

PROVIDER ACCESS POLICY STATEMENT

2026–2027



Ensuring pupils hear directly from technical education and apprenticeship providers

St John Plessington Catholic College is committed to ensuring that every pupil has access to impartial, high-quality information about the full range of education and training pathways available to them. This policy sets out how providers of technical education and apprenticeships can access pupils in Years 8 to 13.

Policy owner	Senior Leadership Team – Personal Development / Careers
Applies to	Pupils in Years 8–13 and providers of technical education and apprenticeships
Effective from	September 2026
Approved by	Governing Board
Next review	September 2027

SJP values

This policy supports our commitment to Compassion, Respect, Determination and Justice by ensuring that all pupils can explore a broad range of pathways and make informed decisions about their futures.



1. PURPOSE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy statement sets out the College's arrangements for managing access by providers who wish to give pupils information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

It is written to meet the requirements of section 42B of the Education Act 1997, as amended by the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, and should be read alongside the Department for Education statutory guidance Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (updated June 2026).

2. PUPIL ENTITLEMENT

All pupils in Years 8 to 13 are entitled to opportunities to:

- find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeship opportunities as part of a careers programme that presents the full range of education and training options available at key transition points;
- hear directly from a range of providers about the opportunities they offer, including technical education and apprenticeships;
- understand what different routes can lead to and what it is like to learn or train with a provider; and
- understand how to make applications for academic, technical and apprenticeship pathways.

The College will not restrict mandatory provider encounters to selected groups of pupils. Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support will be used to enable pupils with SEND and other additional needs to participate meaningfully.

3. STATUTORY PROVIDER ENCOUNTERS

The College will ensure that every pupil has at least six opportunities to meet providers of technical education or apprenticeships across Years 8 to 13. Statutory encounters take place during the normal school day and for a reasonable period of time.

Key phase	Timing	Minimum	Attendance
First key phase	Any time in Year 8, or 1 Sept–28 Feb in Year 9	2 encounters	Mandatory for all pupils
Second key phase	Any time in Year 10, or 1 Sept–28 Feb in Year 11	2 encounters	Mandatory for all pupils
Third key phase	Any time in Year 12, or 1 Sept–28 Feb in Year 13	2 encounters	School must offer; pupil attendance is optional

Within each key phase, the two statutory encounters will be with two different providers. Additional encounters may also be provided where they strengthen pupils' understanding of available pathways.

4. WHAT MAKES AN ENCOUNTER MEANINGFUL

For a provider encounter to meet the statutory requirement, pupils must be given appropriate information about:

- the provider and the approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships it offers;
- the careers and progression routes those options may lead to;
- what learning or training with the provider is like; and
- how pupils can find out more, apply or progress to the next stage.

Pupils will also have a meaningful opportunity to ask questions. Live online engagement may be used where appropriate, although the College will continue to provide varied and in-person encounters wherever practicable.



5. REQUESTING ACCESS TO PUPILS

Providers wishing to request access should contact the College Office on 0151 645 5049. Requests will be directed to the member of staff coordinating careers provision.

To help the College consider and plan the request, providers should include:

- the name of the organisation and a named contact;
- the year group(s) the proposed activity is intended for;
- the nature, purpose and approximate length of the session;
- preferred dates or times, with sufficient notice for timetabling and safeguarding arrangements;
- the technical education qualifications and/or apprenticeship routes that will be covered; and
- any facilities, equipment or access requirements.

6. HOW REQUESTS ARE CONSIDERED

The College welcomes requests from a wide range of providers and will consider them reasonably and fairly. When agreeing an appropriate opportunity, the College may consider:

- the age and stage of the pupils and the relevance of the proposed content;
- the timing of the request alongside the College calendar, examinations and other statutory commitments;
- whether the activity will provide pupils with meaningful information about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships;
- the breadth and balance of provider encounters already planned for that key phase;
- available premises, staffing and resources; and
- safeguarding, health and safety and site-security requirements.

A request may be declined where there is insufficient time to make appropriate arrangements, where the proposed activity does not meet the purpose of provider access legislation, where there are unresolved safeguarding or operational concerns, or where the requested timing cannot reasonably be accommodated. Where practicable, the College will seek an alternative date, format or opportunity rather than simply refusing access.

Access will not be refused solely because the College already works with another provider offering similar provision.

7. OPPORTUNITIES AND TIMING FOR ACCESS

Provider access will normally be arranged during the standard school day and may form part of:

- weekly Careers and Citizenship sessions within the Belong curriculum;
- year-group or key-stage assemblies;
- options and transition activities;
- careers fairs and provider events;
- workshops, small-group sessions or targeted guidance; and
- other planned careers activities where the encounter is appropriate to the age and stage of pupils.

Activities for pupils and parents/carers outside normal school hours may supplement the careers programme, but they do not replace the statutory encounters that must take place during the standard school day.

8. PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Subject to availability and the nature of the activity, the College can make appropriate spaces available, including the College Hall, Drama Studio, classrooms and private meeting rooms. Audio-visual equipment and other reasonable facilities can be discussed and agreed in advance.

Provider visitors must follow the College's visitor, safeguarding, health and safety and site-security procedures. Appropriate supervision will be arranged for the duration of the visit.



Providers may supply prospectuses or other relevant course literature for pupils. Materials should be current, appropriate to the intended age group and clearly related to education, training or apprenticeship opportunities.



9. INCLUSION AND EQUAL ACCESS

The College is committed to ensuring that provider encounters are accessible and meaningful for all pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with SEND, pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan, and pupils who may require additional support to understand or access progression routes.

Where necessary, the College will work with providers to make reasonable adjustments, adapt communication or provide appropriate support so that pupils can participate fully.

10. LINKS WITH THE WIDER CAREERS PROGRAMME

Provider access forms part of the College's wider Year 7–13 careers programme, which is structured around the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Pupils also benefit from careers education, employer encounters, experiences of workplaces, encounters with further and higher education, use of Unifrog and opportunities for personal careers guidance.

The detailed Careers Programme is published separately on the College website so that this policy can remain focused on the statutory provider-access arrangements.

11. COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Any complaint or concern about provider access should first be raised with the College and considered through the published complaints procedure. Providers may also seek support from the Careers & Enterprise Company through their local Careers Hub or the national provider-access support arrangements.

12. MONITORING, APPROVAL AND REVIEW

The College will monitor delivery of provider encounters as part of its wider careers quality assurance and will review this policy annually. The policy will be agreed with the governing body and updated sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes.

Approved by	Governors
Approval date	September 2026
Headteacher	Peadar McLoughlin
Next review	September 2027

Reference documents

- Education Act 1997, section 42B (provider access legislation).
- Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.
- Department for Education, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (statutory guidance, updated 23 June 2026).
- Department for Education, What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online.

Contact for provider access requests

College Office: 0151 645 5049. Providers should explain the proposed activity, intended year group(s), preferred timing and the technical education or apprenticeship routes to be covered.