

ST HELENA SCHOOL



SCHOOL PROSPECTUS



WELCOME TO ST HELENA SCHOOL



HEAD OF SCHOOL CHARLIE MCCARTHY



It is an absolute privilege to lead St Helena School where our desire is to provide exciting opportunities, tailored for our young people. Our students learn so much at SHS and we encourage them every day to aspire to great things and to believe in themselves. We provide so many opportunities to achieve: from answering questions in lessons, to GCSE examinations; from helping raise money for charity to taking part in extra-curricular activities, trips and visits.

We are ambitious for each and every one of our students who we get to know well by working with parents, governors and wider partners. At SHS we want our students to have the knowledge, the skills, the imagination, the ability to think critically and the character to be successful in their next steps and in the wider world. We want our learners to be independent, to be resilient and to believe in themselves. We ask our young people to apply imagination to their work, to push the boundaries of their own performance and we guide them to learn and recall key knowledge across all subjects. Our desire is for our students to read, write and speak with a confidence and fluency that will serve them well whatever their aspirations for the future.





COMMUNITY

We pride ourselves on our diverse and vibrant school community, reflecting St Helena's position at the heart of Colchester city.

Year 7 students arrive from a wide variety of Primary Schools in the local area.

We work in partnership with our primary partner schools, with a range of outreach activities for students.

Current partner schools are:

KENDALL PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY, ST GEORGE'S NEW TOWN JUNIOR SCHOOL, ST JAMES' PRIMARY SCHOOL, ST JOHN'S GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL, THE BISHOP WILLIAM WARD SCHOOL.

CRITERIA FOR YEAR 7 ADMISSIONS

Where applications for admissions exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below.

Looked after children and previously looked after children including those who have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted

Children with a sibling attending the school who will still be on roll at the date of admission

Children who reside within the Priority Admission Area.

Children who attend the following schools: Gosbecks Primary School, Hamilton Primary School, Icení Academy, Montgomery Junior School, St Michael's Primary School and Nursery.

OUR PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER FOR THE 2024-2025 COHORT WILL BE 200

OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING PROMISE



THE ST HELENA WAY TO HIGH QUALITY INCLUSIVE TEACHING

If there is one word that sums up the St Helena classroom it is challenge. In every lesson students are challenged to think, discuss, read, write and explore. Challenge is embedded through questioning by students and teachers.

Each session starts with a learning hook to grab attention and kickstart thinking and discussion. New learning is modelled and scaffolded together so all students can make progress in a supportive but challenging classroom. We question and quiz regularly to make sure students are good at recalling the key facts and information about a topic.

As a reading school, we read challenging texts every lesson and make sure that every student has the support to work and learn independently. Academic writing is promoted across all subjects so students get the chance to practice and implement writing techniques that will improve their confidence and fluency.

Home study is incredibly important in developing independence and good study habits. Each student has access to the best online tools, teaching and resources available through our Google Classrooms and online learning platforms.

Learning objectives and outcomes are always made clear. Teachers check progress and feedback is given regularly.

OUR CURRICULUM



We want our students to experience the joy of learning, through a coherent, rigorous and appropriate curriculum that will leave them well-qualified for the next stage in their education and future. This will be achieved by working in collaboration across the Sigma Trust, providing a holistic educational experience that ensures no student is left behind. We believe that for young people to thrive, our curriculum must build their character, develop their skills, expand their knowledge, advance their thinking and foster their imagination. Students are encouraged to adopt the 'St Helena Habits' which will help them develop these five key attributes during their time at school.

From their experience across the taught curriculum and through enrichment activities, students will grow into lifelong learners who can adapt to whatever challenges and opportunities the future will bring them.

At Key Stage 3, students follow an ambitious, broad curriculum through Years 7 to 9, incorporating Arts, Humanities and Technologies alongside the core subjects. All students study French as their modern foreign language. Subject content in all areas aligns with the National Curriculum, with additional opportunities to explore further. At Key Stage 4, all students follow a core of English, Maths, Science and PE, with four additional choices from a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications. Our guided options process ensures that students select subject combinations which will maximise their future opportunities.





ASPIRE

We are a tolerant and inclusive school and your children will find a warm welcome here as we open their minds to a brighter future. Each day incorporates an Opening Minds programme which teaches students about the real world and answers the question, 'Will I learn anything useful in school?' From learning how to look after money, to reading the news together, these sessions really get students thinking. A weekly reading and vocabulary session and assemblies explore big ideas and themes such as tolerance and diversity, whilst in Key Stage 4 the Opening Minds programme incorporates key aspects of Religious Studies, Computer Science and Relationships, Sex and Health Education.

Full details of our curriculum approach can be found on our webpage. Through the St Helena Habits, all students are encouraged to develop their Knowledge, Skills, Imagination, Independence and Character. For students who take responsibility for their learning and their personal development, rewards are given through: credits, badges, certificates and even doughnuts and hot chocolate!

We celebrate excellence in the St Helena classroom every day, and more widely on social media, as well as through our Aspire, Believe, Achieve magazine.



BELIEVE

VALUES

Aspire: We strive towards a mindset that anything is possible. We have a responsibility to open doors, lift ceilings and widen eyes to ensure every child has the opportunity to dream big and in technicolour. We not only encourage our students to strive for academic success but also give them the confidence to be whoever they want to be.

Believe: Our wide, ambitious and inclusive curriculum gives young people the confidence, motivation and resilience to be successful. We develop young minds, and are committed to doing this with the sensitivity needed to allow them to feel secure and fearless.

Achieve: Striving for academic success is finely balanced with developing the St Helena Habits in young minds. These Habits facilitate a deeper understanding of ourselves: it is only by knowing ourselves, that we know just how much we can accomplish. This combination will provide students with the lifelong skills and knowledge to be a well-rounded contributor to society.



ACHIEVE

THE SCHOOL DAY

REGISTRATION 08.35 – 09.05

PERIOD 1 09.05 – 10.05

PERIOD 2 10.05 – 11.05

BREAK 11.05 – 11.25

PERIOD 3 11.25 – 12.25

PERIOD 4 12.25 – 13.25

LUNCH 13.25 – 14.05

PERIOD 5 14.05 – 15.05



CODE OF CONDUCT

We set extremely high standards at St Helena School where we expect all of our students to follow our code of conduct on a daily basis.



BE RESILIENT

Being ready to learn and resilient in all of their lessons; Being respectful to all staff and students; Being kind to everyone in our community; and Being safe before, during and after school.

All students and parents are encouraged to sign the code of conduct when they start with St Helena.

All students are then supported throughout their time with us to consistently follow the code which helps to fulfil their full potential, not only in school but within the wider community.



BE RESPECTFUL



BE KIND



BE SAFE



BE READY TO LEARN





ACHIEVE ASPIRE



BELIEVE ACHIEVE



ASPIRE BELIEVE



BELIEVE ACHIEVE



ASPIRE
BELIEVE
ACHIEVE



BELIEVE
ACHIEVE





STUDENT WELFARE

Students flourish, learn and fulfil their academic potential in a safe and happy environment. At St Helena we prioritise the wellbeing of our students.

We firmly believe that we have a collective responsibility and moral obligation to look after each other, to support every child, and indeed, the whole family. In times of need, challenge or crisis we have a dedicated pastoral team who work hard to look after our students and provide them with any additional support they may need in order to flourish at St Helena School.

The first point of contact for students and parents and carers is the Form Tutor. Your child's form tutor will, wherever possible, stay with them throughout their time at St Helena School. They will see them every morning and be able to get to know your child really well. This is a vital link between school and home which plays a very important role in the welfare of our students.

Our team of Year Leaders will oversee your child's year group and support the Form Tutor. Again the aim is for the Year Leader to stay with your child throughout their journey at St Helena School. They will be a second consistent point of contact for you and your child. This team is led by our Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) and our Director of Behaviour, Culture and Motivation.

In addition to our Year Leaders we have a team of six Pastoral Managers who are each linked to a year group and are there to offer emotional and practical support where needed and to signpost or contact a variety of outside agencies if required. We have a dedicated safeguarding team, with the Pastoral Managers leading a bespoke intervention across all year groups. The Anti-Bullying Alliance has been the main basis for our anti-bullying work with students trained as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. These ambassadors help to shape our anti-bullying policy and the strategies we use to identify, tackle and prevent bullying.

“BELIEVE YOU CAN AND YOU'RE HALFWAY THERE.”

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES PROVISION

In terms of wellbeing, resilience and exam stress, we use the Edukey Wellbeing Module to help students to tell us how they feel. They can "Tap an App" and let us know straight away if they need our help. We have a dedicated member of staff responsible for students' mental health and supporting students' needs.

We are fortunate to have 2 days on-site counselling through the Child First Charity and 2 days of Chaplaincy support every week. There is early intervention work to make sure a student is given the right level of support at the right time.

Young carers as a group need dedicated support. These students have a specialist Pastoral Manager to help them in school and to put them in touch with the right support outside of school, such as Essex Young Carers. We have gained the Bronze Award from Essex Young Carers.

We also have a Home School Liaison Officer who works closely with families undergoing challenges that require additional levels of support and an Attendance Officer who monitors and maintains our attendance registers.

We support students to overcome adversity and develop the strength they need to become happy, resilient and independent.

In addition to our provision, we work collectively with a broad range of organisations and charities. This hybrid approach ensures we support all our students and have adaptability to enhance their provision.

Our partnership with Child First helps our students access on site counselling and speech and language therapy. Families can source additional support through an experienced Parent Support Worker.

We work closely with the School Chaplaincy service whose highly skilled youth workers offer young people a listening ear and support when needed.

We are always looking for creative ways to support our community. We have developed links with Pets as Therapy and a nurture dog comes into school to spend time with selected students.

We continually strive to be a school where all students feel nurtured. To support families experiencing additional challenges, we have links with GO4 Community Cafe (emergency food parcels) and Colchester Food Bank (vouchers) as well as the Essex Free Uniform Exchange.



Support to students with learning difficulties and their families is provided by our highly experienced Learning Support team. Individually tailored programmes are put in place for students with Educational Healthcare Plans. These range from structured literacy and numeracy support, to reading recovery and mentoring sessions.

Staff across the school are committed to promoting inclusion and independent learning alongside classroom support. Students' learning difficulties are identified through close liaison with primary schools, through testing by departmental staff and by outside professionals. SEND plans are produced, up-dated and managed by departmental staff and close contact is maintained with parents.

Our site is accessible for students with physical impairments. Lifts provide access to both of our first-floor facilities and a range of support is available for students with sensory impairments. We also ensure that the curriculum is accessible and inclusive for all students.

For further information about support for SEND students see the [St Helena School SEND Information Report](#).

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE PROVISION

Before students arrive at St Helena School, our experienced pastoral team will meet with the family to ensure we make appropriate and informed decisions surrounding the educational offer.

The Year Leader along with the Admissions Team will form a link between the school and the student's parents/carers. This may involve identifying someone who can support them with limited skills in English.

Our SENCO and EAL staff share relevant information with subject teachers and members of staff who may be involved in organising and providing additional support before the student starts.

On arrival, the Form Tutor will introduce a buddy, who can support the new student during lessons and break-times. Form Tutors will talk with the tutor group about practical ways in which the new student can be made to feel welcome.

The EAL student completes the following assessments:

Reading tasks

Writing tasks

Mathematics tasks

EAL questionnaire

The Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework for Schools is used to assess and support EAL students to make accelerated progress. There are specific levels of support depending on the language acquisition of the student. The framework is also used to monitor and record progress. Student progress and EAL interventions are reviewed half-termly.



The Bell
Foundation

CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

At St Helena we value the opportunity to broaden our students' horizons beyond the classroom. We offer a large range of co-curricular opportunities to choose from including;

FOOTBALL CLUB, BASKETBALL CLUB, NETBALL CLUB, ST HELENA SCHOOL CHOIR, SCHOOL PRODUCTION CLUB, ART CLUB, LEGO CLUB, KS 3 STEM CLUB, ARDUINO CLUB, JACK PETCHEY, DUKE OF EDINBURGH, WARHAMMER CLUB, E-SPORTS, SCHOOL NEWSPAPER, VEX IQ ROBOTICS, VEX VRC ROBOTICS, SOUL SPACE, GARDENING CLUB, ECO GARDEN, CHESS CLUB, ROUNDERS CLUB, CRICKET CLUB, ATHLETICS CLUB, HIDDEN CHAPTER.

STEM/ VEX

There is a range of different Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics clubs on offer, such as Key Stage 3 STEM club, VEX IQ robotics, VEX EDR Robotics, Arduino club, Drone club and many others.

ARDUINO CLUB

Students get to design and build their own projects using Arduino microcontrollers.

They learn how to code in C++, about electronics and soldering and manufacturing cases for their projects which are 3D printed. St Helena students have completed projects including digital stop clock, remote control switch, GPS position reader, digital guitar tuner, radiation detector, synthesiser, Wi-Fi thermometer and electronic dice.



JACK PETCHEY

St Helena regularly participates in The Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge. An annual workshop with a trained public speaker is held for Year 10 students. The day focuses on developing public speaking skills. This workshop enables students to talk confidently about any given topic, boosts self-esteem and allows students to begin harnessing skills which will benefit them immensely in the wider world.

The school community listens to the speeches of the top three speakers of the day, and selects by voting the student to compete in the Regional Finals, in the hope of reaching the National Final.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award is available to Year 9 students. It involves around 50 hours of independent work in the following areas: skills, physical and volunteering. Students also complete an expedition. This is a weekend in the countryside during which they are assessed on their navigation skills while hiking, their ability to put up their own tent and cook their own food while working in teams. This is a great opportunity for students to try something different and to challenge themselves outside the classroom. It is also a qualification that is sought after by employers and colleges.





PHYSICAL EDUCATION

At St Helena, we recognise the importance of physical activity in developing students' health and wellbeing. A wide range of sport and physical activity is available for all students.

Our facilities include a sports hall, gym, multipurpose hard courts and school field that enable the students to access a wide range of individual and team sports. We are also fortunate to have access to the all-weather pitches at Power League which students can access in lesson and social time.

St Helena has a tradition of sporting success in both regional and national competitions. We aim to build drive and determination for success in our students. Whilst we like to compete and strive to win, there is a desire that students enjoy physical activity. The benefits of physical activity can be seen in both our health and wellbeing and all students are invited to join in after school sport, whether it is recreational or competitive.

St Helena has a vast array of after school sports clubs that students can join. Whatever your starting point or ability, you can broaden your experience, make new friends and develop skills within particular games.





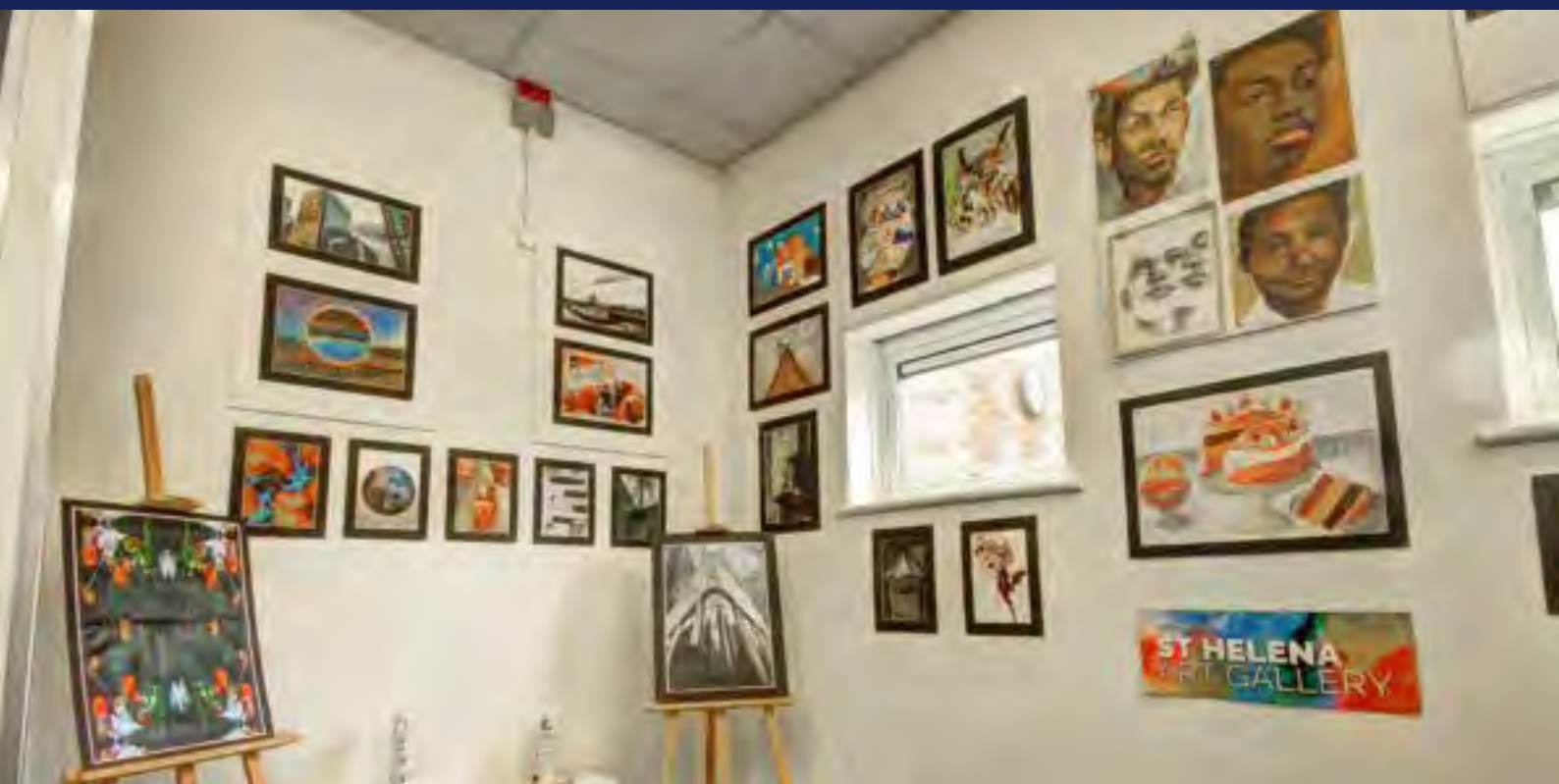
THE ARTS

Music, dance and drama have wide-reaching benefits for students. Involvement in a wide range of art forms, styles and genres that students can undertake at St Helena, gives freedom to explore creativity, innovate and appreciate different cultures and backgrounds.

The facilities include a recently refurbished hall, a large drama room with lighting and sound. The music block has a Mac suite in which students can produce their music projects using Logic Pro and recording facilities, rehearsal spaces and vast array of musical instruments.

Students have the opportunity to join the Choir, Drama Club, Dance Club and work on collaborative projects like Musicals and community performances. There are also opportunities to learn a musical instrument with an outside tutor, develop skills and confidence to produce work that can be performed in school and community based settings.

When we think about the Arts we often think of the performers. The backstage crew are equally important to the success of any performance. The Art/Photography & Technology Department offers clubs that contribute towards costume design, set building and multimedia production whilst supporting the technical elements of events.





THE PERFORMING ARTS

The pursuit of the perfect performance is absolutely what we ask of our students. The time and care taken to nurture talent and coach through the process is evident in how the Performing Arts team have managed to achieve the professional standards in our public performances.

Students are encouraged to explore their musicality and develop confidence in performing within ensembles and as soloists. We embrace and celebrate diversity in artistic taste and support all learners to join, if the Arts are indeed a passion or area of interest.

Our facilities are incredible with a state of the art Mac suite, well resourced classrooms and rehearsal spaces. The Hall has recently had a new lighting and sound system installed ensuring we are able to build upon the success of our yearly whole school musical, a real showcase of collaboration and hard work.

We understand the impact that the Arts can have on a students academic performance but ultimately understand and value the therapeutic nature and impact on wellbeing that a rich Arts programme has for the students in our care.

WE LEARN, UNLEARN & RELEARN



LIFE AT ST HELENA

Here at St Helena school we value our student voice. The opinions and values of our student body help shape the day to day running of the school for all students.

We asked three of our students to give us an insight to what it meant to them to be a part of our school community.

ASPIRE



YEAR 7 STUDENT



As I walked through the gates for my very first day of school, I felt nervous and excited. I was nervous as I had never been to this school before and excited as it would be the beginning of a new journey! When I got my timetable, I had no clue where any of the rooms were, but my form tutor and older students helped me to find my way. All of the teachers, pastoral managers and year leaders at school are really nice and always give you feedback on how to improve. St Helena school now is a school that I know my way around (I was quick to learn) and feel comfortable in. You will love it!



YEAR 9 STUDENT



Living and learning at St Helena is a fun experience. Everyone from other pupils to the teachers are kind and supportive. The teachers all offer a unique experience so every time the lessons change, even if it's the same subject, the teacher makes it unique in multiple ways. The lessons themselves always teach what you need to know without being too easy. They offer unique challenges that help make you grow as a person. All in all, living and learning at St Helena is great.



BELIEVE



ACHIEVE



YEAR 11 STUDENT



I feel so lucky to have had so many experiences, from performing in concerts to staying in a chateau in France. I honestly feel privileged to be able to have spent time in a school which offers so many awesome opportunities and makes me feel a part of such a welcoming and cohesive community. St Helena has opened my eyes to future goals and with the support of so many lovely teachers, I have gained confidence that I can achieve these goals. I will cherish the time I have spent here forever.





STUDENT LEADERSHIP

All our students have the fantastic opportunity of joining numerous bodies within our Student Leadership Groups. The Student Leadership Teams consist of our main Junior Leadership Team, our Prefect Team and our Anti Bullying Ambassadors.

All these roles play an integral part in our school community helping shape the daily life for all. To be voted by your peers into a role on the Junior Leadership Team brings responsibility and purpose but also opens up great opportunities for the individual. They learn such valuable life skills such as listening to others, working collaboratively and working under time pressure, skills which will be priceless in their adult lives.

The Student Voice questionnaires that are run regularly help all students see that their voices are heard, valued and listened to.

“

Being part of the school leadership team as a student is a fantastic way of making sure the school system is tailored for our fellow students. Hopefully they feel safe and comfortable within the school community and most importantly for myself it helps to enjoy life as a St Helena Student -Kourosh

”

“

Having the opportunity to change things for the better in the school is truly an experience not to be missed! - Oliver

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“

It's been lovely to feel that I have a voice and can make positive change within our school. The ability to speak out on behalf of the rest of the students at our school is a great opportunity - Ellie

”

“

JLT has been an invaluable experience, allowing me to impact the school environment in a meaningful way. - Josh

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GREAT LEADERS DON'T TELL YOU WHAT TO DO,
THEY SHOW YOU HOW ITS DONE.

CAREERS

ST HELENA SCHOOL "CAREERS EDUCATION IS COMPREHENSIVE" OFSTED 2024

Careers education is a key part of the a student's journey here at St Helena. The careers team is here to provide an inclusive, broad and realistic curriculum of careers education for all students.

Careers Educations is provided through:

- Opening Minds tutor-led lessons
- Careers Masterclass programme
- Assemblies from the team or visitors
- Team and visitor presence at parents' evenings
- Weekly career profiles in the newsletter
- Termly Careers Bulletins
- Various in-school events
- National Careers Week celebrations
- External trips and visits

St Helena School's Careers Education Team are kindly supported by external partners such as Make Happen, based at the University of Essex and the Greater Essex Careers Hub, an independent company tasked by government to continuously improve careers education across the county.



CEIAG INTERVIEWS

All students will have at least one, face to face, 30 minute meeting with a Level 6 Qualified Careers Advisor, during their time in Key Stage 4, through Directions. During this one to one meeting students will discuss their current situation, career ideas, post 16 plans and identify action points to meet these goals.

In addition, students with care plans will meet with a qualified CEIAG Advisor through the Children and Young People with Disabilities Service (ECC) during their time in Year 11.



MEETING THE WORLD OF WORK

St Helena School students are encouraged to meet with as many employers, educators, trainers and further or higher education students as possible. Aspiring is one of the cornerstones of our St Helena School motto and meeting a wide range of people is key to understanding what is out there! To this end, we coordinate these events:



- Annual Careers Fair - with 25-30 educator and employer visitors, for all students.
- Visits to external Careers Fairs, such as the NHS.
- Key Stage 4 assemblies from colleges and apprenticeship providers.
- Year 10 Workplace experience visits.

RESOURCES

Students in all years are encouraged to make use of Unifrog, accessible online. Unifrog provides all the information needed to make important decisions about future careers, including what subjects, courses, apprenticeships students can do to reach their career destination.





ACHIEVE

ASPIRE



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