



Careers Policy

Mission Statement

‘To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ’s Gospel’

Introduction

Thornton College is committed to delivering a high-quality, inclusive, and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) programme that empowers all students to make informed and aspirational decisions about their futures. Careers education is central to our school’s ethos and is embedded in our School Development Plan, reflecting our belief that careers are at the heart of education and leadership.

Vision and Strategic Commitment

At Thornton College, careers guidance is considered a whole-school responsibility. It is strategically led by the Senior Leadership Team and supported by governors, teaching staff, and external partners. The careers programme is fully integrated into the School Development Plan and is designed and delivered by a trained Careers Leader. It is evaluated annually using feedback from students, parents and staff and is published on the school website and regularly updated on Teams.

Aims

The careers programme aims to ensure that every student receives timely, impartial, and personalised careers guidance. It seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to make informed decisions about their futures. The programme also aims to promote equality of opportunity and challenge stereotypes.

Gatsby Benchmarks

Thornton College’s careers programme is structured around the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. For Benchmark 1, the careers programme is embedded in the school’s strategic planning, led by our Careers Leader, and supported by the Senior Leadership Team and governors. It is tailored and underpinned by clear learning outcomes.

In line with Benchmark 2, students and parents have access to up-to-date labour market information through Spotlight Series talks and employer events, which provide real-world insights. The programme also informs about the different pathways open to students. Benchmark 3 ensures that careers guidance is personalised and inclusive, with aspirations and destinations tracked to inform support. In PSHE and Horizons lessons, students are taught about the range of options available to enable them to succeed in adult life, including further and higher education, training and career pathways. Bespoke one-to-one interviews are available for all students from Year 10 to Year 13, and on request for younger students. By the age of 14, every student has had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people gain entry to and be more effective workers within a wide range of careers. All students from Years 5-13 attend Thornton’s annual STEM event with access to delegates from 15 leading companies. Throughout the programme, events and meetings, students are encouraged to learn more about themselves; their own strengths, weaknesses and interests, and to relate this to the world around them so that each student may fulfil her full potential.

Benchmark 4 highlights the integration of careers education across all subjects. Staff receive ongoing professional development to support careers learning, and teachers are encouraged to highlight how subject knowledge links to future pathways. For Benchmark 5, all students from Year 7 upwards participate in at least one (and usually up to three) meaningful employer encounter annually including events such as Law Fest, Networking Evenings, and employer-led workshops.

Benchmark 6 involves students in workplace visits and business trips, such as those to John Lewis and Magna Park. These experiences are structured and include opportunities for reflection. Under Benchmark 7, students engage with a range of education providers, including universities, colleges, and apprenticeship providers. Sixth Form Open Evenings and university visits are integral components of the programme.

Finally, Benchmark 8 ensures that all students receive at least one one-to-one interview by age 16 and another by age 18. Careers guidance is delivered by our adviser, Joanna Scott, and is tailored and developmentally appropriate.

Staff Development

Careers education is an integral part of the school's continuing professional development programme. All staff are supported in embedding careers into their teaching and pastoral responsibilities.

Provider Access

In accordance with the Baker Clause and Section 42B of the Education Act 1997, Thornton College provides access to a range of education and training providers. Advice given will be timely and help students to choose GCSE and post-16 courses. Requests for access should be directed to Marie Louise Lewis for Years 7–11 (mllewis@thorntoncollege.com) and Joanna Scott (jscott@thorntoncollege.com) for Years 12–13.

Careers Calendar

A termly calendar of careers events is published on Teams and the school website. These events include the Spotlight Series for Years 9–13, Law Fest, Networking Evenings, STEM events, and visits to universities and employers. The full Michaelmas and Lent Calendar is available as an example in Appendix A.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The careers programme is reviewed annually by the Careers Leader and the Senior Leadership Team. Feedback is collected from students, parents and staff and destination data is analysed to inform future planning.

Appendix A

Michaelmas and Lent Term Careers Calendar 2024-2025

Wednesday 18 September	Law Fest Buckingham University	Years 11-12	9.30am-12.00pm
Tuesday 24 September	Networking Event	Year 12	6.00-9.00pm
Wednesday 25 September	Spotlight Series Dentistry	Years 9-13	8.40-9.00am
Wednesday 2 October	Business Trip Magna Park	Year 10	9.30-12.00pm
Tuesday 8 October	Schools Lit Fest	Whole School	All day
Wednesday 9 October	Spotlight Series Bedford Health and Care Academy	Years 9-13	8.40-9.00am
Tuesday 15 October	Head of Patient Experience Team Bedford Hospital	Years 12-13	10.40-11.40
Tuesday 15 October	Sixth Form Open Evening	Years 10-11	6.30-8.00pm
Wednesday 6 November	Spotlight Series Civil Service	Years 9-13	8.40-9.00am
Wednesday 13 November	Women in Engineering Nifty Lift	Year 9	8.30am-1.00pm
Tuesday 19 November	Aimii Workshop	Year 10	8.40am-12.00pm
Wednesday 20 November	Spotlight Series Designer Creative Careers Week	Years 9-13	8.40-9.00am
Monday 9 December	Sky Academy Studios Film and TV Workshop	Year 10-13	1.30-4.30pm

Tuesday 4 February	STEM Event	Years 7-13	1.50-3.50pm
Wednesday 12 February	Spotlight Series Degree Apprenticeships National Apprenticeship Week	Years 9-13	8.40-9.00am
Wednesday 5 March	Spotlight Series National Careers Week	Years 7-13	8.00-9.00am