



# ASH LEA

*Working together to be  
the best that we can be*

## **Ashlea School Careers, Employability, and Transition Policy**

### **Introduction**

The focus of our Careers, Employability and Transition Policy is to provide informed career and option choice, raising aspirations and equipping students with knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes to act as a foundation for their lifelong career and learning, independence and self-agency. The Careers Education, Employability and Transition programme at Ash Lea has been developed to incorporate the aims of the school and recent initiatives in careers and employability education in relation to the Gatsby Benchmarks. The delivery of Careers education against the Gatsby Benchmarks will now be measured by Ofsted inspectors.

### **Aims**

The broader aim of the Programme is to help children be 'the best that they can be', preparing them for the richest and most rewarding adult life after leaving Ash Lea school possible, with as great a level of independence and independent decision-making as appropriate. For some of our children an end-goal may be to achieve paid employment, for some it may be to achieve good communication skills and problem-solving to enable them to enjoy semi-independent living, and for others it might be expressing personal choices. We want all children as far as possible also to understand the world around them including the world of work and commerce.

### **Career Skills in the Curriculum**

Skills of all pupils will be developed through the Curriculum including Communication, Independence and Cognition. These skills are embedded in the school curriculum and will address the needs of the individual pupils through the use of Transition Plan's (from Year 7) and IEPs throughout their school career. Through our PHSE curriculum pupils will focus on social skills, communication skills and emotional intelligence. Skills covered will include respectful relationships, being safe and mental well-being.

From Year 7 pupils will have regular contact with employers and experience of workplaces through employee presentations, offsite visits and appropriate opportunity for work experience; this may be offsite or in school. Topic work will offer the opportunity to explore the world around them and experience different environments and the opportunities they provide. Specific career skills will be embedded into this work and have been identified by the career lead.

Specific career skills for each pupil will be identified through the transition plan and addressed through the IEP and curriculum. In Post 16 these skills will be developed through specific pathways and accredited courses offered to each pupil.



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## • **Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme**

The Careers, Employability and transition programme is the responsibility of the Careers Leader supported by the senior TA with responsibility for work experience and transition. The Careers and Employability Programme is embedded into the curriculum delivered to each child in the school from Year 7, as per National Policy, running alongside specific career-related enrichment activities. The Head of post-16 is responsible for embedding careers into the post-16 curriculum and will take the lead in supporting subject leads and all teachers to ensure careers, employability skills and awareness of the world of work are embedded in a suitable way across the curriculum for the children for who they are responsible. The school is also supported by an Enterprise Advisor from the local business community who helps with strategy development and links into the local community.

The Careers Strategy and a programme of activities will be planned to run throughout the year and updated yearly alongside the curriculum. Staff meeting time will be allocated to ensure good co-ordination, and continued programme development to ensure the programme is best in class. The school will make good use of and extend its links with local stakeholders to deliver components of the Careers and Employability Programme.

The Careers Leader is supported by 'Futures' who disseminate information from government, help us measure our performance on an on-going basis, provide training and support a Special Schools Working Party of Careers Leaders and local business representatives in the area, who share relevant information and experiences on a regular basis, and work together on new initiatives. We have well-embedded relationships with community stakeholders and the Careers Co-Ordinator will work to develop relationships with community stakeholders to support our programme.

The performance of our careers programme overall is regularly internally measured using Compass and is a new component of the Ofsted grading. We achieved a positive review in our most recent Ofsted inspection.

Evidence for Learning is a key tool for measuring outcomes on a child-by-child basis, as evidence is collected from each child during the course of their activities at school and tagged automatically to each of the Gatsby criteria. It ensures each child fully benefits from the programme and also builds up an easy-to-use profile of the careers and employability activities and achievements each student has undertaken whilst at Ash Lea. This will inform transition choices and provide evidence to potential employers.

## • **Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information**

Information regarding the career and labour market, and work pathways, will be provided to children from Year 10 by teachers delivering the Careers programme within the curriculum.

## • **Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil**

As everything we do at Ash Lea, we recognise each child's needs as individual, and we tailor what they learn and how they learn to them specifically. We will seek to develop the skills that have most value to each child in an engaging and appropriate context.

## • **Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers**

The planned programme of study helps students to understand their interests, strengths and weaknesses in relation to the world of work and lifelong education. It incorporates planned activities that use the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding that are useful in work, including learning through the experience of work, about work and working practices and learning the skills for work.



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'Soft-skills' such as communication and problem-solving are life-skills as well as employability skills and therefore all children will be part of the Careers and Employability Programme, although as with all our activities at Ash Lea, our activities are tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual child.

In the Post 16 department, students are working towards qualifications from the 'AIM' awarding body at the appropriate level; these qualifications are very focussed on practical skills that enable young people to be independent and have self-agency, essential for entering the workplace.

Child Assessment will take place through verbal feedback, observation and written assessment. This is supported by Evidence for Learning, creating a 'personal achievement log'.

#### • **Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees**

Every child from the age of 11 will have one 'meaningful encounter' every year with an employer in which the student has had an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace. This may take place through a range of enrichment activities including speakers, mentoring, and 'mock interviews'.

#### • **Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces**

Students will experience a guided workplace visit each year from Year 7. This could also include virtual tours around workplaces where restrictions apply or a greater variety of tailored experiences can be delivered to children this way which would otherwise be impractical. Direct work experience is an important part of the educational entitlement for some pupils at Ash Lea. This is planned, supported, and monitored by the Careers Co-ordinator who also supports the complementary transition programme. When pupils return from work experience, their experience is discussed and evaluated by students, employers, staff, and parents. Students are supported during the placement to a greater or lesser extent by a member of support staff. This is decided on an individual basis. Employers feedback in a structured way. Students will also gain access to vocational taster sessions to broaden choice and tailor what we can offer to their interests; this will help them make the right choices in transition from school.

#### • **Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education**

All pupils are given the opportunity to access community opportunities and to visit possible post school placements, and taster sessions at local day services and colleges. Firm links have been developed with F.E colleges and internship organisations and other Post 18 day-time providers. We participate in transition-fayres and facilitate the attendance of pupils together with their parents is highly recommended.

#### • **Benchmark 8: Personal guidance**

Students learn about different careers and opportunities for training, apprenticeships and volunteering and investigate further education options through our transition programme. Additionally, they are offered impartial, confidential and detailed advice regarding choices of destination and appropriate pathways by external specialist Careers advisors. Each pupil will have a record of the activities they have participated in relating to careers and a CV. This will support the young person to have personalised advice and guidance based on their experiences. Parents/Carers play an integral part in students' understanding of career choices and we facilitate and strongly encourage participation in a range of career events including parents' evenings, transition events, work experience events and annual personal reviews.



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## **Yearly Evaluation and Updating of the Careers Programme**

A yearly evaluation of the programme will take place bringing together an appraisal of outcomes collected from Evidence for Learning, Compass, a questionnaire to parents and pupils, and feedback collected throughout the year e.g. from employers, pupils, and parents on work experience placements. In addition consideration to developments in the National Careers Strategy and Ofsted requirements, the programme will then be updated in good time to feed into the usual yearly cycle of curriculum planning.

## **Responsibilities**

The careers and employability programme is managed by the careers education team which consists of the Careers Lead, the Careers Co-ordinator, with responsibility for transition and work placements, the EHCP Co-ordinator and an external Enterprise Advisor. All teaching and teaching support staff are responsible for the development, application and delivery of individual elements of the programme in such a way as is most appropriate for their individual pupils.

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