Aspire Alternative Provision Careers Programme

At Aspire Alternative Provision, our approach to careers education is shaped by the needs of our students and the recognition that many arrive with gaps in their previous careers education and limited understanding of the world of work. As a result, our programme is designed to rebuild this knowledge gradually, ensuring students develop both awareness and practical readiness for life beyond school. Careers education is delivered through dedicated KS3 and KS4 careers blocks, alongside links within the wider curriculum.

At Key Stage 3, the focus is on building early awareness, aspiration and self-understanding. Students explore a wide range of careers through subject learning and structured careers sessions, helping them understand how knowledge and skills developed in areas such as English, maths, science, outdoor learning and vocational activities connect to the world of work. Teachers make explicit links between curriculum content and employment sectors, including local industries, so that students begin to see relevance and possibility in their learning. Because many students may have had disrupted educational experiences, this stage prioritises broad exposure to different careers, building confidence and developing an understanding of employability skills.

At Key Stage 4, the programme shifts from awareness to application and experience, recognising that students are approaching the next stage of their journey. Careers education becomes more practical and future-focused, with opportunities for employer encounters, workplace experiences and personalised guidance. Students develop employability skills, learn about workplace expectations and responsibilities, and gain an understanding of employment law, including contracts, pay, health and safety and equality. The content and emphasis of KS4 delivery are carefully chosen based on students' prior knowledge and readiness, ensuring that teaching fills any gaps in understanding while preparing them for realistic and sustainable next steps.

The programme is designed to ensure that by the end of Year 11 students are well prepared to transition into their next destination. This includes further education, training providers, apprenticeships or employment pathways. Our careers within the curriculum subjects may vary. This will be decided based on the interests of our young people and the length of their placemnt with us. For example, if a students is set on working in the construction sector and attends on a 12 week placement, the priority may not be to cover careers in music. This will be decided by the senior and middle leadership teams on each site.

Year 7 Focus – Awareness & Self-discovery

Year 7 introduces students to the concept of work, careers and aspiration. Students begin to explore their strengths, interests and personal qualities while developing an understanding of how school subjects connect to future opportunities.

Outcomes

- Explore the world of work and different types of jobs
- Learn about employers and industries in Buckinghamshire
- Know my strengths and interests
- Understand that there is a link between learning now and future choices
- Know how to work towards personal targets and my IEP targets

Activities

- National careers week explores careers within the curriculum. Maths: Architect, Accountant. Science: Paramedic, Vets. English: Journalist, Social Media Manager
- Students participate in lessons on their strengths and interests.
- All students in year 7 have the opportunity to visit at least 1 local employer (Harry Potter Studios, Pinewood Studios, EKFB HS2 construction employer)
- Students participate in careers talks from the local Police

Year 8 focus – Exploration & Broadening Horizons

Year 8 deepens students' understanding of different career pathways and begins to introduce qualification routes, including apprenticeships, vocational learning and college options.

Outcomes

- Explore and understand local market information
- Reflect on how my personal strengths and interests match potential careers
- Actively participate in developing my IEP targets

Activities

- National careers week explores careers within the curriculum Humanities: Urban Planner, Climate researcher. Food: Chef, Nutritionist. Outdoor learning: Forestry, ground maintenance.
- Students journal and have mentoring sessions around their future, strengths and interests
- Students gain understanding of local market information during careers week.
- Complete the online Buzz test
- Student Participate in careers talks with an author

Year 9 Focus – Direction & Readiness

Year 9 focuses on formal option choices, the emphasis is on building readiness, confidence and informed awareness of pathways beyond school.

Outcomes

- Know what my future pathways are and future qualifications
- Know what a CV looks like
- Learn about Post 16 options
- Explore realistic and aspirational career areas linked to employment sectors
- Learn about expectations in the workplace, including behaviour, attendance and communication

Activities

- National Careers week focuses on career behaviour and attitudes
- Mentoring sessions focussed on behaviour and attitudes in the workplace
- PSHE teaching covers and introduction to CVs
- Tailored careers lessons to pupil interests
- Students participate in talks within the care sector (local market)
- Opportunities to participate in Duke of Edinburgh

Year 10 focus – Experience & Application

Year 10 moves from exploration to real-world experience. Students apply learning through work-related activity and structured preparation for post-16 transition.

Outcomes

- Students have the opportunity to experience the world of work where appropriate
- Students know employment law and their rights
- Students develop leadership skills through their PSHE programme

Activities

- National Careers week focuses on Work experience approaches
- Bucks Skills Show
- Work experience options
- Employment Rights and Responsibilities Unit of work (Gateway Personal Development)
- Enrichment Activity – participate in and lead a sports day event for lower school (Gateway personal Development Qualification)

Year 11 Focus – Transition & Future Planning

Year 11 supports students to make secure, informed and aspirational post-16 decisions. The programme focuses on transition readiness and sustained destinations.

Outcomes

- Know my pathways and plan for transition
- Develop an understanding of apprentices and other employment routes.
- Secure a destination through applications and interview prep.
- Use Local Market Information to inspire future pathway planning

Activities

- National Careers week focusses on Interview role play
- Receive personalised 1:1 careers guidance
- Compare education, apprenticeship and employment routes
- Complete applications and attend interviews
- Develop independent living and employability skills
- Students participate in talks with local business entrepreneur that offers apprenticeships
- Bucks Skills show