acting impartially, in line with the statutory duty, and not showing bias towards any route, be that academic or vocational.

Unified Academy endeavours to ensure that all students are aware of all routes to developing their skills and are able to access information on vocational options and apprenticeships, in accordance with our responsibilities as set out in the Education Act 1997, the Skills and Post-16 Act 2022 and in guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on careers guidance and access for education and training providers.

## Aims

As a special school we aim to:

- Develop our students' knowledge and awareness of all career pathways available to them, including vocational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Support young people to be able to learn more about opportunities for education and training outside of school before making crucial choices about their future options.
- Reduce drop out from courses and avoid the risk of students becoming NEET (young people not in education, employment or training).

This policy sets out how we will meet our legal requirements and ensure that every Unified Academy student has access to meaningful encounters with providers of further education, vocational training and apprenticeships, in order to further support them to achieve their outcomes and progress into adult life. The policy has been developed by Unified Academy's Careers Lead alongside the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and is reviewed annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy, the Visiting Speakers Policy and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

Access to other providers is available and promoted to allow all students to access information about other providers of further education and apprenticeships. Unified Academy is

committed to encouraging all students to make decisions about their future based on impartial information.

## Student Entitlement

All students in years 8 to 13 are entitled:

- to find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships opportunities, as part of a careers programme which provides information on the full range of education and training options available at each transition point;
- to hear from a range of local providers about the opportunities they offer, including technical education and apprenticeships – through options events, assemblies and group discussions and taster events;
- to understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses.

For students of compulsory school age these encounters are mandatory and there will be a minimum of two encounters for students during the 'first key phase' (year 8 to 9) and two encounters for students during the 'second key phase' (year 10 to 11). For students in the 'third key phase' (year 12 to 13), particularly those that have not yet decided on their next steps, there are two more provider encounters available during this period, which are optional for students to attend. These provider encounters will be scheduled during the main school hours and the provider will be given a reasonable amount of time to, as a minimum:

- share information about both the provider and the approved technical education qualification and apprenticeships that the provider offers;
- explain what career routes those options could lead to;
- provide insights into what it might be like to learn or train with that provider (including the opportunity to meet staff and students from the provider);
- answer questions from students.

Unified Academy fully supports the statutory requirement for students to have direct access to other providers of further education training, vocational training and apprenticeships. The school will comply with the legal requirement to put on at least six meaningful encounters with providers of approved vocational education qualifications or apprenticeships. This will be done in assemblies in National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week, in addition to students being taken on educational visits to providers as well as providers attending careers events at school.

**Meaningful provider encounters**
One encounter is defined as one meeting/session between students and one provider. We are committed to providing meaningful encounters to all students using the Making it meaningful checklist. Meaningful online engagement is also an option, and we are open to providers that are able to provide live online engagement with our students.

## Requests for Access

Requests for access should be directed to:

**Jeremy Crouch** (Careers Lead): jcrouch@unifiedacademy.org

**Grounds for granting requests for access**
Access will be given for providers to attend during school assemblies, timetabled careers or PSHE lessons, and Careers or Raising Aspirations events that Unified Academy is arranging.

Students may also travel to visit another provider as part of the trip to be organised in partnership with Unified Academy.

**Details of premises or facilities to be provided to a person who is given access**
Unified Academy will provide an appropriate room to be agreed. All rooms have computers, projectors or screens provided. The Careers Lead will organise this, working closely with the provider to ensure the facilities are appropriate to the audience. Appropriate safeguarding checks will be carried out. Providers will be met and supervised by a member of the school staff team who will facilitate.

Where live online encounters are scheduled, technology checks will be carried out in advance to ensure system compatibility and that any accessibility requirements are met.

**Parents and carers**
Parental involvement is encouraged, and parents/carers may be invited to attend the events to meet the providers.

## Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and approved by the Local Governing Body.

## Appendix A

Providers who have been invited into Unified Academy to date include:
Below provided as an example

- St John Ambulance
- NHS
- British Army
- Hyundai
- Innervate Careers Guidance
- Surrey County Council

Destinations of previous students from Unified Academy include:
Below provided as an example

- Brooklands College
- Merrist Wood College
- Guildford College
- NESCOT
- East Surrey College
- Fast Forward Vocational Training
- GASP Motor Project
- Haytor Kennels
- ROAR Outdoor Ltd
- Top to Bottom Plastering
- Paul Nevard Carpet Designs
- Hi Q Tyres