



Outcomes
First Group

Careers Guidance Policy

Acorn Park School



Acorn Park

Updated September 2025

Key staff involved in Careers education

<u>Role</u>	<u>Name(s)</u>
Principal	Peter Marshall
Head of School (Formal Curriculum)	Emma Willis
Head of School (Semi-formal Curriculum)	Adam Masterson
Deputy Head (Formal)	Karen McAtear
Deputy Head (Semi-formal)	Sarah Short
Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jenny Banol
Careers Lead	Tracy Walker
Careers and Employability Lead for the Outcomes First Group	Kelly Guthery

INTRODUCTION

At Acorn Park School, we have chosen to adopt the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of "career" i.e. "a person's course or progress through life" when designing our Careers Programme. Our intention is to provide all of our pupils and their families with the information they need to make informed choices about their futures. The school's ethos is taken into account at every step of the way 'we care, we strive, we grow, we thrive'.

We aim to support our pupils to achieve their full potential both within our school setting and in the future- whether they go onto further education, access an apprenticeship, take on paid or voluntary employment or access adult services. This careers programme has been designed to meet the requirements of the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance.

Gatsby Benchmark	Intent	Implementation	Impact
1.A stable careers programme	To provide a programme of careers education and guidance suitable for all of our pupils.	Careers education and guidance, and work-related learning will be embedded throughout secondary education. Careers programme written and shared with governors, SLT and staff. This is also published on the website- to be accessed by all stakeholders- along with the Careers Lead contact information. Termly Compass reports to evaluate the programme and access the subject development plan. All teachers will be supported to deliver appropriate resources for their pupils. Parents will be supported with advice, resources and information for helping young people plan for their futures.	All pupils (and their families) will be well-informed about their options and be supported to make decisions.
2. Learning from career and labour market information	To provide opportunities specific to the pupils' local area. As we have pupils travel from various places within the county and beyond, it is necessary not to solely focus on the Attleborough	LMI will be provided during 121s, group sessions, employability lessons and displays. Resources will be shared with students and parents/carers to access LMI at home. 'Icanba' website is promoted during group	All pupils will know about the opportunities within their local community with regard to their futures.



	area, but further afield too.	and individual sessions and in displays as a source of reliable information for post 16 options local to the school. For students that will not remain in the local area appropriate alternative sources of information will be found and shared. Regular opportunities to engage with the wider community will be provided. Students will continue to have access to work experience, where suitable.	
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil	To provide careers education and guidance which is bespoke to our pupils ensuring that their needs are fully met.	We know our pupils well and therefore can offer those careers education and guidance which meets their needs. Furthermore, we also liaise with parents/carers (at annual reviews) to ensure that we have a full picture about future ambitions. Yearly flightpath created and reviewed. Careers and enterprise activities/days. 121 careers interviews. Use of PSHE Programme. Destinations data is gathered, used and reviewed. Bespoke post 16	Ensuring that the needs of each pupil are met means that our pupils have a much higher chance of fulfilling their ambitions and reaching their full potential.



		education provider tours programme.	
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	To link suitable areas of the curriculum to careers including our pupils' own ambitions and aspirations.	Where opportunities present themselves, other areas of the curriculum will link to careers. These will be detailed on teachers' planning. Termly compass reports reviewing careers in the curriculum. Emphasis given to the importance of Maths and English in all jobs. Employability curriculum delivered to years 10-13 to develop knowledge of LMI, post 16 opportunity and employment skills.	Careers will not be viewed as a stand-alone area within Acorn Park School as it is an integral part of learning and life.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	To provide regular opportunities to engage with local employers and employees.	Careers days, Careers and HE events, inspiring talks, mock interviews and enterprise challenges. Celebration of National Careers Week And National Apprenticeship Week. Teachers will be free to plan additional opportunities suitable to their pupils' individual needs and abilities.	Pupils will experience a variety of activities linked to work carried out by local employers and employees. For some, this will broaden their horizons, showing them what is possible. For others, it will help them establish likes and dislikes with regard to careers and beyond.
6. Experiences of workplaces	To allow all pupils to experience local workplaces.	All pupils will have the opportunity to visit at least one workplace each academic year. Where suitable, pupils will also have the opportunity to take part in work experience	Pupils will experience what happens in workplaces and some will gain understanding about workplace behaviour and



		within the local community.	protocols. Pupils will also have the opportunity to practise work skills in retail and animal care.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	To provide pupils with the opportunity to see future placement opportunities.	Careers/apprenticeship fairs. During their time in Post 16, all pupils will have the chance to visit colleges and day service providers within the local area.	Pupils, and their parents, will have a clear idea what opportunities exist and also of likes and dislikes regarding potential future placements and can make important decisions using this information.
8. Personal guidance	Pupils will receive guidance from a qualified careers adviser.	During Years 7 to 11, pupils have the opportunity to meet with a fully qualified careers guidance adviser. The careers guidance is impartial and confidential. Personal Guidance at Acorn Park promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion. Where required extra sessions with the Careers Lead are prepared (For example: 121s, mock interviews and application support) All pupils in years 7 to 10 will have at least one meeting with a qualified careers adviser per academic year. Pupils in year 11 have at least two: one in the Autumn term and a follow up in Summer 1. Pupils in post 16 have at least one during year 12 and at least	Following these careers guidance meetings, pupils, and their parents, will have a clearer picture of their aspirations and how those can be achieved. Pupils will follow a path which is suited to their individual needs and wishes.

		two in year 13: one in the Autumn term and a follow up in Summer 1. They During their time at APS, all pupils will be encouraged to 'shine' and strive to achieve their dreams. In Post 16, the curriculum is organised so that pupils can choose, with support, which vocational pathway to follow thus making learning bespoke to individual needs and wishes.	
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Our careers programme will be evaluated to ensure it is meeting the needs of our pupils. We will do this by:

- Using Destination data to provide clear and comparable information on the success of our school in helping all our pupils make informed choices and take qualifications that offer them the best opportunity to continue in education or training
- The Gatsby benchmarks are used to inform, develop, and assess the quality of the Careers programme, and termly reviews are carried out through completion of the Compass reports.
- Feedback from staff and volunteers after careers events
Feedback from staff in work placements
Feedback from pupils and parents/carers after careers events are all used to inform subject development for the careers programme.
- Parents are encouraged to give feedback on how transition is managed within school and this is used to inform the transition plan each year.

PROVISION THROUGH EACH KEYSTAGE

Key Stage 2

At key stage two pupils can be helped to think about the tasks and skills that a job actually entails. Pupils may be able to identify future possible jobs for themselves at this stage. Pupils may also be able to identify possible jobs for themselves at this stage, but this will be dependent upon the level of knowledge that they have and their exposure to thinking about occupations. This can be enhanced through the provision of external speakers and educational visits to encourage younger pupils to think about future job roles.

Key Stage 3

The framework recognises that pupils are making good progress if they can explain the requirements of a particular job that appeals to them and if they can mention an interest or skills that they possess to justify this as a choice for them. It also focuses on helping pupils to understand different viewpoints about careers and work besides their own and to open their

minds to new possibilities. We use the flightpath document to record this and show the necessary steps that will be taken to support pupils to achieve their dreams. This document informs transition reviews. Pupils at Key Stage 3 benefit from activities that support personal reflection and help them to focus on what they have to offer in career terms and not just what they want to take, i.e. to see themselves as providers of skills and expertise that employers want and not just as consumers of careers that take their fancy. This is a great time to help pupils become connected with their communities and to understand the work that needs to be done to sustain the community in which they live. Exploring the world of work is a valuable way of enlarging their vocabulary and understanding of publicly held concepts about careers and work as well as developing their literacy and numeracy skills. It is also important at this stage to tap into their real-life experiences and concerns so pupils feel strongly about injustice and will readily understand the impact.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4, the flightpath document will be revisited to ensure aspirations remain the same or amended to reflect new goals. Pupils will develop their capacity for self-reflection and realistic appraisal of their choices and opportunities. The formation of relatively stable, long-term occupational interests is also a feature can be accelerated by well-designed careers and work-related education programme. Although their understanding of their own capacities is becoming more realistic, unrealistic aspirations remain a problem for some. Learning at this stage, which focuses on how to respond to influencers and chance events 'happenstance' and serendipity, is particularly helpful. Pupils need help to understand the psychosocial as well as the physical and economic impacts of their choices.

Post 16 and 6th form

Our Post 16 provision offers a semi-formal curriculum with a holistic approach that focuses on developing Independent Life skills and Preparing for Adulthood We provide a variety of vocational options that have been developed to give learners the opportunity to:

- Experience more than one vocational sector where they have not yet decided on a specific sector to follow.
- Develop knowledge, understanding and skills of different vocational sectors to motivate them to progress to higher-level qualifications or employment in a specific sector.
- Develop cross-cutting employability skills through carrying out practical activities in a vocational context
- Engage in learning which is relevant to them and provide opportunities to develop a range of skills and techniques, personal skills and attributes essential for successful performance in working life.

Our 6th form provision offers a formal curriculum approach, including 3 different bespoke pathways with an entire curriculum planned around student aspiration following flight path meetings.

Work experience

At the sixth form all students are given the opportunity to develop skills and the resilience needed for the world of work. All students are expected to take part in some kind of work-based learning.

Students will partake in either an onsite work experience in our school café, supported external placement or independent work experience with one of our local providers. This will be dependent of level or ability and need. Work experience usually takes part in the spring term and can run for a period of 8 plus weeks.

Careers

All students will receive careers advice from an external source, as well as from our internal careers advisor. Here they will be supported to identify any skills and interests they have and to identify next steps. They will be provided with written feedback from this meeting.

They will have two flight path meetings. One at the beginning of term or just before they start, to enable them to voice their future expectations. The second will be at the beginning of the spring term to enable them to identify any changes and inform their future needs and EHCP.

All students will be expected to take part in weekly careers lessons to help them to develop skills for the FE (Further Education) and the workplace. It is an expectation that all students leave with a usable CV.

Community learning

We work very closely with TITAN to identify travel needs, students with an identified need will be expected to take part in weekly TITAN sessions where they will learn skills for communication, travel and how to stay safe when out in the community.

Students are expected to behave in appropriate manner as they are representatives of the school. Staff will ensure that students are given the correct support, and they are able to manage the expectation and given a suitable risk assessment for the task.

Curriculum and learning

All students are offered a bespoke timetable which supports their level of ability and their interests in one of our four curriculum pathways.

All students will be expected to complete English and Maths and work towards a level 2 Qualification.

It is expected that students will engage in their learning as we are developing the resilience required for FE and work.

Our curriculum is centred around the PFAL outcomes

Good Health

Independent living

Employment

Friends' relationships and community

All students are expected to participate in all lessons that support these outcomes

Staff will support students to engage with their curriculum and offer supportive interventions to enable them to actively participate with their learning.

Students who are not making expected progress will be offered interventions to support engagement from the wider multi-disciplinary team.

Informed choices

All students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and to attend any meetings about their needs and education where appropriate.

Staff will support students to attend the EHCP meetings, flightpath meetings, college interviews, and careers meetings and any other meeting that is deemed appropriate. Where students are not able or feel they cannot attend, staff will capture their voice and act as an advocate for them.

Next Steps

Students are encouraged to set expectations for their future aspirations and to apply for courses, apprenticeships, and employment. We will ensure that they are provided with the information to make informed choices about next steps and to make applications to FE, apprenticeships, or employment.

Independence

The main objectives for the sixth form are that each student is encouraged to be as independent as possible. We will provide a curriculum that supports this. Our staff will set an expectation for independence and the students are expected to strive to be independent.

EMPLOYABILITY LESSONS

KS4 and post 16 students participate in 1 lesson per week of Employability lessons. The aim of these lessons is to educate students employment and award them with gateway qualifications. Units inform them of:

- Skills, attitudes and behaviours that support employability
- Personal, learning and thinking skills
- Basic skills in work
- Exploring career options and career planning
- Searching and applying for jobs

Gateway credits:

- Year 10
 - Career planning
 - Working safely
 - Making the most of a work placement
- Year 11
 - Interview Skills
 - CV writing
 - Community environment project
- Post 16
 - Time management
 - Conduct at work
 - Searching for a job
 - Exploring and presenting enterprise ideas OR Community environment project



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