Outcomes First Group

Careers Guidance Policy

Acorn Park School

Acorn Park

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Key staff involved in Careers education

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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 area, but further	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. 'Icanbe' website is promoted during group and individual sessions	All pupils will know about the opportunities within their local community with regard to their futures.

	afield too.	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/ CDI framework to inform Careers Programme. Destinations data is gathered, used and reviewed.	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.

		Bespoke post 16 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 9-13 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	Pupils will experience what happens in workplaces and some will gain understanding about workplace

		part in work experience within the local community.	behaviour and 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	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.

		year 12 and at least 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.	

Our careers programme will be regularly evaluated to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils and supports positive post-16 and post-18 outcomes. We will do this by:

- Using destination data to provide clear and comparable information about the success of the school in helping pupils make informed choices and progress into appropriate education, employment, training, or supported pathways.
- Using the Gatsby Benchmarks to inform, develop, and assess the quality of our careers programme, with termly reviews carried out through the completion of Compass reports.
- Gathering feedback from staff, employers, volunteers, and external partners following careers activities, encounters, and work-related learning opportunities.
- Collecting feedback from pupils and parents/carers regarding careers events, work experience placements, transition support, and careers education to inform ongoing programme development.
- Encouraging parents/carers to provide feedback on transition planning and support, which is used to review and strengthen transition arrangements each year.
- Monitoring participation in careers and work-related learning activities to ensure all pupils have equitable access to opportunities, regardless of their needs, abilities, or pathway.
- Ensuring that all students within both the formal and semi-formal provisions are provided with meaningful, personalised, and age-appropriate careers and work-related learning opportunities. These opportunities will be tailored to individual needs, interests, aspirations, and EHCP outcomes, ensuring that every pupil can engage with careers education in a way that is relevant, accessible, and aspirational.
- Regularly reviewing careers provision across all pathways to ensure equality of

opportunity, high levels of engagement, and positive outcomes for all learners.

Through this approach, Acorn Park School aims to provide an inclusive careers programme that enables every pupil to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence, and experiences needed to make informed decisions about their future.

PROVISION THROUGH EACH KEYSTAGE

Key Stage 2

Focus: Building the Foundations for Life, Independence and Future Employment

From EYFS through to Key Stage 2, pupils begin to develop the foundational skills, knowledge, and behaviours that will support them throughout their education and future lives. Career-related learning is introduced through the CDI Framework using role play, sensory experiences, themed learning, and practical activities that help pupils explore the world around them. Across both formal and semi-formal pathways, there is a strong emphasis on developing independence, communication, social interaction, and everyday life skills. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2, careers-linked learning becomes increasingly embedded within curriculum topics, helping them develop transferable skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, resilience, and self-awareness. Pupils begin to gain an understanding of different jobs, community roles, and adult life, while engaging in enterprise activities, enrichment opportunities, and encounters that broaden their aspirations. Progress is evidenced through Learning Journeys, Assessment for Learning (AfL), and Independence Booklets, supporting pupils as they prepare for progression into either the Formal or Semi-Formal Secondary Pathway. Throughout this stage, all pupils are provided with meaningful and accessible opportunities to develop skills that will contribute to their future education, employment, and independent living outcomes.

Key Stage 3 Focus: Refining Independence and Building Career Awareness

At Key Stage 3, pupils continue to develop their independence, self-awareness, and understanding of the world of work through a progressive careers programme informed by the CDI Framework. The Independence Skills Programme continues throughout Key Stage 3, enabling pupils to develop the confidence, resilience, communication, problem-solving, and self-management skills required for adult life and future employment. From the beginning of Year 9, pupils commence their ASDAN Award Scheme programmes and participate in structured career-focused sessions, which support the development of the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and transferable employability skills required for future education, training, employment, adult life and Key Stage 4 qualifications.

Pupils are encouraged to explore their interests, strengths, skills, and aspirations, helping them to understand how these relate to future career pathways. Through structured reflection activities, pupils are encouraged to consider not only what they may gain from future employment, but also the valuable skills, attributes, and contributions they can offer employers and their wider communities.

Career learning at this stage focuses on broadening aspirations and increasing awareness of the wide range of opportunities available. Through employer encounters, enterprise activities, workplace-related experiences, and careers adviser meetings, pupils gain a greater understanding of occupations, career pathways, and labour market opportunities. They are encouraged to consider different viewpoints about careers and work, helping them to challenge assumptions and remain open to new possibilities.

Key Stage 3 also provides opportunities for pupils to develop meaningful connections with their local communities and gain an understanding of the roles and services that contribute to community life. Exploring the world of work supports the development of literacy, numeracy, communication, and employability skills, while increasing pupils' understanding of key

concepts such as responsibility, equality, inclusion, and social justice. Learning is linked to real-life experiences and relevant issues, enabling pupils to better understand the impact individuals can have within their communities and workplaces.

Progress, aspirations, and next steps are recorded through the school's Flightpath documentation, which identifies individual goals and the support required to help pupils achieve their future ambitions. This information informs annual reviews and transition planning, ensuring that pupils are effectively prepared for Key Stage 4, employability qualifications, work-related learning, and successful transition into adulthood.

Key Stage 4

Focus: Employability Preparation and Accredited Learning

At Key Stage 4, the Flightpath document is revisited and reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils' aspirations remain appropriate or are amended to reflect changing interests, strengths, and future goals. Pupils further develop their capacity for self-reflection, enabling them to make informed and realistic decisions about their future education, training, and employment pathways. Through a well-planned careers and work-related learning programme, pupils are supported to develop longer-term career interests and a greater understanding of how their skills, qualifications, and experiences can contribute to achieving their aspirations.

Pupils continue to work towards their ASDAN Award Scheme programmes and participate in structured career-focused sessions that develop employability skills, career management skills, and knowledge of post-16 opportunities. Learning at this stage supports pupils to understand the influence of personal circumstances, external factors, chance events, and unexpected opportunities on career decision-making. Pupils are encouraged to develop resilience, adaptability, and confidence in responding positively to changing circumstances and future opportunities.

Career learning focuses on helping pupils understand the social, personal, and economic impact of their choices, while developing the skills and attributes required for successful transition into adulthood. Through employer encounters, workplace experiences, enterprise activities, careers guidance interviews, and work-related learning opportunities, pupils gain a broader understanding of education, training, and employment pathways available to them.

The Key Stage 4 careers programme prepares pupils for progression into:

- Personal Effectiveness qualifications within Sixth Form
- The Sixth Form Employability Programme
- Further Education and post-16 transition pathways
- Supported internships, apprenticeships, training, and employment opportunities, where appropriate

Progress, aspirations, and transition plans continue to be recorded through the Flightpath process and annual reviews, ensuring that pupils are supported to achieve positive and aspirational outcomes as they prepare for adulthood.

Sixth Form Formal Pathway

Focus: Accredited qualifications, career exploration, further education, apprenticeships, and employment.

Our Sixth Form Formal Pathway offers a highly personalised curriculum built around each student's aspirations and long-term goals. Following Flight Path meetings, students access one of three bespoke pathways with a timetable tailored to support their individual career and

educational ambitions.
Students work towards:

- GCSEs and Level 1-2 qualifications
- Level 3 Qualifications
- Vocational qualifications
- Employability and workplace skills
- Preparation for Further Education, apprenticeships, and employment

All students receive:

- Independent careers advice and guidance
- Two annual Flight Path meetings
- Career-focused lessons
- Support with college, apprenticeship, and employment applications
- CV writing and interview preparation

Work Experience
All students participate in work-based learning, including:

- School café placements
- Supported external placements
- Independent work experience with local employers

Placements are matched to students' aspirations, abilities, and support needs, helping them develop confidence, resilience, and workplace skills.
Progression Route
Students are supported to move on to:

- Further Education
- Higher-level vocational training
- Apprenticeships
- Supported Internships
- Employment

The overarching aim of the Formal Sixth Form Pathway is to develop independent, ambitious young adults who are equipped with the qualifications, skills, and confidence needed for their chosen next steps.

Careers Education and Guidance
Students receive regular careers education through career-focused sessions and personalised guidance that helps them understand their strengths, interests, and future opportunities. All students have access to:

- One-to-one careers advice and guidance
- Flight Path meetings to discuss aspirations and future goals
- Support with transition planning
- College and training provider visits
- Information about further education, training, supported internships, and employment pathways

Careers guidance supports students to make informed choices about their future and contributes directly to annual review and transition planning.

Work Experience and Employability
All students are expected to participate in work-related learning activities to develop employability skills, confidence, and workplace resilience.
Students complete at least **one day of work experience**, either:

- Internally within school-based enterprises such as the school café and other vocational projects, or
- With an external employer where appropriate.

Work experience opportunities are carefully matched to individual needs, interests, abilities,

and aspirations. Through these placements, students develop practical workplace skills, communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving abilities, and an understanding of employer expectations.

Community Learning and Travel Training

We work closely with **TITAN Travel Training** and other external agencies to support students in developing the skills required to travel safely and independently.

Students identified as benefiting from travel training will participate in regular sessions focused on:

- Safe travel
- Community awareness
- Communication skills
- Personal safety
- Independence in the local community

Students are supported to complete meaningful learning experiences within the community and are encouraged to represent the school positively while developing confidence and independence.

Key Stage 3-5 (Semi-Formal Pathway)

Focus: Independence, personal development, preparation for adulthood, and entry-level employability skills.

Our Semi-Formal Pathway provides a personalised curriculum designed to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence students need to become as independent as possible and prepare successfully for adult life. The curriculum is centred around the four Preparing for Adulthood outcomes:

- Good Health
- Independent Living
- Employment
- Friends, Relationships and Community

Students participate in a comprehensive **Personal Development Programme** alongside CDI-linked work and life skills lessons, helping them develop communication, resilience, self-advocacy, decision-making, and independence skills.

From the beginning of **Year 9**, students follow the **ASDAN programmes** and engage in learning that is linked to their individual interests, strengths, and aspirations. This enables students to explore vocational areas while developing transferable employability skills that support progression into further education, supported internships, training, and future opportunities.

Progression opportunities include:

- Personal and Social Development (PSD) Entry Level 1-3
- Work Right Programme (Entry 1-3)

All students receive a bespoke programme of study that includes English, Maths, personal development, employability, and independence-focused learning. Staff work closely with students to identify aspirations and support them in working towards realistic and ambitious outcomes.

Yes, it would be clearer to separate the **Post-16 Semi-Formal Pathway** from the **Formal Sixth Form Pathway**, as they follow different qualifications and outcomes.

Post-16 Semi-Formal Pathway

Focus: Independence, personal development, preparation for adulthood, and entry-level employability skills.

The Post-16 Semi-Formal Pathway is designed for learners working at Entry Level who require a practical, personalised curriculum that develops independence and employability skills alongside preparation for adult life.
Students follow a bespoke programme based around the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes:

- Good Health
- Independent Living
- Employment
- Friends, Relationships and Community

The curriculum includes:

- Personal Development Programme
- CDI-linked work and life skills
- Work Right Programme (Entry 1-3)
- ASDAN Employability Qualification
- Functional English and Mathematics
- Community learning and independence skills
- Travel training where appropriate

Qualifications and Progression
Students work towards qualifications such as:

- Personal and Social Development (PSD) Entry 1-3
- Employability Entry 2-3
- ASDAN Employability Qualification
- Work Right Award (Entry 1-3)

Subjects and vocational learning opportunities are linked to individual interests and aspirations, supporting progression into Further Education, supported internships, training opportunities, and future employment.
Work Experience
All students undertake work-related learning and complete at least one work experience placement, either:

- Within school-based enterprises, including the school café and vocational projects; or
- With an external employer where appropriate.

Students receive personalised careers guidance, participate in Flight Path meetings, and are supported to develop the skills needed for adulthood, employment, and community participation.
Progression Route
This pathway typically leads to:

- Sixth Form Semi-Formal Provision
- Further Education Colleges
- Supported Internships
- Vocational Training Programmes

Preparing for Adulthood and Transition
A key focus throughout Key Stages 3-5 is preparing students for their next stage of education and adulthood. By Key Stage 5, students are supported to explore and apply for appropriate destinations, including:

- Further Education (FE)
- Supported Internships
- Apprenticeships
- Vocational Training

- Employment opportunities

Students are encouraged to attend meetings relating to their education and future planning, including Annual Reviews, Careers Interviews, College Interviews, and Flight Path Meetings. Where students are unable to attend, staff will ensure their views are gathered and represented effectively.



Outcomes
First Group