Provider Access Policy Statement (PAL) 2026-27

Provider Access Policy Statement (PAL)

Access for colleges, sixth forms, training providers, universities, university technical colleges (UTCs), apprenticeship providers and employers.

Introduction

This policy statement sets out the arrangements for managing the access of education and training providers to students at Bedminster Down School for the purpose of giving information about post-16 and post-18 education and training pathways.

This policy sets out the school's arrangements for meeting its legal obligations under Section 42B of the Education Act 1997 and the Provider Access Legislation (PAL), commonly known as the Baker Clause. It should be read in conjunction with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, updated on 23 June 2026.
For information about students' access to education and training providers, see Student Entitlement and Provider Encounters. Providers wishing to arrange a visit should refer to Management of Provider Access Requests, Facilities Available, and Granting and Refusal of Requests. Information about complaints appears under Opportunities for Access.

This policy should be read alongside the school's CEIAG Policy, Careers Programme and Safeguarding Policy.

Commitment

Bedminster Down School is committed to ensuring that all students receive high-quality, impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance.
We believe that students should have access to information about the full range of pathways available to them, including:

- Sixth Form study
- Further Education Colleges
- Apprenticeships
- Technical Qualifications
- T Levels
- University Technical Colleges (UTCs)
- Higher Education
- Employment and training opportunities

The school will ensure that no route is promoted over another and that students are supported to make informed decisions about their future education, training and career pathways.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To raise awareness of the full range of post-16 and post-18 progression routes.
- To ensure students have opportunities to hear from a broad range of education and training providers.
- To support students in making well-informed decisions at key transition points.
- To promote understanding of local and national labour market opportunities.
- To reduce the likelihood of young people becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

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Student Entitlement

All students in Years 8-11 are entitled to:

- Learn about technical education qualifications and apprenticeship opportunities as part of the school's careers programme.
- Hear from a range of local and national education and training providers.
- Access information on both academic and technical routes.
- Understand how to apply for a variety of post-16 and post-18 opportunities.
- Receive impartial and personalised careers information and guidance.
- The school will ensure that students with SEND and other vulnerable groups have equitable access to provider encounters and careers guidance activities.

Whilst the statutory entitlement applies to Years 8-11, Bedminster Down School may also provide opportunities for Year 7 students to engage with employers and education providers through the wider careers programme.

Provider Encounters

In line with Provider Access Legislation, all students will receive a minimum of four encounters with approved providers of technical education qualifications or apprenticeships.

- First Key Phase - Years 8 and 9

Students will receive at least two encounters which are mandatory for all students to attend.

- Second Key Phase - Years 10 and 11

Students will receive at least two encounters which are mandatory for all students to attend.

During these encounters providers will have sufficient time to:

- Share information about their organisation.
- Explain the qualifications, courses or apprenticeship opportunities available.
- Discuss progression routes and employment outcomes.
- Provide insight into student life, training or work-based learning.
- Answer student questions.
- Support students with additional needs and vulnerable learners

Bedminster Down School defines an encounter as a meaningful opportunity for students to learn about technical education qualifications, apprenticeships or training pathways from an approved provider. Encounters will normally last a minimum of 25 minutes and take place during the normal school day.

Planned Provider Encounters

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The table below sets out planned opportunities within the school's careers programme that contribute towards meeting provider access requirements. Read these opportunities alongside the description of provider encounters above.

Year Group	Planned Opportunity
Year 8	Careers and Pathways Assembly & Tutor Programme
Year 9	Options and Post-16 Awareness Activities
Year 10	Work Experience Preparation and Technical Pathways Events
Year 10	Apprenticeship & Training Provider Encounters
Year 11	Post-16 Information Evening
Year 11	College, Sixth Form and Apprenticeship Assemblies

The school may amend these activities annually in response to student need and provider availability.

Approved Providers

Approved providers may include:

- Sixth Form Colleges
- Further Education Colleges
- Independent Training Providers
- Apprenticeship Providers
- University Technical Colleges
- Universities
- Employers
- Sector-based training organisations
- Professional bodies and industry representatives

As part of our careers programme, we will consider requests from any approved training, apprenticeship, technical and vocational education providers, including University Technical Colleges where appropriate, to speak to our students.

Bedminster Down School will also approach these providers directly when planning and organising key career related events throughout the school year such as school assemblies, webinars within the curriculum, including live events, careers engagement events and parents' evenings. Meaningful encounters may be planned using the Making it meaningful checklist.

The quality and impact of careers provision at Bedminster Down School is monitored by our Senior Leadership Team, Bedminster Down School's Careers Leader and the West of England Combined Authority through Compass + auditing. Access and opportunity to engage with technical, vocational and training providers will form part of this process.

Management of Provider Access Requests

All requests made by providers should be emailed at least 6 weeks in advance of the expected date of the session.

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In the first instance, requests by providers should be sent to: -
Careers Leader: Stuart Harris
Email: sharris@bedminsterdown.org.uk

Facilities Available

Bedminster Down School has a range of facilities available to support provider engagement, including:

- School theatre
- Classrooms
- Conference rooms
- IT suites
- Online delivery platforms

Providers will be supported by school staff throughout visits where appropriate.

Granting and Refusal of Requests

The Bedminster Down School Careers Leader will respond within 10 working days of your request being submitted. The designated Careers Leader and Senior Leadership Team will give all requests due consideration.

Once the request has been granted, we will ask you for a range of information to share with our students and parents before the session. This may be a prospectus, letter, presentation to share with students and parents in advance of your session.

This should include: -

- Details of the opportunities you offer including technical education, courses and entry requirements.
- What is learning like with your institution?
- How do you prepare students for their best next step on successful completion of your course/training?
- Provide examples of linking courses with careers relating to the labour market and recent positive destinations of students who have completed their learning with you

Requests will be considered against: -

- Clashes with other planned activities or visits.
- Interruption to preparation for public or internal examinations.
- Availability of school staff, space, and resources to host the session.
- All requests will also be considered in line with the school's Safeguarding policy. For questions on this policy statement or the wider careers programme at Bedminster Down School please do not hesitate to contact us.
- Bedminster Down School will keep a log of all provider requests for access and the outcomes and record on Compass + to support the delivery and evaluation of the careers programme.

Opportunities for Access

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Bedminster Down School offers multiple opportunities throughout the academic year for approved providers to engage with students and parents/carers. These may include assemblies, tutor programme activities, careers fairs, employer encounters, curriculum enrichment activities, mock interview events, webinars and parents' evenings. Providers may also be invited to contribute to targeted activities linked to local labour market information and student destinations.

This policy statement will be evaluated with the Careers Leader and Central Strategic Careers Lead as part of the Compass Evaluation, 3 times each academic year.

If a provider has reason to make a complaint in relation to this statement, please email Mr Jon Van Eker, Assistant Principal Bedminster Down School, at jvaneker@bedminsterdown.org.uk who will investigate further.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality and impact of provider encounters will be monitored through:

- Student feedback.
- Compass+ evaluations.
- Careers Leader reviews.
- Senior Leadership Team monitoring.
- Gatsby Benchmark assessments.
- The governing body receives regular updates on careers provision and provider access arrangements as part of its strategic oversight responsibilities.

The school will maintain records of provider encounters and requests to support quality assurance and statutory compliance.

Previous Providers who have Worked with Bedminster Down School

A2A Youth Training
HMRC
Access Creative College
Knowle West Media Centre
Babcock
Ministry of Defence
BEMA
BBC
Channel 4
Next Level Apprenticeships
Boomsatsuma
NHS Recruitment
Bristol City Robins Foundation
On Site Bristol - Construction Apprenticeships
Bristol Rovers FC
Reflections Training Academy
City of Bristol College
SGS College
DEFRA
St Mary Redcliffe School
Department of Work and Pensions
St. Brendans 6th Form College
Futura 6th
Synoptix
GKN AeroSpace
Taylor Wimpey
Green Light Training
University Centre Weston

Recent Destinations of Bedminster Down Students

City of Bristol College
Cabot Learning Foundation
St Brendan's Sixth Form College
St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School
South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Merchants' Academy
Weston College
Ashton Park School
Access Creative College
Apprenticeships

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Boomsatsuma
Reflections Training Academy
Bristol City Football Club
Bath Dance College
Red Bus Nursery & Pre-School
Montpelier High School
IKB Academy

DATE OF APPROVAL October 2026
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW October 2027