



**THE LINK
ACADEMY
Netherton**



Sponsored by
Dudley College of Technology







Welcome

Welcome from Emma Edwards-Morgan - Principal

As an ex-learner, it was a privilege and joy to take over as Principal in January 2019. My mission is to regain the school's previous reputation for excellence and give every child who comes here the best possible opportunities to progress.

Being locally raised and educated, I am acutely aware of the vital role that my own secondary education played in my subsequent choices. The senior team and wider staff at The Link Academy are committed to changing lives among the young people of Netherton and the surrounding area. This school made a huge difference in my life; I am extremely proud to be from the local area and I want every learner to achieve to their potential under our guidance.

The young people who attend The Link Academy are good enough to achieve the top university, apprenticeship and employment opportunities. We will teach them to dream big and will reward their efforts to realise their ambitions. The last set of our learners who sat GCSE exams recorded an overall improvement on previous years, with greatly improved results in English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Combined Science. GCSE results will again improve significantly this academic year and we will ensure that we give our learners the chance to be 'the best that they can be'.

We have made a number of key teaching appointments in the last 18 months. This will significantly add to the performance of the school and the ability of your children to exceed their own expectations. We have introduced a rewards and behaviours system that has set new standards for our learners. We have also changed the curriculum, installed new computers and new software, increased support for learners who need it and introduced a new careers programme to open learners' eyes to the opportunities ahead of them.



We are very confident that this academy has a great future, and I invite you to come and see for yourselves.



Welcome to Dudley Academies Trust



Dudley Academies Trust is a relatively new organisation set up to help transform education in Dudley. We want all of our young people to have a high-quality education that will give them the foundations they need for a fulfilling life and a rewarding future career.

Already, we have made a big difference to the prospects for our learners. At the end of our first operational year, our GCSE results showed significant improvements in all four of our secondary academies. We are delighted that all four secondary academies significantly improved their results in 2020. We are confident that our learners will continue to flourish in the coming years and achieve excellent examination outcomes.*



Our learners are a fantastic group of young people who tell us they feel happy, safe and well cared for in our schools.



We are able to achieve these and many other advances because we have a large and experienced Central Team that supports each academy with its leadership, teaching, building programmes, sports and activities, financial management, staff training, IT and – most importantly – the progress and wellbeing of your children.

We have recruited numerous excellent staff to our academies and made some outstanding appointments to their leadership teams. We have introduced a proven system of rewards and behaviour management that has changed the culture of our classrooms, accompanied by a raft of new approaches to teaching. Many £millions have already been invested in improving the buildings, facilities and computing equipment of our academies, and another £5 million is being spent this year.

I am confident that The Link Academy will continue to make great strides forward over the next few years, and that your child will find every opportunity to thrive there and to develop as a rounded and confident young person. We want your child to 'Dream Big' and to know that many positive life choices are within their reach. Working with you, we will do everything in our power to make that a reality.

Our learners are a fantastic group of young people who tell us they feel happy, safe and well cared for in our schools. We are delighted that you have taken the time to read this prospectus and we encourage you to visit one of our open events and meet some of our learners, or book a personal tour of the academy, so you can see for yourselves what we have to offer.

Jo Higgins
Chief Executive



[Discover more](#)

* No schools league tables are being published by the government for 2020. Existing league tables are therefore out of date. The Trust has a proven model for predicting GCSE grades, which enables us to help learners to maximise their potential.



About our sponsor



The Trust's sponsor, Dudley College of Technology, is one of the most successful further education colleges in the UK and a major contributor to the development of the economy in The Black Country and beyond.

The college provides a wide range of education and training programmes across the West Midlands, enrolling some 12,000 learners each year on 4,000 academic and technical programmes. The college supports nearly 4,000 apprentices and is the lead partner in bringing an Institute of Technology to Dudley.

Ofsted rated as "outstanding", the college has significantly developed its curriculum offer and estate over the last decade. Dudley Sixth A Level centre opened in 2012, Dudley Advance I - a £9 million state-of-the-art Centre for Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Technology - opened in 2013 followed by Dudley Advance II - a £12 million Centre for Advanced Building Technologies - in summer 2017.

At Dudley Sixth, learners study 30 different A Level programmes with an overall pass rate of 99% in 2019 and a 100% pass rate achieved in 28 subjects.

The college sponsored the creation of Dudley Academies Trust and actively assists it with a variety of support services, sporting activities, careers events, facilities, management expertise and governance.

“Ofsted rated as “outstanding”, the college has significantly developed its curriculum offer and estate over the last decade.





THE LINK
ACADEMY
Netherton

Why The Link Academy?

As part of Dudley Academies Trust, we benefit from:

- Support from a team of subject directors and subject coaches – teachers who are experts in their subjects who work with our teachers and your children
- Help with recruiting exceptional teaching and support staff
- Shared best practice in the classroom
- Shared resources
- Shared learner support
- An excellent Careers programme
- Large-scale investment in our buildings, IT and facilities
- The latest available learning technologies such as the excellent Artificial Intelligence learning platform, CENTURY
- A tried and tested model of how to ensure positive behaviour and motivate learners through Values Driven Expectations
- The resources and expertise of Dudley College of Technology.

In addition, The Link Academy offers:

- A successful leadership team who have a clear plan for moving forward and a passionate commitment to the school
- A significant improvement in our last set of GCSE results
- Very strong roots in the local community and a welcome for the many learners who come from outside
- A medium-sized school with plenty of resources and facilities, but retaining a friendly atmosphere
- Dance studios and performance spaces, dry-play pitches and indoor sports facilities (a whole leisure centre!) and a large and modern school hall, and dining hall
- A broad range of extra-curricular clubs, teams, activities and trips
- A school that is absolutely determined to win back the 'excellent' grading that it previously boasted.

Our values are shared amongst all of the Trust's members. These were shaped by the student leaders from each of the academies and reflect the kind of ethos and culture they want to be a part of.

Our Values:

Dreaming big
Rewarding effort
Leading together
Respecting each other and our world
Learning that inspires





We place a lot of emphasis on Collaborative Learning. Learners will usually be seated in groups rather than rows, and ideas, thoughts and opinions will be discussed in a structured way followed across all lessons.



Settling in and getting set up for life

Transition

We place great emphasis on ensuring that the transition from primary to secondary school is as smooth as possible and an exciting and happy experience for your child.

During May and June, we will contact your child's primary school to learn all about their academic progress so far. Our staff then go out to all of our main feeder schools to say 'hello' to the learners, talk to their teachers and learn all about them and their abilities and needs. Any extra support that is needed will be noted so that it can be in place when your child comes to us. SEND staff will also make contact where appropriate.

Then, in July, all new learners will come to a block of taster days, when they will attend lessons, make new friends, get to know their teachers, get used to the behaviour and rewards system, and begin to feel at home in the academy. There will also be a meeting for all new parents and carers which you are strongly encouraged to attend.

Pastoral support is one of our strengths. Every learner who joins us will clearly know who to talk to if they have things on their mind. That support is with them throughout their school career.

Years 7 and 8

In Years 7 and 8, learners benefit from an engaging curriculum which is competency based. It's deliberately not too big a change from primary school teaching, so that learners can use methods that they already understand to start tackling new subjects. There is a particular emphasis on literacy, numeracy and digital literacy – the foundations for highly effective learning in future years.

We place a lot of emphasis on Collaborative learning. Learners will usually be seated in groups rather than rows, and ideas, thoughts and opinions will be discussed in a structured way followed across all lessons. This ensures that learning is active and thought-provoking. It also ensures that all learners are engaged in the learning process and not just a few who might be asked questions by the teacher.

Our Resilience programme is designed for learners who join us having achieved a scaled score of 100 or below in their Key Stage 2 SATS. Resilience has its own classrooms, individualised ICT provision and dedicated teachers. Learners study in a way that improves their reading, comprehension, writing, spelling and grammar. They also learn the leadership, organisation, initiative and communication skills that will make them 'resilient' in the future.

This approach enables them to make a big leap forward, catching up their age group and acquiring the skills that they will need throughout their time in school and college.





The Link Academy offers Leadership who have a clear plan for moving forward and a passionate commitment to the school



Helping your child to succeed

In Year 10, learners progress to study GCSE courses. They study the core subjects, English, Mathematics, Science and PE, plus others that they choose themselves. Our learners are supported by our highly-committed teachers who are supported by subject directors and coaches from the Trust Central Team.

We aim to accelerate the progress of every single learner by:

- Building on areas of strength to improve outcomes for all learners
- Quickly identifying and dealing with any areas of weakness
- Accelerating learner attainment
- Increasing the levels of outstanding teaching in the academy
- Raising learner confidence, developing their future career aspirations and increasing their knowledge of career options
- Ensuring that all learners, irrespective of their differing abilities, achieve their maximum potential – supporting those with learning difficulties.

We have a strong emphasis on English and Mathematics skills as the foundation for academic success and we have introduced exciting new ways of teaching these critical subjects. These teaching methods are focused on encouraging communication, getting every learner in a classroom to join in with the lesson and helping the learners to solve problems in teams and to learn

from each other. The key to success is making learners want to learn, giving them goals that motivate them (Dreaming Big) and approaches to teaching that keep them engaged, focused and making progress in every subject (Learning that Inspires).

One area where the Trust has invested is in a state-of-the-art learning technology called 'CENTURY', which we use for Mathematics, English and Science. CENTURY is an artificial intelligence platform that can be used at school or in the home; it looks at how each learner learns and sees what they know or don't know, then it feeds them work that is suited to them personally.

It also tells their teachers exactly how well they are doing so that the teachers can help them, and it continually challenges them to improve.

The Upgrade Mission is an initiative that has been designed to support all of our Year 11 learners and prepare them for their forthcoming GCSE exams. An extended school day gives learners the best chance of doing well in their GCSEs. There are practice papers throughout the year, extra revision lessons, study skills kits and a wide range of rewards to make sure they stay focused on their goals. A range of outside organisations help us to motivate our learners to achieve beyond themselves. All learners are encouraged to Dream Big and aim for the highest grades.





Confident and Caring Citizens

We want our learners to leave us after five years with great qualifications and a good idea of what careers they might go on to. We also want to give them the confidence to succeed in the world and the attitudes and behaviours to make positive contributions to our society.

In order to achieve this, we run a wide range of programmes. You can read about some of them here.

Values Driven Expectations

Every school has a behaviour model, but ours is different. It focuses on opportunities for learners to be rewarded.

Of course, there are sanctions for learners who break the rules. Values Driven Expectations cuts out the behaviour that stops learners from learning, that wastes time in the classroom and distracts attention from the subject being studied. In and out of the classroom, learners and teachers tell us that our behaviour model is a massive plus point for our schools.

Our emphasis is on rewarding good behaviour, attendance and punctuality, thoughtfulness and kindness, effort, achievement, participation in academy life and setting a good example.

All adults in school actively seek opportunities to praise and to hand out merit stamps and commendations. Learners who earn a certain number of merits and commendations are rewarded at special celebration events throughout the academic year.

Our Values:

Dreaming big
Rewarding effort
Leading together
Respecting each other and our world
Learning that inspires

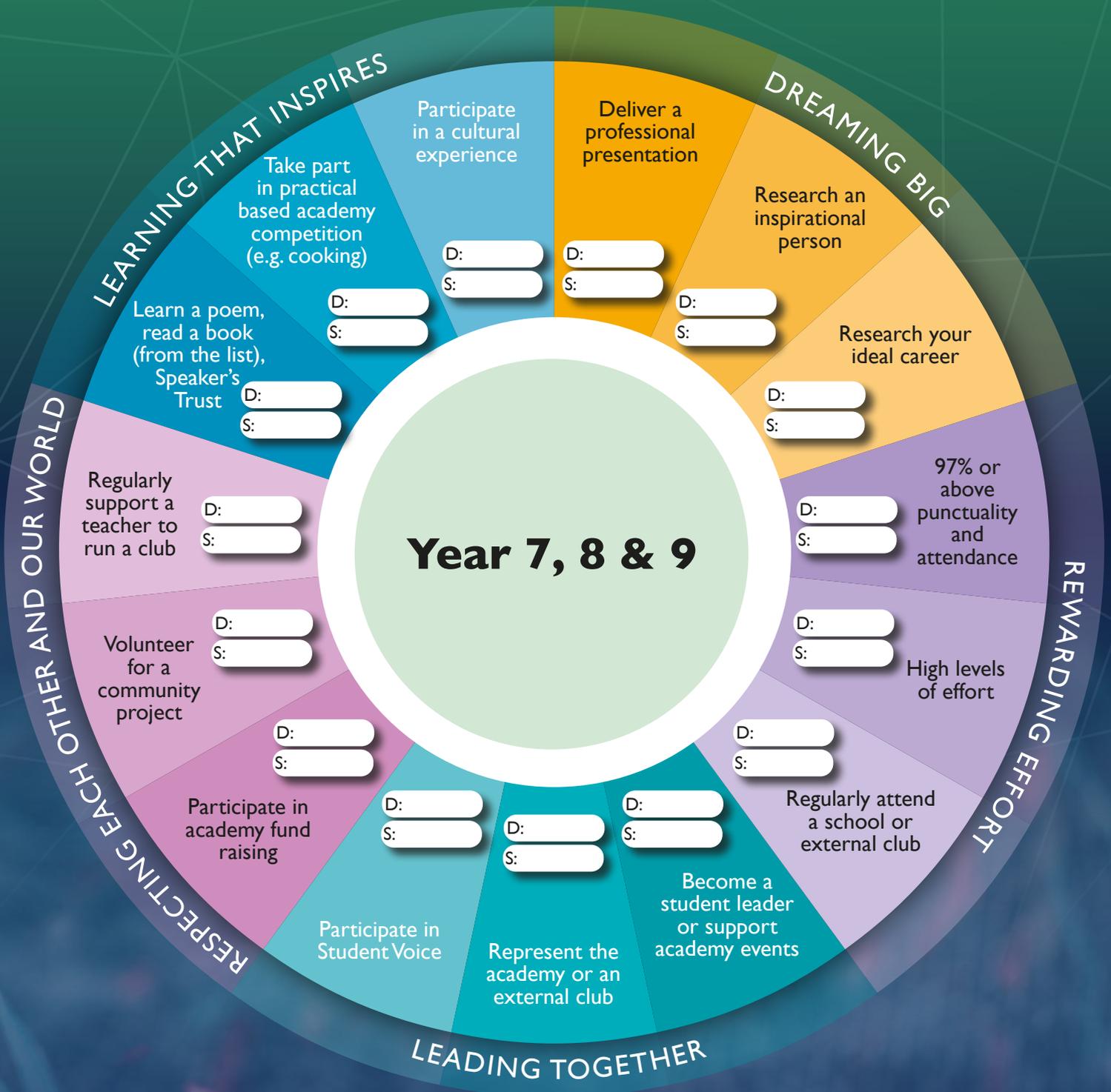




Commitments

Commitments is a fantastic programme that brings our values to life. It challenges learners to display our values in their behaviour, to think about their futures, to participate in student leadership and to get involved in all sorts of extracurricular

activities. There are rewards for learners who achieve the commitments that they make, but the real reward is that our young people grow in their attitudes, abilities and responsibilities.



Respecting each other and our world



Student Leadership and Learner Voice

All learners in every year group have the opportunity to participate in student leadership activities, at the heart of which is our Student Leadership team. This highly impressive group of young people supports key school events across the Trust and works with the entire student body to ensure that our core values are put into practice. Members of this team regularly report to our Principals' Board, the Local Advisory Committees and our Trust Board.

Our young leaders genuinely play a central role in shaping the direction of the Trust and putting learner voice at the heart of our decision-making processes.

In the academies, young leaders help to organise school events, guide people on tours, speak in assemblies, work on 'staying safe' initiatives, discuss issues and suggestions with the Principal, organise sports teams, run charity events and contribute to the recruitment of staff.



19th CENTURY LITERATURE



We have a strong emphasis on English and Mathematics skills as the foundation for academic success, and we have introduced exciting new ways of teaching these critical subjects.

Respecting each other and our world



Character education is at the heart of our learners' experience

As part of Dudley Academies Trust, we can offer a very wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities.

Sports include cricket, rounders, netball, football, basketball, tag rugby, rugby football, athletics, gymnastics and many more. Dudley College of Technology has hosted and supported tournaments and sports coaching, while the Trust is putting a plan for sports development in place for the future.

Recently, our learners have participated in public speaking and poetry recitation competitions, full-scale dramas, musicals, dance, STEM competitions, entrepreneurship competitions, business networking, public debates, foreign trips, field trips, charity events, community activities and many other interesting and worthwhile additions to their studies.





A Mind to be Kind

The 'Mind to be Kind' programme develops a culture where kindness, without an expectation of reward, becomes a way of life. Rather than focusing on performing acts of kindness for a reward, we focus on how it feels when we are kind. The aim is that giving and receiving kindness becomes natural and normal. This programme is central to ensuring that our academies are safe, happy and calm places where everyone is respected.

The 'Mind to be Kind' programme is delivered to all learners as a series of short 'Stop and Think' sessions where kindness is explored through three main themes:

- **Acts of Kindness**
- **Living without Harming Others**
- **Respect.**

Confidence: Voice 21

Voice 21 is a structured programme to transform teaching and learning through talk ('oracy'). Oracy develops learners' confidence, articulacy and capacity to learn. It boosts their ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language.

Confidence: Speak Out

Speak Out is a public speaking challenge in which learners compete to persuade other people and hold their interest. It is run by the Speakers Trust, which helps young people to gain the confidence and skills to communicate with clarity, conviction and impact.

Confidence: Poetry by Heart

Poetry by Heart, an initiative supported by the Department for Education, is another confidence-building challenge based around speaking skills. Learners get used to memorising and reciting poems in front of a range of different audiences and can enter a regional and national competition.





Dreaming Big: a careers programme that fits your child's ambitions

We all know that if learners are 'Dreaming Big' about what they want to do in life, they will work harder, achieve more and be happier.

This is why Dudley Academies Trust has launched CareerFit, a best-in-class careers programme across our four secondary academies.

Starting in Year 7, every learner will have inspiring careers advice and experiences that motivate them to plan for their future. Learners will have a careers passport in which they will record all of the careers advice and experience that they gain during their time with us. That will include:

- At least one activity in every term of every year
- High-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance

- Workplace visits, work shadowing and work experience with leading businesses such as Thomas Dudley
- Taking part in business events and entering entrepreneurial competitions
- Outside speakers from business and industry
- Interview practice with experienced interviewers
- Taster courses at Dudley College of Technology in their industry-standard studios, salons, IT suites and advanced engineering and building technology facilities
- Visits to top universities.

By the end of Year 11, our learners will be equipped to understand and take advantage of the opportunities ahead of them. Whether they choose A Levels or college courses and apprenticeships, learners will leave us with a map of where they want to go in life and a passport of knowledge and experience that will help them to get there.



The Future

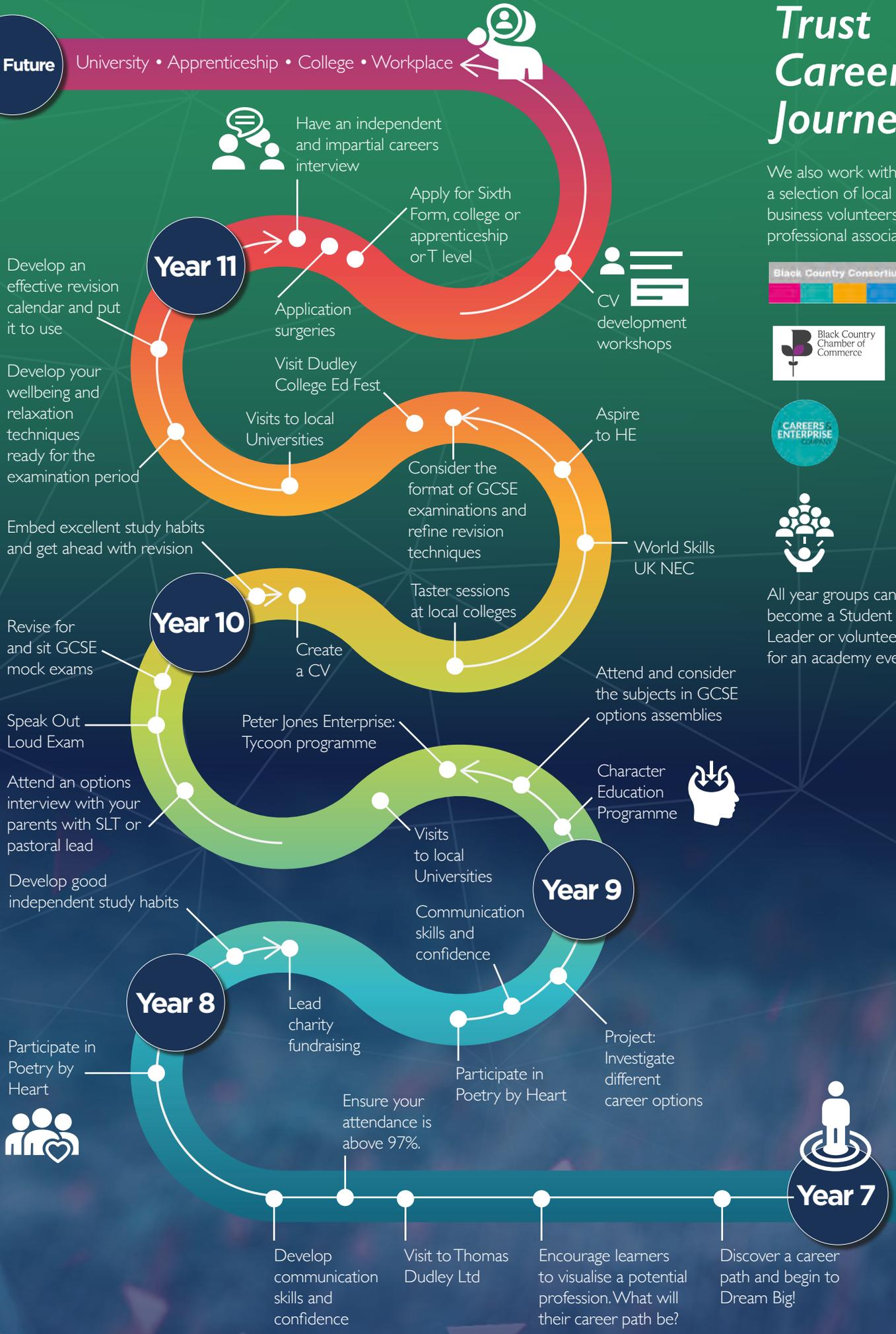
University • Apprenticeship • College • Workplace

Trust Careers Journey

We also work with a selection of local business volunteers and professional associations.



All year groups can become a Student Leader or volunteer for an academy event.





Key Contacts

Main school switchboard

01384 816500 and dial 0

USEFUL WEBSITES

**The Link Academy
Dudley Academies Trust
Dudley College of Technology
Dudley MBC (Admissions)**

**www.thelinkacademy.org.uk
www.dudleyacademiestrust.org.uk
www.dudleycol.ac.uk
[www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/
learning-school/schools-and-
colleges/school-admissions/](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/learning-school/schools-and-colleges/school-admissions/)**

 www.facebook.com/thelinkacademydudley/  [@DudleyAcadTrust](https://twitter.com/DudleyAcadTrust)



Sponsored by
Dudley College of Technology

