ST MARK'S CAREERS PROGRAMME

Updated September 2026

Next review: September 2027

Our Vision

At St Mark's Catholic School, careers education is an integral part of Personal Development and our commitment to educating the whole person.

Rooted in our Catholic mission, our careers programme seeks to enable every student to recognise their God-given gifts and talents, understand the opportunities available to them and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to make ambitious and informed decisions about their future.

Our programme is designed as a progressive journey from Year 7 to Year 13. Students move from discovering their strengths and interests and exploring the world of work, to making informed choices, gaining meaningful workplace experience and successfully navigating their transition into further education, training, apprenticeships, university or employment.

Our approach combines careers education through PSHCE, careers learning across the curriculum, encounters with employers and education and training providers, experiences of workplaces, personal guidance, career planning and enrichment.

Our Intended Outcomes

- Know themselves: Recognise strengths, interests, values and skills, and understand how these influence choices.
- Explore opportunities: Understand academic, technical and vocational pathways and use reliable careers and labour market information.
- Make informed decisions: Compare options and entry requirements, make ambitious choices and consider suitable alternatives.
- Develop career readiness: Build communication, teamwork, problem-solving, resilience and professional behaviours.
- Learn from experience: Prepare for and reflect on employers, providers and workplaces, connecting experiences to personal development.
- Manage transitions: Develop plans, complete applications and know where to seek guidance and support.

Our Priorities

Our careers programme is driven by five strategic priorities which underpin all aspects of planning, delivery and evaluation.

1. Deliver an Outstanding Careers Programme

We will provide a stable, progressive and fully integrated careers programme from Year 7 to Year 13, aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks, the CDI Career Development Framework and statutory guidance.

Careers education is a whole-school responsibility and is embedded through Personal Development, curriculum learning and the wider life of the school.

2. Develop Career Readiness

We will enable students to develop the knowledge, skills, behaviours and confidence needed to understand themselves, explore opportunities, make informed decisions and manage transitions successfully.

3. Connect Learning with the World of Work

We will provide meaningful encounters with employers, workplaces, apprenticeship providers, colleges, universities and alumni that enable students to see the relevance of their learning and understand the breadth of opportunities available. Through curriculum learning, enrichment and progressive workplace experiences, students will develop authentic insights into the changing world of work.

4. Champion Equity and Inclusion

We will ensure that every student, regardless of background, has equitable access to ambitious careers education, impartial guidance and meaningful opportunities. Through targeted support and personalised interventions, we will remove barriers, raise aspirations and enable every learner to fulfil their God-given potential.

5. Measure Impact and Drive Continuous Improvement

We will evaluate our careers programme using student voice, participation information, careers-readiness measures, destination data and feedback from employers, providers and other stakeholders.

Evaluation will inform future planning and help us identify where particular groups or individual students require additional support.

Our Careers Journey

A progressive journey towards lifelong career readiness

At St Mark's Catholic School, careers education is designed as a carefully sequenced journey that develops students' career readiness from Years 7–13. Each year builds on prior learning, enabling students to develop greater self-awareness, broaden their understanding of future opportunities, gain meaningful experiences and make increasingly informed decisions about their education, training and employment pathways.

Year	Focus	Key Learning and Experiences
Y7	Discovering Myself	Students explore their identity, strengths, interests and future possibilities. Introductory employer and alumni encounters, curriculum connections and virtual workplace activities help them begin understanding the world of work.
Y8	Exploring Possibilities	Students connect interests and achievements to careers, explore the challenges and rewards of work and consider what success means to them. Employer and provider encounters broaden their awareness of industries and pathways.
Y 9	Making Informed Choices	Students explore transferable skills, learning pathways, labour market information and financial responsibility. Options guidance, careers activities and employer encounters support informed GCSE choices.
Y10	Building My Future	Students research employers, reflect on their career journey and prepare for workplace expectations. The planned work experience programme combines preparation, workplace learning and reflection, with support tailored to students' needs.
Y11	Preparing for My Next Step	Students compare post-16 pathways, record employability skills and prepare for applications and interviews. Mock interviews, provider encounters and individual careers guidance support a personalised progression plan.
Y12	Planning My Future	Students explore post-18 choices, set career goals and prepare for personal guidance. Learning about networking, enterprise, wellbeing and employers supports future planning, alongside opportunities to develop workplace understanding.
Y13	Taking My Next Step	Students develop CVs and online profiles, prepare for interviews and assessment processes and learn to manage transitions. Careers learning and sixth-form support help them prepare for their chosen destination and consider alternatives.

Y7: Discovering Myself

Our Focus

Students begin their careers journey by recognising their strengths, interests and values. They explore future possibilities and begin understanding how their learning and skills connect to the world of work.

Careers Learning

Through PSHCE, students study:

- **Who am I?**
- **Exploring possibilities: dream jobs**
- **What is a career?**
- **Careers and the future**

These lessons develop self-awareness, introduce the idea of a lifelong career journey and explore how work and the skills needed for it are changing.

Employer encounters	Encounters with employees and alumni introduce different roles and career journeys, supported by questions and reflection.
Exploring pathways	Students begin recognising that there are different education and training routes to future careers.
Curriculum connections	Subject learning and educational visits help students understand how classroom knowledge and skills are used beyond school.
Workplace awareness	Virtual workplace activities introduce industries and professional roles. Planned developments include the *Who Makes St Mark's Work?* video and staff networking activity.
Personal planning	Students begin using Unifrog to explore interests, record achievements and identify personal goals.
Careers enrichment	Careers assemblies, careers vocabulary and Dignity of the Worker activities encourage curiosity, ambition and understanding of the contribution work makes to society.

By the End of Year 7

Students will be able to:

- Identify their strengths and interests and explain how these could connect to future opportunities.
- Recognise skills developed through subjects and activities beyond lessons.
- Reflect on careers learning and experiences and set a personal development goal.

Y8: Exploring Possibilities

Our Focus

Students build on their self-awareness to explore a wider range of careers and pathways. They connect their interests and achievements to future opportunities and consider what success means to them.

Careers Learning

Through PSHCE, students study:

- **What are my interests?**
- **Job applications: superhero CVs**
- **Challenges and rewards of work**
- **What does success mean to me?**

These lessons help students connect interests and achievements to careers, understand how skills are presented in a CV and explore different definitions of success in life and work.

Employer encounters	Encounters with employees and alumni, including *Life After St Mark's*, introduce different industries and career journeys, supported by questions and reflection.
Exploring pathways	Education and training provider encounters broaden students' understanding of academic, technical and vocational routes.
Curriculum connections	Subject learning and educational visits highlight careers and transferable skills linked to different areas of study.
Workplace awareness	Virtual workplace activities and opportunities through Hospitality Connect introduce professional roles and develop teamwork, communication and problem-solving.
Personal planning	Students update their Unifrog profile, reflect on interests and achievements and identify personal development goals.
Careers enrichment	Careers assemblies, careers vocabulary and Dignity of the Worker activities broaden horizons and encourage students to challenge stereotypes.

By the End of Year 8

Students will be able to:

- Connect their interests and achievements to a range of future opportunities.
- Explain the purpose of a CV and recognise the challenges and rewards of work.
- Reflect on their own definition of success and identify a personal development goal.

Y9: Making Informed Choices

Our Focus

Students develop the knowledge and confidence to make informed GCSE option choices. They explore their skills, future pathways and careers information while considering how to take responsibility for their career journey.

Careers Learning

Through PSHCE, students study:

- **What are my skills?**
- **What comes after school: the main learning pathways**
- **Decision making: choosing what to study at KS4**
- **Taking control of your career journey**
- **Working and earning: managing your money**
- **What is the labour market and why is it important?**

These lessons develop understanding of transferable skills, learning pathways and informed decision-making. Students also explore barriers, employment rights, budgeting and how labour market information can support their choices.

Employer encounters	Careers activities and planned employer speed networking introduce different roles, skills and career journeys, supported by questions and reflection.
Exploring pathways	Provider encounters and options guidance help students understand future routes and make considered GCSE choices.
Curriculum connections	Subject guidance and a planned Careers in the Curriculum carousel connect GCSE options to future study and careers.
Workplace awareness	Employer-led activities, workplace challenges and virtual opportunities develop understanding of work and transferable skills.
Personal planning	Students use Unifrog, self-reflection and labour market information to explore options and record their reasons for choosing subjects.
Careers enrichment	Options assemblies and evening, careers communications and financial education reinforce informed choices. Targeted opportunities provide additional support where needed.

By the End of Year 9

Students will be able to:

- Explain their GCSE choices using their interests, strengths and future possibilities.
- Use careers and labour market information to compare pathways.
- Identify transferable skills, potential barriers and practical steps towards their goals.

Y10: Building My Future

Our Focus

Students develop employability skills and prepare for workplace experiences. They research employers, reflect on their aspirations and consider how their learning and experiences can support future progression.

Careers Learning

Through PSHCE, students study:

- **Reflecting on my career journey: past, present and future**
- **Exploring employer profiles**
- **What type of career is best for me?**
- **Preparing to go on work experience**

These lessons help students review their career development, explore employers and different patterns of working life, and prepare for the expectations and opportunities of work experience.

Employer encounters	Employer and alumni encounters introduce recruitment, workplace expectations and the skills valued by employers.
Exploring pathways	Careers events and provider encounters help students compare post-16 routes, including college, technical education and apprenticeships.
Curriculum connections	Subject learning highlights how GCSE knowledge and skills support further study, training and employment.
Workplace awareness	Work experience is planned for the week beginning **12 July 2027**, using external and in-school placements where appropriate. Preparation and reflection support learning.
Personal planning	Students develop CVs, application and professional communication skills, set work experience goals and reflect on their developing interests.
Careers enrichment	Careers communications and virtual opportunities support preparation. Targeted placement support includes funded Youth Careers Collective places for disadvantaged students.

By the End of Year 10

Students will be able to:

- Research employers and explain workplace expectations and professional behaviours.
- Identify skills developed through learning and workplace experiences.
- Reflect on their career journey and identify practical next steps.

Y11: Preparing for My Next Step

Our Focus

Students make informed post-16 decisions and prepare for applications and interviews. Personal guidance and practical support help them develop a clear plan for their next stage.

Careers Learning

Through PSHCE, students study:

- **What are my employability skills and how do I record them?**
- **Careers day follow-up and mock interview preparation**
- **Post-16: Choices, Choices**
- **Decision making: choosing your post-16 pathway**
- **Money talks: apprenticeships vs. higher education**
- **An introduction to Sixth Form**

These lessons help students identify and record employability skills, prepare for interviews and compare progression routes. Students develop informed post-16 plans and consider the financial implications of future pathways.

Employer encounters	Employer-led mock interviews help students practise presenting their skills and achievements and reflect on individual feedback.
Exploring pathways	Post-16 events, provider encounters and college application workshops help students compare sixth-form, college, technical and apprenticeship routes.
Curriculum connections	Subject teachers explain progression routes and help students understand qualification and entry requirements.
Workplace awareness	Students draw on previous workplace learning when preparing for interviews and discussing their skills, interests and aspirations.
Personal planning	Individual guidance with a qualified Careers Adviser supports a personalised action plan, applications and consideration of suitable alternatives.
Careers enrichment	Assemblies, careers communications and information for families highlight opportunities and deadlines. Additional support helps students with uncertain plans or barriers to progression.

By the End of Year 11

Students will be able to:

- Explain their preferred post-16 pathway and identify a suitable alternative.
- Present their skills and achievements in applications and interviews.
- Act on a personalised plan and know where to seek further support.

Y12: Planning My Future

Our Focus

Students explore post-18 pathways and develop increasingly independent career plans. They consider their goals, the experiences they need and how to prepare for future learning and work.

Careers Learning

Through PSHCE, students study:

- **Post-18: Choices, Choices**
- **Setting career goals**
- **How to network and be enterprising**
- **Wellbeing: balancing life, learning and work**
- **What makes an employer 'good' to work for?**

These lessons help students compare post-18 choices, prepare for guidance and set career goals. Students also explore networking, enterprise, wellbeing and the qualities they value in an employer.

Key Experiences and Support

Employer encounters	Employer and alumni insights help students explore professional roles, career journeys and the skills needed in different sectors.
Exploring pathways	Post-18 information and provider engagement support exploration of university, apprenticeships, training and employment.
Curriculum connections	Subject teachers connect advanced study to future learning and careers, helping students investigate pathways and entry requirements.
Workplace awareness	Students are encouraged to undertake two weeks of work experience linked to their interests and future aspirations. This may be completed as one block or through separate placements, with preparation and reflection helping students use their learning in future applications.
Personal planning	Students use Unifrog to research pathways, set goals and record experiences. They prepare questions and priorities for personal guidance.
Careers enrichment	Leadership, service, wider study and careers opportunities help students develop interests and build evidence of their skills and achievements.

By the End of Year 12

Students will be able to:

- Compare post-18 pathways and identify options suited to their interests and aspirations.
- Set career goals and identify relevant preparation and experience.
- Reflect on their skills, wellbeing and the qualities they value in working life.

Y13: Taking My Next Step

Our Focus

Students put their progression plans into action and prepare for life beyond school. Careers learning develops confidence in applications, recruitment and managing transitions.

Careers Learning

Through PSHCE, students study:

- **Personal branding: your CV and online profile**
- **The basics of interviews: in person and online**
- **Confidently managing transitions**
- **Being self-employed and working freelance**

These lessons help students communicate their skills and achievements, prepare for recruitment and manage change. They also explore self-employment and freelance work.

Key Experiences and Support

Employer encounters	Employer and alumni insights, alongside recruitment-focused learning, develop understanding of professional expectations and working life.
Exploring pathways	Post-18 information supports decisions about university, apprenticeships, training and employment, including entry requirements and alternative routes.
Curriculum connections	Subject teachers connect advanced knowledge and independent learning skills to the demands of students' intended destinations.
Workplace awareness	Students reflect on previous experiences and use examples of workplace learning to support applications and preparation for future opportunities.
Personal planning	Sixth-form support helps students review plans, prepare applications and selection processes, consider alternatives and identify practical transition steps.
Careers enrichment	Careers updates, leadership, service and wider opportunities strengthen confidence and provide evidence of responsibility, initiative and achievement.

By the End of Year 13

Students will be able to:

- Communicate their skills and achievements through applications, CVs and interviews.
- Explain their progression plan, alternatives and practical next steps.
- Identify strategies and sources of support for managing transitions confidently.

Evaluation, Support and Contact

How We Evaluate Our Programme

We evaluate our careers programme using Compass+, student feedback, Unifrog records, employer feedback and destination tracking.These sources help us understand what students have learned, how effectively opportunities reach different groups and how well students are prepared for their next steps. Findings inform improvements to the programme and help identify students who need additional support.

Students, parents/carers, staff, employers and providers are welcome to share feedback with the Careers Leader.

Guidance and Inclusion

Our programme supports students to explore academic, technical and vocational pathways and make informed decisions suited to their interests and aspirations. We work with pastoral staff, the SEND team and Pupil Premium colleagues to identify barriers and provide additional support. This may include help with applications, access to careers experiences and tailored preparation for transitions.

Students and parents/carers can request careers support through the Careers Leader, tutors or pastoral teams.

Accessing Information

This programme is available on the school website. Further information is shared through school communications, Google Classroom, Unifrog and relevant events Staff can access programme information through the Careers Leader. Employers, alumni and education and training providers are welcome to contact us about contributing to the programme. Provider access arrangements are set out in the school's Provider Access Policy.

Careers Contact

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