



SHIRE OAK ACADEMY
TURNING POTENTIAL INTO EXCELLENCE



THE MERCIAN TRUST

Shire Oak Academy Careers Plan 2021-2022

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At Shire Oak Academy we work in partnership with a range of employers and education providers to offer a progressive, inspiring and exciting careers programme for all our students. Over the past number of years and moving forward, we are going beyond simply helping our own students as we have built strong partnerships with our MAT partner schools and also the Careers and Enterprise Company Black Country Careers Hub to share best practice and improve careers education for every young person in the Black Country.

Our careers programme offers our students impartial, well-informed, up-to-date advice and guidance on the full range of opportunities available to them. As well as providing a large selection of careers events and activities throughout the year, which are tailored to the needs of each student, we also take a whole school approach to careers education. All staff including our independent careers adviser, our Alumni, local employers, apprenticeship providers, our academy business advisor, enterprise adviser and further and higher education representatives help to drive forward a programme which raises aspirations, challenges stereotypical thinking and promotes equality and diversity.

The careers programme at Shire Oak Academy goes beyond helping students to figure out what their next steps should be; it helps students to continually develop the essential employability and life skills to make successful applications to their chosen pathway. The world of work is constantly changing and more people in today's modern world will change careers frequently throughout their working life. Factors beyond our control influence the jobs available such as globalisation, technological advancements, the environmental crisis and of course the COVID 19 pandemic that has affected all areas of our lives.

Young people need to be prepared for the evolving working world and so, at the heart of our careers programme, is a focus on building up essential lifelong employability skills. Below is the plan for our Careers Programme, mapped to the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Careers Guidance (<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/goodcareer-guidance>).



Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

- Shire Oak Academy will measure and assess the impact of its own Careers Programme using the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Compass and Tracker tool, as well as using our own internal tracking systems. We regularly evaluate our programme using opinions of careers providers, students, staff and parents.
- The Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors support the Careers Programme and the designated Careers Leader.
- Careers Leader has completed Level 7 Careers Leader qualification accredited by Warwick University.
- Resources have been allocated to enhance careers education and activities we provide.
- A dedicated careers section of the academy's website details useful and up-to-date information for use by students, parents and teachers.
- Our Provider Access Policy is also published on our website for the benefit of employers and educational establishments.

Benchmark 2: Learning from careers and labour market information

- Students will be informed and updated with LMI information through their PSHE lessons, subject careers related lessons, assemblies and careers newsletters.
- LMI information about different sectors and careers will be shared with students via website and careers newsletter.
- A dedicated LMI section on the school website is updated annually.
- A LMI display in school will be updated annually.
- Staff will be kept up-to-date in annual CPD careers sessions.
- Employers visiting the school and trips to providers help to contribute to the delivery of LMI information.
- LMI information will be disseminated to parents at key pathway and information evenings and through the academy's website.

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil

- Our Careers Programme is designed to support our students into the career pathway of their choice. Each student will have tailored advice and support at key transition points such as year 9 options, year 11 next steps and in the 6th form. The academy careers adviser will also provide tailored advice to all year 11 students and students in other years as and when requested.
- We aim to raise the aspirations of all of our students, encouraging them to consider all options such as Shire Oak Academy 6th form, Further Education, Higher Education, Higher Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships as pathways that will keep their career options wide open for the future.
- We challenge career stereotypes through our PSHE programmes and setting examples through our visiting employers.
- The school keeps an accurate record of all of our students' careers experiences and uses this to tailor and target future support. We have also started to use UNIFROG to help our students record these experiences.

- A detailed database with all students' career aspirations allows us to carefully target our invites for careers activities but most are open to all who choose to sign up.
- Students' progress, career aspirations and future plans are discussed during progress meetings every term
- Aimhigher programme - year 10 cohort, to raise aspiration, motivation and attainment of the students and to give them opportunities to experience higher education at first hand so that they can make informed decisions about their future.
- Brilliant Club - year 8, cohort to raise aspirations and give opportunities to experience higher education. Students are assigned a PHD student to run small group tutorials, students complete an assignment and have 2 visits to a university during the programme.
- Be Ready programme - Year 10,11,12, 13. Online platform providing training courses related to employability skills. Each micro course is provided an accredited qualification.
- Learning Performance workshops - Years 7 to 11 cohorts of students. Series of one day workshops delivered to empower students to be more independent, confident and develop their effective metacognition and self-regulation skills.
- RONI (Risk of becoming Not in Education or Training) programme supports students identified as being at risk of becoming NEET. It is a motivational programme designed to assist a young person to progress into further education or work without ever becoming NEET.
- Our Alumni Network is continually growing so that we can track the destinations of our pupils and use this to inform and evaluate our careers programme.
- Our SEND students receive regular support from our careers adviser and we are working to create supportive workplace experience opportunities for them.
- We plan to collect and retain accurate data for each student on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school.

Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

- We have a whole school approach to careers where careers staff, teachers and pastoral staff help to support our students as they navigate their career pathways.
- Career learning is embedded into all subjects for all year groups, not just PSHE. Each department feeds careers learning into their scheme of work and occasional lesson objectives are careers centered.
- During National Careers Week subject areas ensure a career link is included in lessons.
- Each department has a dedicated careers display.
- Subject departments are encouraged to develop links with local and national employers and universities and use these to create new opportunities for students within lessons or for educational visits to workplaces or higher education providers.
- Cohort of year 10 students follow the C&G Level 2 qualification in Employability Skills. This course provides a foundation to progress to college at the end of year 11.
- We plan to have Staff Careers Champions to drive the careers programme forward in each department. An annual CPD session for all teaching staff is dedicated to careers.
- Each year group has a series of PSHE lessons dedicated to Careers which are tailored to the different stages of their career learning, this is delivered through Step-Up programme and a series of unifrog activities.
- The academy has a dedicated STEM lead providing opportunities for students such as trips, speakers, activities and a new mentoring

programme. By the age of 14, every student will have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

- We have built up a strong network of local employers, many of whom regularly return to support the academy each year by delivering talks and workshops to groups of students E.g Walsall Housing Group, Wolverhampton NHS
- All students attend our academy Careers Fair - every 2 years.
- All students have opportunities to take part in sessions by various visiting speakers e.g NHS careers, careers in construction and engineering, apprenticeship training providers. Our dedicated careers governor visits the academy each year to give a talk about the legal sector and further governor links are being established.
- Trips to a range of employers are planned to take place throughout the year e.g
- We plan to build up a strong Alumni Network which allows us to create a variety of encounters for our students and enrich the delivery of our careers programme.
- We proudly showcase the many wonderful achievements of our former students within departments and in the 6th form centre.
- Year 10 will take part in 'World of Work Day' with employer support. Students will experience a one to one interview with an external employer having completed an application form for a job role.
- Year 12 will attend additional careers fairs in Birmingham to reach an even wider range of employers.
- Year 12 students take part in mock interviews with local employers as part of their Next Steps Week.
- Year 12 students take part in the Speakers For Schools programme.
- Year 12 students take part in employability sessions with employers through our SIPs partners.

Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

- Year 12 students take part in 2 weeks of work experience during the summer term.
- Year 9 students have the opportunity to take part in Take Your Child to Work Day during the summer term.
- Any student who wishes to gain voluntary work is also encouraged and supported to do this in their spare time. Opportunities are regularly advertised.
- Older students who wish to complete work experience in the school holidays are supported to do so.
- We value the opportunity for our students to not only experience the workplace through work experience but also to develop essential confidence, communication, perseverance and resilience skills when trying to source these placements.
- Year 7, 8 and 9 students take on the job role of Duty Monitor for a day in school.
- Year 11 and 12 students are encouraged to take part in NCS which includes a valuable voluntary work placement.
- Students have many opportunities to take on leading roles within school that give them a taste of a working dynamic e.g. House captains, Prefects, School Council. Visits to employers are arranged throughout the year for small groups.

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

- The school has built up contacts with a full range of local and national providers and uses these contacts to help inform our students of all of the options available to them. This is done through a range of activities both on and off site.
- All students attend our academy careers fair every two years with a full range of options presented to our students: local and national employers, universities, colleges, apprenticeships, employment, training providers, gap years and voluntary work.
- Various visiting speakers, taster lectures, trips and projects are arranged throughout the year.
- We have partnerships with many universities and take part in their projects e.g Aim Higher and Brilliant Club
- Year 12 Enrichment sessions help students to explore all of their options.
- Parents are kept regularly informed at Progress Evening events and through letters, texts and the school website.
- Our students get opportunities to visit at least one university to help raise their aspirations, however we also recognise the increasing number of highly regarded apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships and work closely with businesses and ASK Apprenticeships to keep our pupils informed.
- Year 11 students take part in Next Steps Day to give them a taste of Sixth Form or College and help them make those final crucial decisions.
- Year 12 pupils attend higher education fairs in Birmingham to reach an even wider range of universities.
- Year 12 students complete a Next Steps Week to explore their options at the end of post 18 study.
- Year 12 have the opportunity to attend talks and seminar sessions with a range of universities.
- Year 12 and 13 students visit universities and are encouraged to take part in open/applicant days.
- We also work very closely with a number of universities and organisations who have tailored Access Schemes and projects to help students along their way to university.
- Summer Schools are also widely advertised and encouraged amongst our Year 12 and 10 students.
- Students in Year 11 and 12 are also encouraged to take part in NCS which includes a university taster experience.
- Year 9 students and parents are given up-to-date information as part of their Pathways Programme when selecting GCSE options.

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

- Every student will have had at least one interview with our Careers Adviser by the end of Year 11. Students do not just simply have chats about their chosen pathway during these interviews but can also request application support, phone calls to chase up applications, mock interviews and CV/personal statement advice. These sessions often occur much more than once and are impartial and conducted by the academy independent careers adviser with a professional level 6 careers qualification.
- Every student has access to one to one careers appointment in Year 9, 10 and 11. Every student will have had at least one appointment with our Careers Leader in Year 13. Students receive extensive tailored UCAS and Apprenticeship application support and checking. They are offered mock Interviews, including group interviews and assessment centre scenarios.
- We also have a dedicated Careers Guidance Programme for those Not Going to University. Every student and their parents/carers have the opportunity to book a Careers Interview on request.
- There is also a drop-in during the afternoon at 3.00pm which is widely advertised to students and parents.
- Targeted careers interviews take place for those with the most need and requests from pastoral staff, tutors and teachers are also encouraged.
- SEND students receive a continuation of support from year 9 including support with their option choices. Students receive SEND transitional worksheets to ensure a smooth transition to post 16 pathways.

