

Programme of Study

EMA Gillingham, North Dorset



Find your future...

Programme Overview

The EMA Gillingham Study Programme has Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) at its heart. It delivers a personalised curriculum that builds the skills, confidence and independence learners need for adult life, structured around the four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes: Next Steps & Employment, Independent Living, Community Inclusion and Good Health. Every student follows either the Discovery or Horizons pathway, chosen according to their EHCP, support needs and aspirations. Both pathways are built around the same four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes – but are delivered and assessed in different ways to suit how each group of learners engages best.

- **Discovery Pathway:** An engagement-based model for learners for whom short, adult-led, personalised activities – rather than fixed-subject lessons – give the best opportunity to progress. Progress is captured through students' engagement rather than what they can or cannot do.
- **Horizons Pathway:** A more structured, subject-linked model of timetabled sessions in English, Maths, Next Steps & Employability, Independent Living, Community Access and Digital Skills. Students' progress is tracked through RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement).

Both pathways combine classroom learning with real-world, practical experience – including the Pop-up Café, community projects and on-site work experience – to build independence, teamwork and employability. Every student's timetable is individualised: curriculum priorities are weighted around their own EHCP outcomes rather than a single shared template, and are reviewed at least termly.

The Four Preparation for Adulthood Outcomes

The curriculum is structured around the four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes set out in the SEND Code of Practice. Every timetabled subject, on both pathways, is mapped to the outcome(s) it contributes to most directly.

Employment

Timetabled Subjects

- Next Steps & Employability (Horizons pathway)
- Pop-up Café – work skills and hospitality elements
- Digital Skills
- English & Maths

Integration Focus

- Workplace communication and customer service
- On-site work experience and vocational skill-building
- Money handling, planning and problem-solving in real work contexts
- Professional behaviours, responsibility and time management

Independent Living

Timetabled Subjects

- Independent Living Skills (ILS) - core subject, all students
- Cooking for Self / Sensory Cooking (Discovery pathway)
- Communication and Choice (Discovery pathway)
- Problem Solving (Horizons pathway)

Integration Focus

- Self-care, daily living and household management skills
- Choice-making, self-advocacy and requesting support
- Personal organisation and budgeting
- Preparation for the responsibilities of adult life

Community Inclusion

Timetabled Subjects

- Community Access (all pathways)
- Communication and Relationships (core subject, all students)
- Gardening / Outdoor Sensory (Discovery pathway)

Integration Focus

- Social relationships and community participation
- Total communication and Intensive Interaction principles embedded throughout
- AAC, symbols and visual supports used consistently across both pathways
- Environmental engagement and community-based projects

Good Health

Timetabled Subjects

- Gym / Physical Activity (all pathways)
- Sensory Regulation & Movement (Discovery pathway)

Integration Focus

- Physical health and fitness
- Mental health, emotional regulation and health self-advocacy
- Sensory regulation and comfort

Cross-Curricular Subjects

Pop-up Café (All Students)

Primary outcome area: Employment, with elements woven across all four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes.

- Employment: customer service, work skills, responsibility and time management
- Independent Living: money handling, planning and personal organisation
- Community Inclusion: social interaction and community connection
- Good Health: social confidence and wellbeing through the café experience

Tutor Time & All About Me Tutorial

- Cross-curricular integration of all four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes
- Individual target setting and progress review
- A dedicated focus on Preparation for Adulthood outcomes

How We Deliver: Two Pathways, One Set of Outcomes

Discovery Pathway: Engagement-Based Curriculum

For students whose profile means short, personalised, adult-led activities offer the best opportunity to progress, curriculum planning starts from what increases communication, regulation, participation, wellbeing and independence – not from a fixed subject list. Students rotate activities through short sessions across the day or week rather than sitting through fixed-length subject lessons, so each timetable can flex around health, regulation and fluctuating presentation.

Continued on reverse...



Core Areas

- Communication – total communication, AAC and choice-making
- Sensory Regulation & Movement – sensory circuits and physical regulation
- Independence & Life Skills – personal care and daily-living routines
- Literacy – functional or sensory literacy, matched to starting point
- Numeracy – functional or sensory numeracy, matched to starting point
- Meaningful Occupation / Vocational / Community – purposeful, motivating activity
- Health & Physical Wellbeing – physiotherapy-informed movement and physical activity

Horizons Pathway: Subject-Linked Functional Skills Curriculum

For students who are ready to access a more structured curriculum, sessions are timetabled subject blocks – typically 60 minutes – delivered to the whole group, a small group or 1:1. This reflects the fact that these students can sustain longer, structured periods of subject-specific learning.

Core Subject Menu

- English and Maths
- Employability and Next Steps
- Independent Living Skills
- Community Access and Travel Training
- Digital Skills / ICT
- PSHE and Relationships Education
- Communication and Social Skills

Where a student's needs or presentation call for it – for example during dysregulated or highly anxious episodes – staff can draw on Engagement Model observation as a selective fallback, without it becoming the primary assessment method for a student who is otherwise engaged in subject-specific study.

Wider Preparation for Adulthood Themes

Alongside the four outcomes above, Preparation for Adulthood themes are taught explicitly, in a dedicated PFA setting where possible, so students can apply skills in a realistic environment before using them independently in the community. Themes include home safety, emergency services, travel and safety in the community, using and buying household goods, and friendships and relationships.

Find your future
EMA - Gillingham, Dorset



Gillingham Campus Gillingham, Dorset. SP8 4RE. | 01929 405685 | office@employmyability.org.uk
www.employmyability.org.uk

Employ My Ability (EMA) Limited. The Walled Garden, Moreton, Dorchester, DT2 8RG.
Registered in England and Wales. Company Registration No. 09183380.