



Provider access Policy		
Date of issue	Review Date	Policy Owner
March 2023	March 2025	MCO

Introduction

This policy statement sets out Bedford Free School's arrangements for managing the access of providers to pupils at the school for the purposes of giving them information about the provider's education or training offer. This complies with the Trust's legal obligations under Section 42B of the Education Act 1997.

Student entitlement

Students in years 7-11 at Bedford Free School 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 evenings, assemblies and group discussions and taster events.
- To understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses

For pupils of compulsory school age these employer encounters are mandatory and there will be a minimum of two encounters for pupils during year 8 and 9 and two encounters for pupils during year 10 and 11

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 pupils from the provider)
- answer questions from pupils.

Meaningful provider encounters

One encounter is defined as one meeting/session between pupils and one provider. We are committed to providing meaningful encounters to all pupils 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 pupils.

Previous providers

In previous terms/years we have invited the following providers from the local area to speak to our pupils:

- Kimberley College – 6th form provider
- Bedford Academy - 6th form provider
- Wixams - 6th form provider
- Bedford College - FE College, Apprenticeship provider
- Bedford 6th form - FE College, Apprenticeship provider
- SSG – FE provider

Destinations of our pupils

Bedford Academy	1%
Bedford college incl Shuttleworth	24.2%
Bedford Sixth Form	24.2%
Biddenham Sixth form	2%
Kimberley Sixth Form College	36.4%
Leon Barnett	1%
Sir John Lawes	2%
Other Higher Education Destinations	8.1%

Management of provider access requests:

Procedure

Any provider wishing to request access should contact, Michael Cox, Assistant Principal and careers lead.

Telephone: 01234 332299

Email: mcox@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

Opportunities for access

The school offers an employer encounter each year (four provider encounters required by law (marked in bold text)) and a number of additional events, integrated into the school careers programme. We will offer providers an opportunity to come into school to speak to pupils or their parents or carers.

Please speak to our Careers Leader to identify the most suitable opportunity for you.

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 7	Introduction to careers	National Careers week	Employer encounter University visit
Year 8	Key characteristics Apprenticeship Assembly – apprentice view	National Careers week Employer encounter	
Year 9	Labour market assembly Grouped careers interviews	National Careers week College	Career competencies work Options assembly and parents evening

		Apprenticeship assembly – provider view	
Year 10	Welcome to year 10 and work experience evening CV writing	Work place guidance Interview guidance Employer encounter – Apprenticeship employer view	Work experience
Year 11	Individual careers interview Next steps event CV update NCS programme	Writing letters of application Post 16 interviews	

A number of events, integrated into the careers programme, will offer providers an opportunity to come into school to speak to pupils and/or their parents:

Please speak to our named careers lead to identify the most suitable opportunity for you.

Bedford Free School's policies on safeguarding and visitors sets out our approach to allowing providers into academy as visitors to talk to our students. These can be found on our website. Education and training providers will be expected to adhere to this policy.

Premises and facilities

Bedford Free School will make the sports hall, drama studio and classrooms or private meeting rooms available for discussions between the provider and students, as appropriate to the activity. We will also make available projectors and other specialist equipment to support provider presentations. This will all be discussed and agreed in advance of the visit with the careers lead or a member of the pastoral team.

Meaningful online engagement is also an option and we are open to providers that are able to provide live online engagement with our pupils.

Providers are welcome to leave a copy of their prospectus or other relevant course literature with reception.

Complaints

Any complaints with regards to provider access can be raised following the school complaints procedure or directly with The Careers & Enterprise Company via provideraccess@careersandenterprise.co.uk

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

The school's arrangements for managing the access of education and training providers to students is monitored by Michael Cox (Assistant Principal).

This policy will be reviewed by BFS SLT every 2 years. At every review the policy will be approved by the local governing body.

Next review: March 2025