



Provider Access Policy

Draft: September 2025
Ratified: September 2025
Review: September 2026

Chair of Governors: 

Headteacher: 

1. Ethos of The Orchard School

At The Orchard School, ***Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares***. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that every child has the potential to grow, thrive, and succeed when provided with the right environment, relationships, and support. The Orchard Way guides everything we do, ensuring that our approach is therapeutic, inclusive, and centred on understanding behaviour as communication. We are committed to nurturing the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs of our pupils, recognising their unique challenges while celebrating their individuality. Through strong relationships and a culture of care, we create a school where every pupil feels safe, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Principles of Our Ethos

1. Respect for the Individual: Every pupil deserves respect, dignity, and the opportunity to be heard.
2. Relationships at the Heart of Learning: Positive, trusting relationships form the foundation of our work.
3. Equity and Inclusion: We ensure all pupils have access to the support they need to succeed.
4. Therapeutic and Nurturing Approaches: We integrate trauma-informed strategies to promote resilience.
5. High Expectations with Compassion: Balancing aspirations with understanding and personalisation.
6. Collaboration with Stakeholders: Families, carers, and agencies work together to support pupils.
7. A Safe and Predictable Environment: Structure and boundaries foster trust and confidence.
8. Restorative Practices: Addressing conflicts through understanding, accountability, and growth.

2. Introduction

This policy outlines The Orchard School's arrangements for ensuring that a wide range of education and training providers have access to pupils for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications, apprenticeships, and future learning opportunities.

The Orchard School complies with:

- Section 42B of the Education Act 1997,
- The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and
- The Provider Access Legislation (PAL) updated in January 2023.

Our careers programme promotes equality of opportunity, high aspiration, and informed choice, in line with The Orchard Way and the school's Values: *Trust, Belonging, Aspiration, Voice, Pride, and Curiosity*.

2. Pupil Entitlement

All pupils in Years 7–11 are entitled to:

- Learn about the full range of education, training, and employment pathways available at each transition point.
- Hear directly from a diverse range of local providers, including FE colleges, UTCs, training organisations, and employers.
- Receive personalised advice and guidance that supports their EHCP outcomes and future aspirations.
- Be supported to make informed applications for post-16 placements. In line with the

PAL requirements, all pupils will have:

- At least one meaningful encounter with a provider of technical education or apprenticeships in Years 8 or 9.
- At least two meaningful encounters in Years 10 or 11.

These encounters will be integrated into the school's Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) curriculum and tailored to meet the needs of pupils with SEMH profiles.

3. Management of Provider Access Requests

Providers wishing to request access should contact:

Name: Martin Wicks

Job Title: Careers Adviser

Telephone: 01227 769220

Email: mwicks@orchard.kent.sch.uk

All requests will be considered in line with the school calendar and safeguarding requirements.

4. Opportunities for Access

We welcome engagement from education and training providers through a range of structured opportunities including:

- Assemblies and themed presentations
- Careers Fairs and events (e.g. National Apprenticeship Week)
- Workshops and taster sessions
- Employer encounters and mock interviews
- Visits to provider premises
- Small group or 1:1 discussions as part of transition support

These activities are embedded in the KS3 and KS4 Careers Programmes, which also include:

- Dedicated CEIAG sessions and PSHE lessons
- Work experience, volunteering and employer projects
- Transition planning within EHCP Annual Reviews
- Support from Kent & Medway Careers Hub and The Education People

5. Premises and Facilities

The Orchard School will make appropriate facilities available to support provider visits, including:

- Classrooms, meeting rooms, and assembly spaces
- Audio-visual equipment for presentations
- Access to pupils during structured CEIAG activities
- Staff support to facilitate engagement
- Opportunities to distribute approved prospectuses and materials

All visits will comply with the school's safeguarding and health and safety procedures.

6. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Careers Leader and Governing Body.

Effectiveness will be monitored through:

- Student and staff feedback
- Provider engagement logs
- EHCP outcomes and post-16 transition data
- NEET and destination tracking
- Evaluation using the Compass+ tool and Gatsby Benchmarks

Outcomes of evaluation are shared with governors as part of the school's annual Careers and Transition Report.

7. Safeguarding Procedures for Visiting Providers

The Orchard School is committed to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.

Visiting providers must adhere to the following:

- Visits must be agreed in advance with the Careers Adviser.
- Provider staff details must be shared before the visit.
- A risk assessment will be completed for all external visitors.

- All visitors must sign in, wear visitor badges, and comply with staff supervision requirements.
- No unsupervised pupil contact is permitted unless DBS clearance has been verified.
- All materials must be inclusive, age-appropriate, and accessible to pupils with varied learning needs and communication profiles.
- Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The full Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all visitors and is available on request.

8. Policy Approval and Review

Approved by: The Orchard School Governing Body

Review Frequency: Annual

Next Review Date: September 2026

Responsible Lead: Careers Adviser (Martin Wicks)

Link Policies:

- CEIAG Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy
- Curriculum Policy