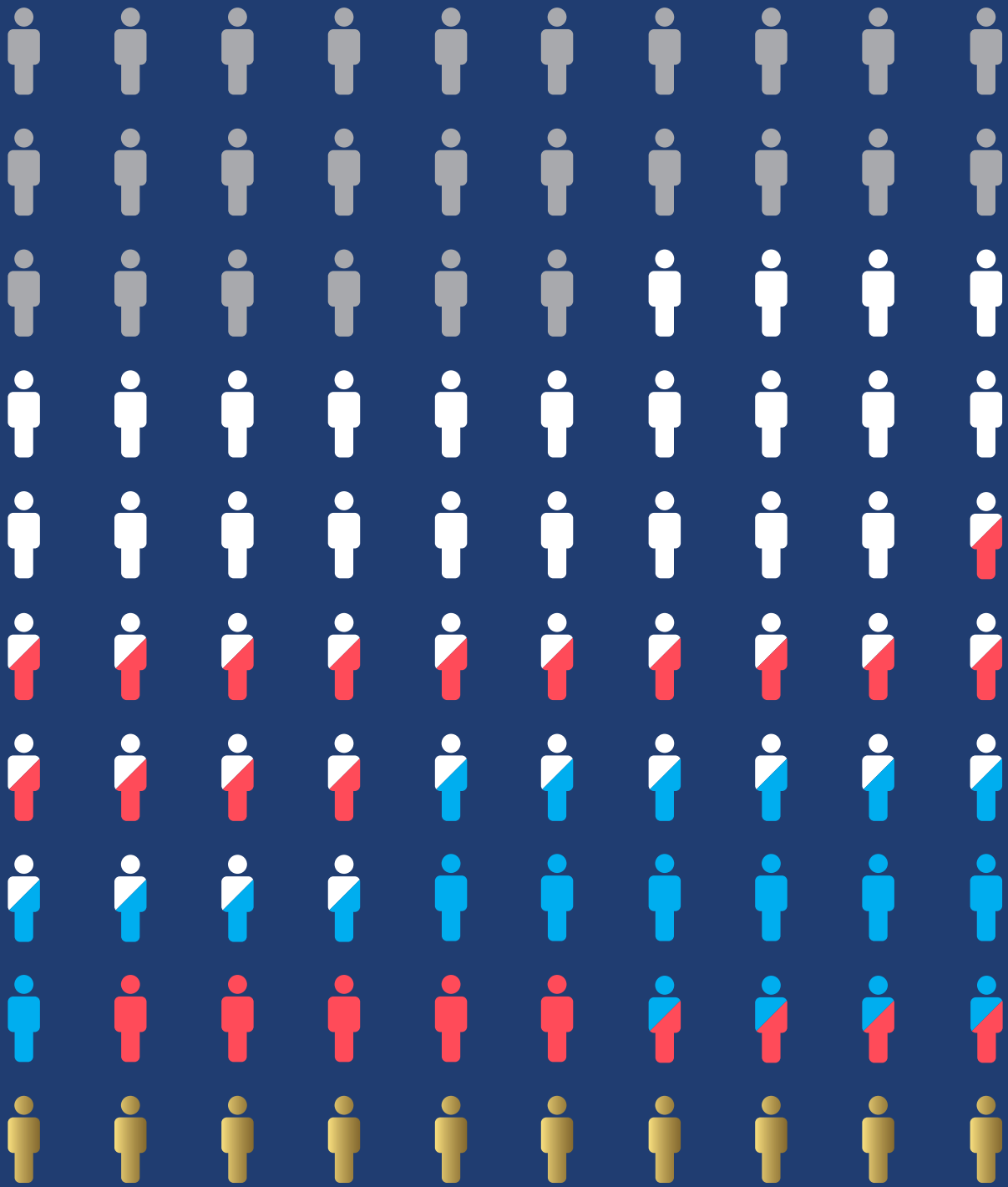




Let's talk about Stanley

'Every moment is an opportunity to
personally and professionally develop'



Leigh UTC
Dartford



Introduction

Leigh UTC Dartford (University Technical College) opened its doors in 2014, initially serving students in Years 10 and 12. In 2017, it made history by becoming the first UTC in the UK to introduce Key Stage 3, aiming to be a beacon of innovative education.

Situated in the heart of Dartford, a town with a higher than average crime rate, Leigh UTC Dartford is surrounded by five grammar schools within a three-mile radius. Compared to other local schools, the UTC has a higher percentage of disadvantaged students (30%) and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (33%).

With a student body of approximately 700, Leigh UTC Dartford is a relatively small secondary school. However, its enrolment exceeds the national average for University Technical Colleges (UTCs), including 130 students in the sixth form. The school's demographic comprises approximately 75% boys, with a lower-than-average proportion of students holding an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) at 1.8%, and 15% identified as having English as an Additional Language (EAL). Nearly half of the students enter with middle prior attainment, while fewer than 12% are classified as high ability.



As part of Leigh Academies Trust, the UTC boasts some of the finest facilities in the country for technical education. However, it emphasises that students graduate with a deep appreciation of the community and values instilled in them, rather than relying solely on its state-of-the-art resources.

Beyond academics, Leigh UTC Dartford fosters a sense of community and belonging, focusing on developing well-rounded individuals and nurturing professional habits shaped by its industry partners.



Our mission is to nurture the next generation of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) professionals, preparing them to make meaningful contributions to the ever-evolving global market.

A journey of transition and change

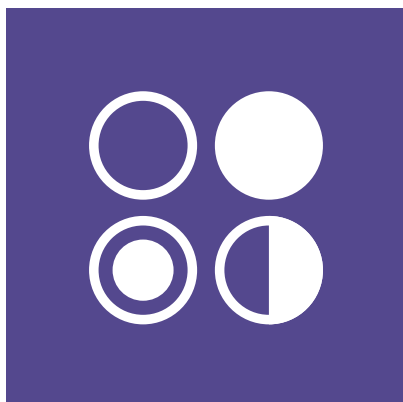
Students enter Leigh UTC Dartford at key transition points: ages 11, 14, and 16. Consequently, they bring with them a diverse range of pre-existing experiences and values, some of which may be firmly established. We acknowledge the unique journey each student undertakes upon joining our community. It is often observed that prior expectations and behaviours may not align with the professional standards and societal contributions we endeavour to cultivate. In such instances, a process of change is necessary. To facilitate this, we employ a simplified adaptation of Lewin's (1951) model:

1. Unfreezing entrenched behaviors.
2. Changing attitudes and mindsets.
3. Refreezing new values to sustain progress. However, we are realistic in our approach.

We recognise that **change is not immediate**, and for some students, years of ingrained behaviours may require considerable time and sustained effort to reshape.

We feel that **personal development is not a discrete subject or programme, but rather a continuous, experiential process**. Every daily interaction offers an opportunity for personal growth. To facilitate this, we employ the 'Stanley' framework, ensuring a human-centric approach across all our developmental initiatives.

Contents



06

The Values Deficit

We believe a values deficit is a greater barrier than financial deprivation



07

The Stanley Effect

We believe in intentional positive interactions



09

Our Common Language

Depersonalise challenge but personalise support



19

Professional Development

Consistently high standards in what you do and the way you are



21

Careers

We do not force a narrative



23

Voice

Perspectives shape decisions, drive innovation, and strengthen experiences



11

Professional Habits

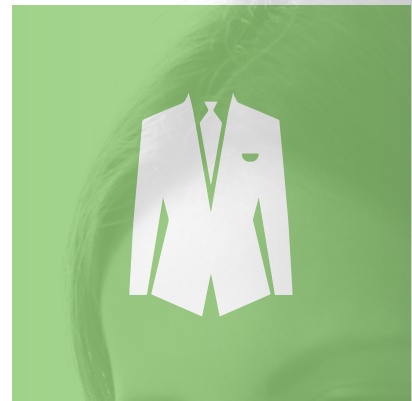
Respect, Relationships, Responsibility



15

Routines

Compliance to self regulation



17

Professional Dress

Clear guidelines, early exposure, self-expression



27

Small School Model

A stronger sense of belonging



28

Staff Wellbeing

Serve yourself to serve others



29

Enrichment

Broaden horizons

Building the Whole Person

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we recognise that each student is a unique individual whose development is profoundly shaped by the experiences and opportunities they encounter within our UTC community. This graphic illustrates how the diverse aspects of school life; academic, pastoral, social, and beyond, each contribute as essential pieces to the formation of the whole person.

Every experience, every interaction, and every support mechanism acts as a vital part of the broader picture, reinforcing our belief that education is not solely about knowledge, but about nurturing well-rounded, resilient, and confident young people. In doing so, we seek to unleash potential and raise horizons, enabling the students for whom we work to become the architects of their own future.



The Values Deficit



We believe that the apparent values deficit is a greater barrier than financial deprivation. Of course, a values deficit is often a byproduct of financial deprivation, but we believe that they can coexist without the other.

For this, let's use the DfE definition of 'disadvantaged,' often tied to household income. While the well-documented attainment gap is clear, we need to dig deeper into the factors at play.

When PP funding was introduced, schools rushed to use the money for trips or revision guides to 'close the gap.' Whilst such strategies may have had marginal impact, they only scratched the surface.

Now, let's introduce what we call the values deficit—a different kind of disadvantage. For us, this is the real barrier behind some of the largest gaps, often more significant than household income. There's a strong correlation between value deficits and underperforming groups. Here are contrasting examples:

An inner-city school

An inner-city school with high deprivation, where many FSM-eligible students outperformed expectations. Why?

- Incredible teachers broke barriers and rejected imposed labels.
- Parents instilled values like hard work, resilience, and the desire to break poverty cycles.
- Wearing immaculate uniforms they ironed themselves.
- Preparing nutritious, home-cooked meals.
- Studying with discipline—not because they had the latest gadgets, but because they internalised responsibility.

A rural school

Contrast this with a rural school, low in deprivation but high in a value deficit. These students lack financial barriers but exhibit:

- Little accountability or appreciation for what they have.
- Open defiance, confident 'Mummy' or 'Daddy' will defend them, regardless of the situation.

Compounded Disadvantage

When financial barriers and a value deficit coexist, we encounter what a colleague phrase as compounded disadvantage—double, triple, or even quadruple disadvantage. For instance, white British FSM boys with SEN often fall into this category. The challenge in secondary education is that we have five years to reshape values formed over eleven years—a monumental task.



The Stanley Effect

Stanley could be male, female, non-binary, transgender...

Stanley could be of any ability—remember, we are all low ability at something!

Stanley could be of any ethnicity or heritage.

Stanley is not limited by background or any characteristic.

Why Do Positive Intentional Interactions Matter?

For some students, the next intentional positive interaction they experience may not happen until 8.00am the next day when they walk through the gate again. Make it count. Intentional positive interactions breed Intentional positive interactions.



And remember: Not everything we measure is measurable. Stanley is not a MUG. Stanley has feelings.

Let's explore two contrasting daily school experiences for Stanley.

inspiration
education

	Positive Intentional Interaction	Contrast
Entry Through the School Gate	<i>"Good morning, Stanley!" (Vice Principal)</i>	<i>The Vice Principal is on their phone or talking to a colleague, ignoring Stanley.</i>
Morning Lineup	<i>"Good morning, everyone. It's great to gather as a team. Let's remind ourselves of the professional expectations that shape our habits."</i>	<i>"Be quiet, all of you! I hope you brought your equipment today—I'm not your mother!"</i>
Transition to Lesson: Stanley walks past two staff members	<i>"You look very professional this morning, Stanley. Thank you for your contribution to yesterday's lesson!"</i>	<i>One staff member looks Stanley up and down to check their uniform but says nothing. The other doesn't acknowledge Stanley at all—not even a smile.</i>
Lesson 1	<i>"Stanley, would you like to share your response with the class? Thank you—that was very well thought out. Would anyone like to comment on what they appreciated about Stanley's answer?"</i>	<i>"Stanley, you're not paying attention, so I'm picking on you. Wrong answer. Can anyone tell Stanley the correct one?"</i>
Lesson 2: Teacher circulating the room	<i>"Stanley, can I help with Question 5? Can you recall Friday's lesson and how it connects to this question?"</i>	<i>"Stanley, you've missed Question 5. We covered that last week—you should know it."</i>
Breaktime (Catering Staff)	<i>"What would you like, Stanley? If you're unsure, I recommend X—it's delicious and healthy!"</i>	<i>"Yes? What do you want? Hurry up—there's a queue behind you."</i>
Breaktime: Stanley sits with friends	<i>"Stanley, it's great to see you enjoying yourself. Just a quick reminder—please sit down while in the dining area."</i>	<i>"What's so funny? Sit down, all of you."</i>
Afternoon Lineup	<i>"Thank you to everyone who has lined up quickly and stayed silent—you've modeled the correct habits for others."</i>	<i>"If you don't hurry up, you're all getting detention!"</i>

Our common language

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we use common language to breed consistency and avoid misinterpretation.

Our belief in the power of language extends beyond mere communication; it's a cornerstone of our approach to fostering a supportive and equitable learning environment. We understand that consistent language, used uniformly by all staff, creates a shared understanding and minimises the impact of personal barriers.

By adhering to a consistent vocabulary and approach, we shift the focus from the individual to the established expectations. When a student's actions fall short, our language highlights the discrepancy between their behaviour and the desired standard, rather than placing the student themselves under scrutiny. For example, instead of saying, "You are wearing the wrong trousers," we might say, "The professional dress code requires tailored trousers." This subtle but significant shift de-personalises the challenge, making it less

about the student's character and more about a shared understanding of expectations.

This approach is crucial in creating an environment where students feel safe to learn and grow. While we strongly promote student accountability and emphasise that individuals are in control of their actions, we also recognize the importance of de-personalising challenges. By consistently using common language, we remove the emotional charge that can hinder learning and create a space where students can reflect on their actions without feeling personally attacked.

Many schools now demand silence during transition, but we believe that enforcing constant silence can hinder this natural process. Communication is vital for learning, development, and building social skills. A constant demand for silence can create a stressful and tense atmosphere, leading to anxiety, especially for students who struggle with rigid environments.

Consistent expectations

This consistent language ensures that expectations are clear and predictable, reducing anxiety and fostering a sense of fairness. It allows students to understand that when they are challenged, it is not a personal judgment, but a reflection of the established standards that apply to everyone.

This fosters a culture of professionalism and accountability, where students are empowered to take ownership of their learning and development, while also feeling supported in their journey.

We believe in the transformative power of language, used with both precision and empathy. We've established a culture where consistent language de-personalises challenges, ensuring that expectations, not individuals, are the focus.

However, we also understand that true support requires a deeply personal touch. While we de-personalise challenges to maintain fairness and clarity, we ensure that support is tailored to each student's unique needs. We avoid generic stereotypes and assumptions, recognising that every student is an individual with their own strengths, challenges, and aspirations.



We refuse to limit a student's potential based on their starting point or contextual information. We understand that every student has the capacity for growth and achievement, and we are committed to providing the personalised support they need to reach their full potential. This means:



Individualised support

We take the time to understand each student's specific needs, learning styles, and aspirations.



Avoiding stereotypes

We reject the use of generalisations or assumptions about students based on their background or any other factor.



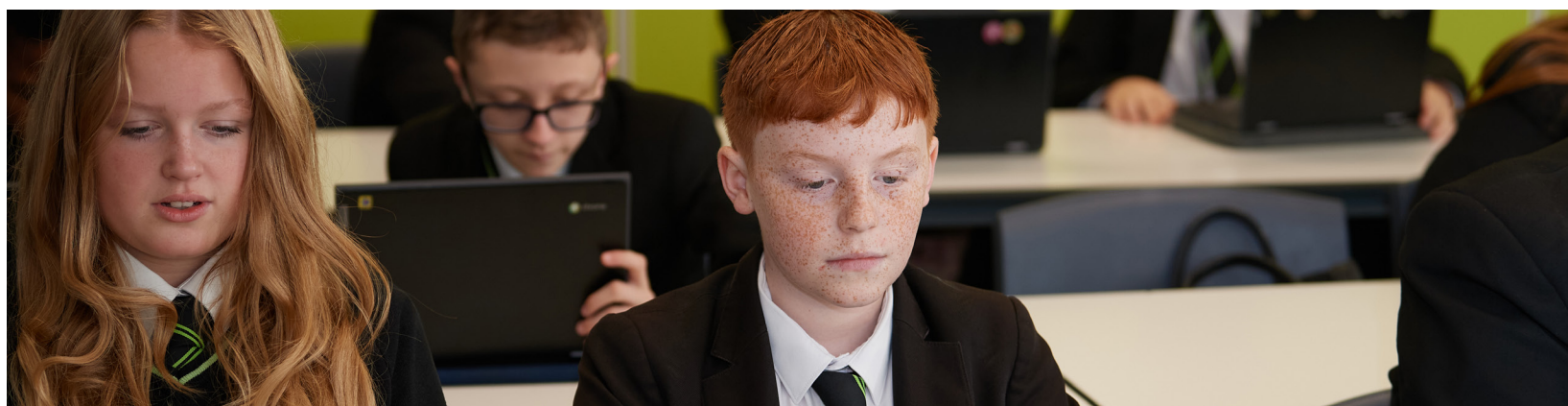
Focusing on potential

We believe in the inherent potential of every student and work to create a learning environment where they can thrive.



Contextual awareness, not limitation

We recognise that contextual information is important, but we do not allow it to define or limit what a student can achieve.



By balancing the depersonalisation of challenges with the personalisation of support, we create a learning environment where students feel both supported and challenged. We empower them to take ownership of their learning, while also providing the individual guidance they need to succeed. At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that every student has the potential to achieve great things, and we are committed to helping them reach their full potential, one carefully chosen word at a time.

Professional Habits

We believe in the power of habit

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we are developing STEM professionals for the future global market. We will be preparing students by instilling professional habits of behaviour and conduct. Students will be equipped with the skills to enable them to be successful both academically and socially.

THINK: RESPECT

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we will show respect in all aspects of what we do, ensuring that our learners are open-minded, caring and balanced.

Ourselfs

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that learners should feel a sense of pride gained through consistent self respect and positive personal growth.

- Consistently wearing the correct uniform appropriately.
- Having an awareness of our own strengths and areas for development.
- Knowing and doing right from wrong.

Others

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we recognise that mutual respect underpins the development of a positive environment where everyone feels valued.

- Showing respect to everyone we meet, including all members of staff, visitors and the wider community.
- Moving safely and purposefully around the school building.
- Keeping our hands to ourselves.

Learning

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that all students should be able to learn in a disruption free environment in order to make accelerated progress.

- Attending and being punctual to school every day.
- Following Leigh UTC Dartford habits of attention.
- Creating and maintaining a disruption free environment for all students.

Environment

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that all students should be respectful towards, and value their surroundings.

- Putting rubbish in the bin.
- Clearing away and working to create a tidy environment for all.
- No graffiti or destruction of property.



ACT: RELATIONSHIPS

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we will actively work to develop and support a culture of balanced and reflective communication.

Active listeners

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that actively listening enables us to deepen our understanding and knowledge.

- Displaying habits of attention during lessons.
- Listen attentively to other people at all times both inside and outside the classroom.
- Responding, acknowledging and reflecting on what's being said.

Collaboration

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that through collaboration students are able to better understand and express ideas.

- Cooperating with others through supporting and challenging.
- Working for a common outcome.
- Giving and receiving feedback to enhance and improve.

Caring

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that through showing empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others we make a positive difference to the lives of others.

- Showing empathy and compassion to others and the environment.
- Respecting the needs and feelings of others.
- Using positive language.

Open-minded

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that students should be open minded to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities.

- Understanding and appreciating different cultures and histories.
- Being open to the varying perspectives, values and traditions of others.
- Seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

A photograph of two young men in school uniforms walking outdoors. The man on the left is wearing a blue suit and tie, and the man on the right is wearing a black suit and tie. Both are wearing lanyards with the word 'Turing' repeated. The background shows other students and a building.

Our relentless mission is to unleash potential in order to raise horizons, enabling the students for whom we work to become architects of their future.



PERFORM: RESPONSIBILITY

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we guide our learners and encourage them to take ownership of their own actions. We guide them to develop into principled individuals who behave consistently.

Perseverance

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that resilient students display perseverance and a determination to succeed.

- Committing to making sustained progress in all subjects.
- Arriving on time to school every day.
- Consistently attending extra curricular activities.

Integrity

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that we should all display integrity, through being honest, trustworthy and by taking responsibility for our own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

- Accepting sanctions in line with school policy.
- Attending homework catch up sessions.
- Being honest and making ethical choices even when faced with difficult situations.

Reflective

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that being reflective enables us to take ownership of our actions and consider our own actions.

- Apologising when our actions have hurt others.
- Engaging in restorative conversations.
- Giving and receiving feedback.

Independence

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that encouraging independence allows students to make informed choices and take responsibility.

- Completing all homework tasks.
- Bringing all equipment to school including charged Chromebooks.
- Bringing PE kit when required.

Routines

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that establishing routines is highly beneficial for students, contributing significantly to their overall development and well-being. In essence, routines provide students with a sense of structure, security, and predictability, which are essential for their healthy development.

However, as students progress through their time at Leigh UTC Dartford, aligned with our mission to bring routines from compliance to self regulation, we start to remove parts of this structure. In year 10, students are still expected to line up but are then expected to transition to lessons without the guidance of their teacher. In year 11, there is no formal line up after recreational times as students are expected to demonstrate the above five points without guidance.

Why routines?

Provide a sense of security

- Predictability is comforting for students. Knowing what to expect throughout the day reduces anxiety and fosters a sense of security.
- Routines create a stable environment, allowing students to feel safe and confident.

Promote emotional regulation

- Consistent routines help children manage their emotions by providing a framework for their day.
- Knowing what comes next helps them anticipate transitions and reduces the likelihood of emotional outbursts.

Enhance cognitive development

- Routines help students learn about time, sequence, and organisation.
- They also promote independence by teaching students how to complete tasks and manage their time.

Foster independence

- Routines, when implemented well, allow students to know what is expected of them, and therefore allows them to complete tasks on their own.

Reduce stress

- For both students and staff, routines reduce daily stress. When things are predictable, less time is spent trying to decide what to do next.



Why line up?

Making students line up is good practice for several reasons, especially in a school setting where organisation and safety are priorities. Here's why we believe it's beneficial:



Promotes order and structure

Lining up helps maintain a sense of organisation, preventing chaos when transitioning between activities or locations.



Encourages patience

Students learn to wait their turn and follow instructions, which are valuable life skills.



Eases transitions

Moving from one place to another (e.g. playground to classroom) is smoother and more efficient when students are in a structured line rather than moving in a disorderly group.



Fosters respect and cooperation

It teaches students to respect personal space and cooperate with peers, reinforcing positive social behaviour.



Prepares for real-world situations

In many aspects of adult life (e.g. waiting in lines at stores, airports, or events), knowing how to line up and wait appropriately is essential.





Professional Dress

By thoughtfully allowing students to choose their own professional attire within existing uniform expectations, Leigh UTC Dartford fosters valuable life skills, promotes a sense of responsibility, and helps students develop a positive understanding of professionalism from an early age.

Our considerations



Clear guidelines

We provide clear guidelines and expectations for professional attire to ensure that the choices remain appropriate and aligned with our values.



Affordability

We consider the financial implications for families and ensure that the expectations for professional attire are affordable and accessible to all students.



Age-appropriate

The level of choice and the specific expectations for professional attire are age-appropriate and gradually increase as students pass through key stages.

We believe maintaining uniform expectations, allowing students to choose their own professional attire at an earlier than typical age, can offer several benefits.



Developing responsibility and decision-making

Choice and ownership: Giving students the autonomy to select their professional attire fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership over their appearance. This can encourage them to think critically about what is appropriate and presentable in a professional setting.

Decision-making skills: Making choices about clothing helps students develop essential decision-making skills. They learn to consider factors like comfort, appropriateness for different situations, and personal style within the boundaries of professional expectations.



Boosting confidence and self-expression

Personal style: Allowing some level of personal choice within a professional framework can help students express their individuality and develop a sense of personal style. This can boost their confidence and self-esteem.

Positive self-image: When students feel comfortable and confident in their attire, it can positively impact their self-image and overall well-being. This can contribute to a more positive learning environment.



Understanding professionalism

Early exposure: Introducing professional attire at a young age provides early exposure to the concept of dressing for success. It helps students understand that clothing can influence perceptions and is an important aspect of professional environments.

Contextual learning: By choosing their own professional attire, students can learn about the nuances of professional dress in a practical way. They can explore different styles and understand what is considered appropriate in various contexts, while still adhering to school guidelines.



Balancing uniformity and individuality

Gradual transition: This approach can serve as a gradual transition towards more independent choices in later years. It provides a structured environment where students can learn about professional dress within established guidelines.

Maintaining school standards: While allowing choice, the uniform expectations still provide a framework for maintaining a sense of order, equality, and school identity. This ensures that the focus remains on learning while incorporating the benefits of personal choice.

Professional Development

At Leigh UTC Dartford, our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE), Citizenship, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programmes are integrated and delivered through the framework of professional development. We posit that the concept of 'professionalism' encompasses a broad spectrum of essential attributes, transcending any single professional domain.



Professionals are characterised by a commitment to continuous improvement, adherence to rigorous ethical standards, and the prioritisation of respect, positive relationships, and responsibility. Moreover, professionals are held accountable for their actions. All year groups participate in a daily 30-minute professional development session each morning. Each student therefore receives 30 minutes of dedicated professional development daily. Each year group engages with a distinct focus or theme within each module, primarily facilitated by their designated professional development mentor.

These themes are consistently applied throughout their five-year educational journey, enabling a progressive, spiral-sequenced model of knowledge, skills, and understanding, delivered in an age-appropriate manner. Once weekly, all students attend an assembly within their respective college key stages. These assembly themes are consistent, aligned with national

and international calendar notable days, and delivered by a variety of staff members or guest speakers, providing diverse perspectives. In Key Stage 3, students also participate in a 65 minute timetabled session each week for professional development. While fulfilling statutory requirements, we also ensure these programmes address the specific needs of our local context. At Key Stage 5, our provision is centred around Health and Wellbeing, Relationships, and Living in the Wider World.

Assessment of these programmes will employ both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to evaluate changes in student confidence, interest in STEM subjects, understanding of real-world applications, and future ambitions. Semi-structured interviews with professional development mentors and students will explore key takeaways, areas for improvement, and the sustainability of impacts over time.

Empowering Diversity in STEM: The >STEM Initiative



Our >STEM initiative exemplifies our commitment to inclusive excellence by addressing gender disparities in advanced STEM participation. Founded in response to observed enrollment patterns, this staff-student community connects young women and non-binary learners with industry role models through partnerships with leading employers including FM Conway, York Water Company, Fujitsu, Kenard Electronics, ASN, and BAE Systems.

Through mentorship opportunities, site visits, guest speaker events, and collaborative workshops, >STEM breaks down barriers and challenges stereotypes that have historically limited diverse participation in technical fields. The group's impressive attendance rate demonstrates its resonance with participants, who report increased confidence and interest in STEM careers. Beyond academic enrichment,

>STEM cultivates essential professional skills through project management training and team-building activities like our origami workshop, where students practice spatial reasoning, communication, and collaborative problem-solving. The initiative's distinctive badges, funded through community support, visibly celebrate member identity while raising awareness of representation issues.

Through continuous feedback and responsive programming, other enrichment experiences include Women in Tech & Engineering Events —>STEM evolves to meet emerging needs.

Reflecting our commitment at every level, 38% of the Senior Leadership Team at the UTC are female, and nearly 50% of STEM subject teachers are women, strong role models who help reinforce the message that STEM is for everyone.

The Generational Impact on Social Mobility

We hold a deep and enduring aspiration to create a generational impact that extends beyond academic achievement to fundamentally transform the life trajectories of our students and their families. Through an internal research project examining the post education destinations of our parent and carer community, we gained valuable insight into the historical patterns that shape our present context.

Our findings revealed that, upon completing secondary education or college, approximately 50% of the parent/carer cohort progressed to university, one third entered employment, 10% commenced apprenticeships, and a further 10% were classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

In contrast, the destinations of our students demonstrate a marked shift. The proportion of leavers classified as NEET has significantly decreased, while a substantially higher percentage of students now progress to university or high quality apprenticeships. This progression is not coincidental; it is the result of a deliberate and sustained commitment to raising aspirations, broadening horizons, and equipping every learner with the qualifications, skills, and mindset to thrive in a competitive world.

By ensuring that each generation surpasses the last, Leigh UTC Dartford is not only fostering individual success but also driving positive social mobility.

Careers: Destinations-Driven

At Leigh UTC Dartford, our careers curriculum is driven by a clear vision: to develop **STEM professionals for future global markets**. We achieve this through a well-structured programme that empowers students to make informed and aspirational career decisions.

A cornerstone of our approach is meaningful employer engagement. Regular interactions with STEM professionals provide students with valuable insights into diverse industries, broadening their horizons and inspiring them to consider various pathways. Our guiding principle, "If you can see it, you can dream it," underscores our commitment to early and sustained exposure to careers education, helping students identify pathways and select relevant subjects from the outset.

Our careers programme is tailored to meet the developmental needs of each year group, ensuring all students receive structured and inclusive

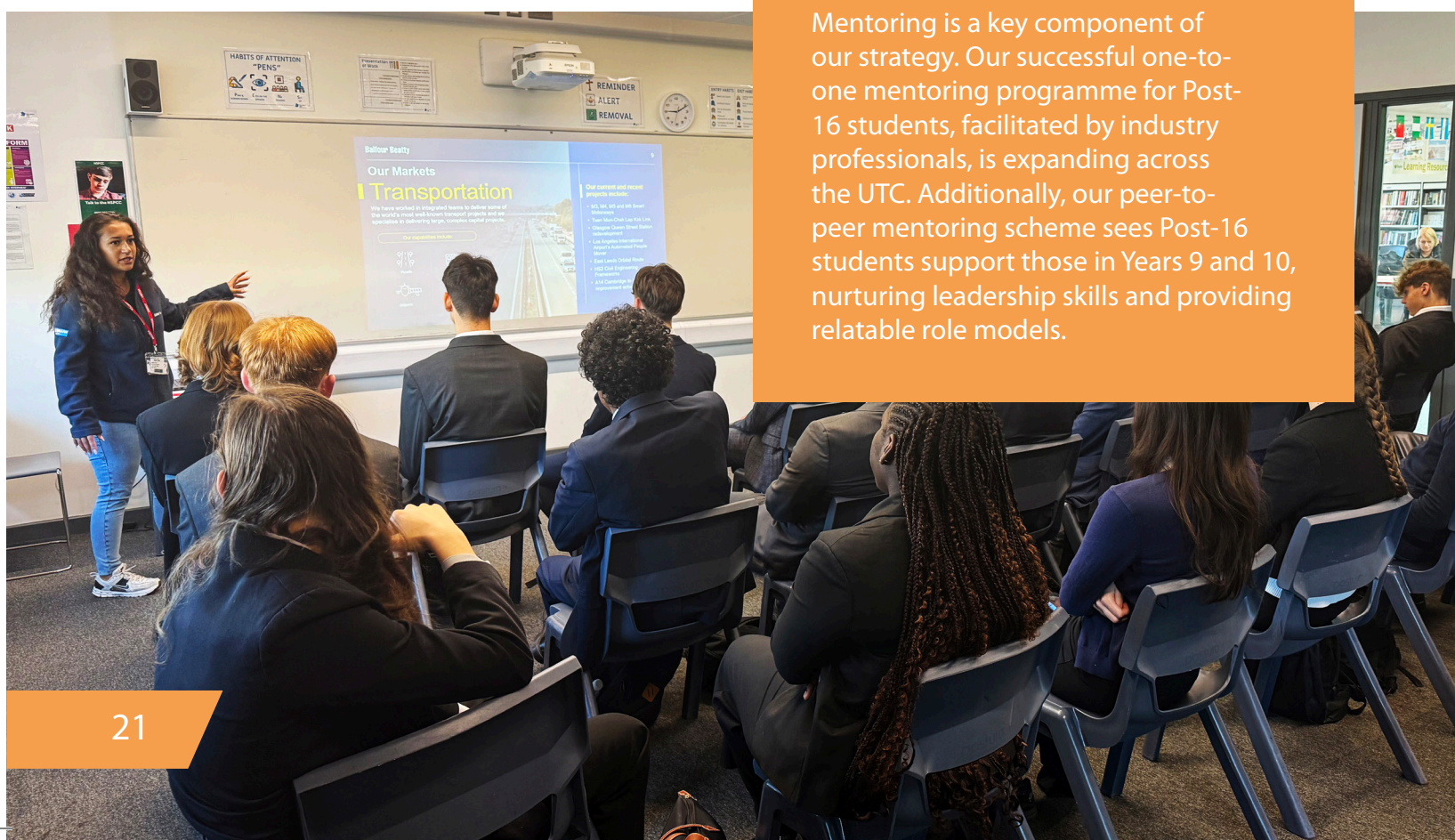
support. This includes access to comprehensive labour market information and digital platforms like Unifrog. We're proud to consistently exceed the Gatsby Benchmarks, with initiatives such as our mock interview programme preparing students for real-life scenarios.

In Post-16, we offer targeted guidance on apprenticeships, training, and university pathways, leading to a significant increase in students progressing to Level 4+ apprenticeships. Our approach is results-focused yet destination-driven, equipping students with the information and guidance needed to make confident decisions about their unique futures.

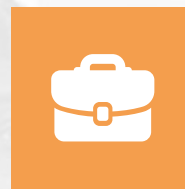
At Leigh UTC Dartford, we offer a dynamic, inclusive, and impactful careers education, broadening horizons, raising aspirations, and preparing all students for the evolving world of work.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a key component of our strategy. Our successful one-to-one mentoring programme for Post-16 students, facilitated by industry professionals, is expanding across the UTC. Additionally, our peer-to-peer mentoring scheme sees Post-16 students support those in Years 9 and 10, nurturing leadership skills and providing relatable role models.



Personalised Guidance and Support



At Leigh UTC Dartford, we provide personalised support throughout every student's educational journey. Our structured programme of one-to-one meetings ensures timely, tailored guidance at each key stage:

- **Year 9:** Students receive individual advice from senior staff during the options process to choose subjects aligned with their interests and future aspirations.
- **Year 11:** Personalised meetings with the Principal offer supportive feedback on GCSE performance and help students make informed Post-16 choices, focusing on their potential.

- **Year 12:** Students benefit from bespoke careers guidance, exploring university, apprenticeship, and employment pathways.
- **Year 13:** Our students receive one-to-one coaching on CV writing, interview techniques, and Post-18 planning, preparing them for higher education, vocational training, or direct employment.

This consistent and personalised approach reflects our belief in 'depersonalising challenge but deeply personalising support,' ensuring every student is known, valued, and empowered to succeed.

Talent Acquisition Pipeline

The Talent Acquisition Pipelines at Leigh UTC Dartford play a crucial role in preparing students for future careers in STEM fields. These pipelines are strategically designed to offer developmental opportunities at each year group level, guiding students through a series of stages that enhance both their academic and professional capabilities. Each step within the pipeline helps build essential skills that will enable students to successfully enter the workforce or continue their education in STEM disciplines.

These developmental pathways are clearly outlined in the Talent Acquisition Pipeline document for each year group, offering a roadmap for students, teachers, and parents to understand the opportunities and expectations at each stage.

The ultimate goal is to ensure that students graduate from Leigh UTC Dartford with not only academic excellence but also practical skills, professional experience, and a clear understanding of their career options, ready to make an impact in the world of STEM.

Year 9 Options Process

Our Year 9 options process is a carefully structured and personalised experience, designed to support students in making informed and aspirational choices for Key Stage 4. Delivered during Module 4, this process combines high-quality information with meaningful guidance.

Through taster lessons, a career interests survey, and a dedicated information evening for families, students gain a broad understanding of available curriculum pathways. Crucially, each student has a one-to-one guidance meeting with a senior leader, receiving bespoke advice based on their progress, interests, and future ambitions. Students with SEND receive co-supported conversations from a member of the SEND team for tailored accessibility. This process empowers students to take ownership of their future and aligns with our mission to nurture the next generation of STEM professionals.

Voice

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe that stakeholder voice is essential to building a thriving and inclusive community. By actively listening to students, parents, staff, and industry partners, we ensure that diverse perspectives shape our decisions, drive innovation, and strengthen the learning experience. Engaging stakeholders not only builds trust but also empowers everyone to contribute to our shared vision for excellence in education and future-ready skills.

Students

Central to our voice commitment is our Student Voice Team, a dynamic group of students dedicated to representing their peers and contributing to the continuous improvement of our UTC. The Student Voice Team provides students with the opportunity to have their say on their UTC, working collaboratively with staff, parents, and governors to enhance the educational experience for all. The team operates through a structured process:

- **Listening and Ideation:** Gathering ideas and feedback from peers.
- **Proposal Development:** Formulating proposals based on collected insights.
- **Presentation:** Introducing proposals to their year group, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governors.
- **Implementation:** Collaborating with SLT to enact positive changes within the UTC.

Focus areas encompass Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), Teaching and Learning, Environment and Facilities, and Student Experiences.

The Student Voice Team have successfully led fundraising events for global and local charities, bringing all members of the UTC community together to raise not only funds but also awareness about key topics.

The team have also initiated and coordinated:

- **Random Acts of Kindness:** An anonymous messaging service, allowing staff and students to send kindness cards to anyone within the UTC community.
- **Community Engagement:** Such as the annual Great Big Dartford Litter Pick, collaborating with Dartford Bridge Community Primary School students in Years 4 to 6. This initiative contributes to environmental cleanliness but also facilitates meaningful conversations about transitioning from primary to secondary education.
- **The Big College Quiz:** Organised by Student Voice members and held during the end of module celebration assemblies, this quiz features rounds on sports, music, general knowledge, and UTC-specific topics.

We conduct an annual student voice survey to gather further insights and identify areas for improvement.

The Student Voice Team exemplifies our dedication to empowering students and fostering a collaborative culture. Through their initiatives and the broader engagement strategies involving staff, parents, and the community, Leigh UTC Dartford continues to evolve, ensuring that every voice contributes to our shared success.



Parents

Being located in an area facing significant socio-economic challenges, where some families may feel less connected to the education system and UTC leadership, creating meaningful opportunities for parental engagement is essential. One of the key initiatives we have introduced to strengthen these relationships is the Parent Voice Forum.

The Parent Voice Forum is held three times each academic year and is designed to give parents and carers a platform to share their thoughts, experiences, and suggestions openly. Each session is led by a different member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), ensuring that the leadership team remains approachable and visible. Importantly, only one SLT member leads each forum, placing the balance of power firmly in the

hands of our parents and carers. This approach helps foster open, honest dialogue in a relaxed and respectful environment.

This process not only helps build trust between home and the UTC, but also ensures that our decisions reflect the needs and perspectives of the families we serve. It empowers parents, strengthens communication, and promotes a shared commitment to improving the educational experiences of all our students.

We believe that education works best when families and schools work together. The Parent Voice Forum is a key part of making that collaboration a reality.



We value all feedback shared through the Parent Voice Forum. Following each meeting, we publish a 'You said – We did' document, which summarises both the positive feedback and any constructive criticism provided by parents. This transparency shows our commitment to listening, learning, and acting on your views. Each piece of feedback is carefully reviewed by SLT members, and those comments which relate directly to specific areas of responsibility are addressed individually.

Employer Focus Group

Leigh UTC Dartford is committed to strengthening and expanding its relationships with business and industry to enrich the educational experiences of our students and prepare them for successful careers. To this end, we formed an Employer Focus Group, a dedicated sub-committee of the existing Community Board, that will focus on sustaining and further developing these critical business partnerships.

The UTC movement, and specifically Leigh UTC Dartford, is unique in offering students a combination of National Curriculum subjects with highly specialised technical and vocational education. Our specialisms in Engineering and Digital studies demand not only advanced technical equipment but also business acumen. These subjects are grounded in real-world application, making strong industry ties indispensable to the success of our students. Business partners play a pivotal role in curriculum

development, ensuring that the education provided is relevant, modern, and reflective of current industry needs. Moreover, these partnerships help guide our students into meaningful career pathways, whether through higher education or direct entry into the workforce.

The Focus Group has a singular aim: to enhance the educational provision at Leigh UTC Dartford through increased and sustained employer engagement. Unlike traditional school governing bodies, this group is not concerned with routine governance issues, but instead channels its energy and expertise into creating unique opportunities for our students that are rarely available in mainstream comprehensive institutions.

The Board is composed of industry professionals who are passionate about the role that business can play in education and the local community.

Key contributions of the focus group include:



Curriculum Support and Development

Ensuring that industry insights directly inform our curriculum so that it remains cutting-edge and aligned with the evolving demands of the business world.



Work and Industry Placements

Securing high-quality work placements for students and industry placements for students enrolled in T-Level courses, giving them hands-on experience.



Business Mentorship

Extending our network of business mentors so that more students benefit from guidance from professionals each year. The frequency and depth of this mentoring increases as students progress through the UTC.



Resources and Project Support

Assisting the UTC in sourcing resources, organising industry-relevant trips and visits, and arranging projects or events where business partners can directly engage with our students.



Face-to-face communication

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we believe in-person engagement fosters stronger relationships and a deeper, more meaningful connection between school and home.

While many schools have transitioned to online formats for parental events in the post-pandemic landscape, offering a level of convenience for both staff and families, we remain committed to the power of face-to-face communication.

Each academic year, we host a *Meet the Teacher* evening, during which students and their parents or carers are invited on site to meet individually with each of their subject specialist teachers. This event provides a valuable opportunity for families to engage directly with teaching staff, discuss progress, and strengthen the partnership that underpins student success.

Beyond this, we welcome parents and carers on site at a number of key points throughout their child's educational journey. These include MYP graduation ceremonies, pre-examination information evenings, and our annual awards dinners, occasions that allow us to celebrate student achievement and maintain a strong sense of community.

Our annual Open Event is also held on a Saturday, reflecting our view that selecting the right secondary school is a significant decision that should not be rushed. We believe a weekend event allows families to engage more meaningfully, without the pressures of a midweek evening. We are proud that our staff voluntarily give their time to facilitate this day, ensuring prospective students and their families receive a warm welcome and a thorough understanding of what we offer.

Small School Model



We operate as a unified institution across two sites, underpinned by consistent values, expectations, and practices. To foster a personalised learning environment, we employ a small school system. This model, designed to ensure optimal care, guidance, and support for each student, offers several distinct advantages:

- A strong sense of belonging for all students.
- Smaller, more intimate units cultivating a familial atmosphere.
- Integrated college membership for teaching and support staff.
- Leadership of each college by a Head of College, who also holds a Vice Principal role within the academy's Senior Leadership Team.
- The Head of College's responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of all students within their college, reporting directly to the Principal.
- Dedicated pastoral teams within each college.
- Healthy inter-collegiate competition in a range of academic year events.

The three colleges are named after prominent figures in STEM fields, selected through stakeholder consultation, representing both historical and contemporary contributions from diverse backgrounds. Teaching staff, and selected support staff, are assigned to colleges and provide pastoral support through year group structured professional development groups. Subject-specific pastoral care is further ensured by allocating teachers to colleges based on their specialisms. Each Head of College, as a Vice Principal, holds strategic responsibilities across the academy.

Each college also benefits from a dedicated administrative and pastoral team, serving as the primary point of contact for parents and students. This team ensures swift resolution of issues, enabling students to focus effectively on their academic pursuits. Inter collegiate competition is promoted through a range of extra-curricular activities across the academy.

Each phase breeds independence

Throughout their time at Leigh UTC Dartford, we aim to cultivate increasing independence and self-regulation in our students. In Years 7 and 8, pupils are primarily taught and accommodated within a smaller, more open-plan building. They form orderly queues in the mornings, after break, and after lunch. Upon transitioning to Year 9, they gain experience navigating between two buildings, fostering the ability to move responsibly. In Year 10, having selected their curriculum options,

pupils still queue, but are expected to proceed to their subsequent lessons without teacher escort. By Year 11, the requirement to queue is removed, and pupils are expected to travel independently and in an orderly fashion to their lessons. Sixth Form students are granted the privilege of leaving the site during break and lunch periods, and are expected to conduct themselves professionally within the community. They are also permitted the use of their mobile phones.

Staff Wellbeing



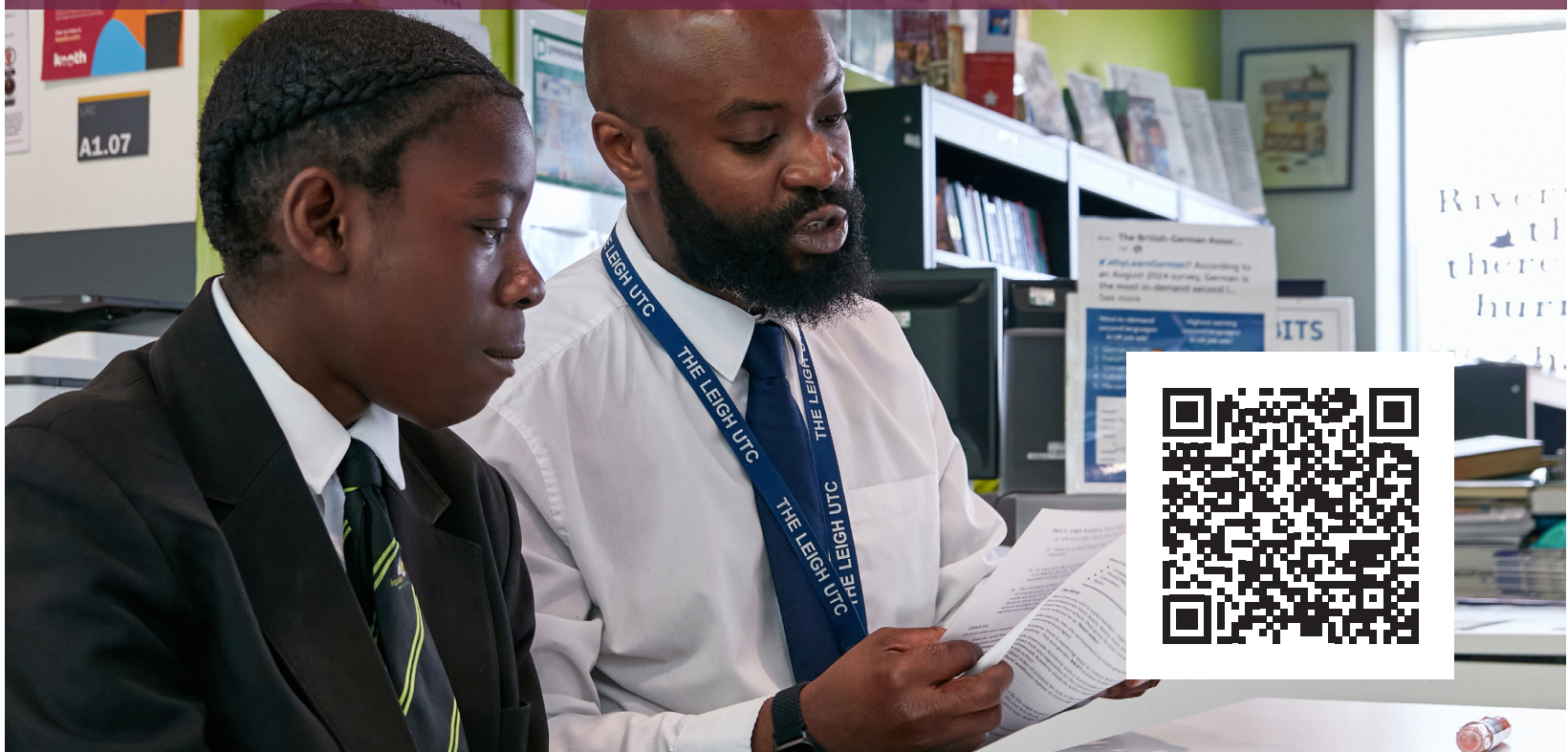
At Leigh UTC Dartford, we recognise that the wellbeing of our staff is paramount to the successful delivery of our educational mission. We firmly believe that our capacity to provide exceptional service to our students is directly contingent upon our ability to prioritise and nurture the wellbeing of our colleagues.

To effectively serve our students, we must first ensure we are operating at our optimal capacity. This necessitates a proactive approach to staff wellbeing, guaranteeing that each individual is equipped to present their best self on a daily basis. We understand that our staff serve as vital role models for our students, and as such, we hold ourselves to the same high standards of professionalism that we expect from our learners.

Our commitment to fostering a culture of professionalism extends to both our staff and students. This includes a shared understanding of the duty of care we hold, and the unwavering pursuit of high expectations. We acknowledge that maintaining these standards is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing of our staff. A supportive and healthy work environment enables our colleagues to meet these expectations consistently and effectively.

In essence, we value staff wellbeing at Leigh UTC Dartford because we recognise that it is not merely a benefit, but a fundamental prerequisite for delivering outstanding educational outcomes and cultivating a thriving learning community.

Scan the QR code below to view our Staff Wellbeing Pledge.





Enrichment

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we are deeply committed to offering a broad and inclusive enrichment programme that complements our academic curriculum and helps shape confident, well-rounded, and ambitious young people. Enrichment is a vital part of our UTC ethos, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to explore their interests, discover new passions, and develop key life skills beyond the classroom.

Our enrichment offer includes residential experiences, international trips and exchanges, cultural and subject-based outings, competitive sports fixtures and physical activity opportunities, extra-curricular clubs, and leadership opportunities. To ensure every experience is accessible to every child, we subsidise—through the Pupil Premium—any opportunities that involve a cost for families facing financial challenges.

Learning Beyond the Curriculum (LBC)

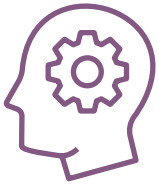
We are resolutely committed to ensuring that every student has access to learning opportunities beyond the traditional curriculum. For the young people we serve, such experiences are a fundamental entitlement, not a reward.

We recognise that many secondary aged students may not yet have had the opportunity to participate in educational outings, and we must not take for granted their familiarity with experiences such as travelling by public transport or coach.

Through these enriching experiences, we aim to broaden students horizons and provide meaningful exposure to environments and opportunities outside their immediate community. As part of this commitment, every student in Years 7 to 10, as well as those in Year 12, will participate in at least one trip or visit per term.

These visits are centred around three key themes: Healthy, Active Lifestyles; Culture; and Business/STEM.

The multitude of benefits for students include but are not limited to:



Enhanced Learning and Engagement

Real-world application: Trips allow students to see how classroom concepts apply in real-world settings, making learning more relevant and meaningful.

Increased engagement: Experiential learning is often more engaging than traditional classroom instruction, leading to greater student interest and participation. Hands-on experiences create lasting memories that reinforce learning.



Development of Social and Emotional Skills

Teamwork and collaboration: Many trips involve group activities that require students to work together, fostering teamwork and collaboration skills.

Independence and responsibility: Trips provide opportunities for students to develop independence and take on greater responsibility.

Cultural awareness: Visits to cultural institutions or diverse communities can broaden students' perspectives and promote cultural understanding.



Broadened Horizons and Personal Growth

Exposure to new experiences: Trips can expose students to new places, cultures, and ideas that they might not otherwise encounter.

Increased confidence: Overcoming challenges and trying new things during trips can boost students' confidence and self-esteem.

Development of a lifelong love of learning: Positive experiences outside the classroom can spark a lifelong interest in learning and exploration.



Connection to the Real World

Understanding global society: Trips can help students to better understand the world around them, and the diverse societies that live within it.

Practical knowledge: Visiting places like parks, or factories, can give students practical knowledge of how things are produced, and how society functions.



The Bridge Development
Brunel Way
Dartford, Kent DA1 5TF
01322 626600

Respect, Innovation, Collaboration,
Opportunity, Potential



Education for a better world

Chief Executive: Simon Beamish BA (Hons) MSc PGCE NPQH NLE FCCT

Carnation Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 2SX
01634 412200 | fax: 01634 412201
info@latrust.org.uk | leighacademiestrust.org.uk

Leigh Academies Trust is a registered company (company no 2336587) and an exempt charity.