

EMA - GILLINGHAM

2025 - 2026



Find your future...

Head of Education's Welcome...

Welcome to EMA – Gillingham!

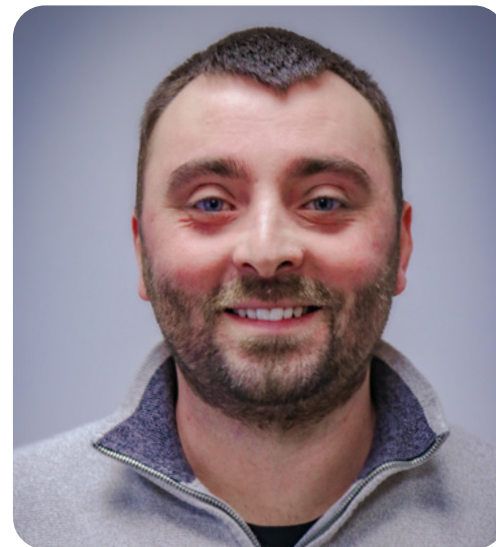
Our new campus prospectus provides an overview of the unique and diverse opportunities at EMA, where we support, guide, and celebrate everyone who attends. I have been part of the EMA team for six years and have served as Head of Education for the past three. It is with great pride that I introduce you to our Gillingham site. At EMA, we are committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment where every student is empowered to thrive. This ethos is the cornerstone of everything we do.

EMA's Gillingham campus features modern facilities designed to meet a wide range of needs. Supported by a passionate and experienced team of professionals, we foster a community where everyone can achieve their full potential. From hands-on learning experiences to developing essential skills for your future, we are dedicated to supporting you at every step of your journey.

Our study programmes cover a variety of subjects and levels with a focus on getting you ready for that transition to adulthood. We've recently introduced new facilities such as a dedicated independent living suite and multi-use games area. These, in addition to our fully equipped training café, sensory spaces, and more, are all designed to create a personalised learning experience that equips you for the next steps in your future, supports positive wellbeing, and builds your independence.

We understand that every individual's journey is unique. From the moment you arrive on campus to the day you transition into the local or wider community, we are here to celebrate your progress and help you grow into a more confident, independent version of yourself.

Your journey with us can start with a tour, a taster session, or even an informal chat. We'd love to hear from



James Dunham - Head of Education

Thank you!

Learning at our Gillingham Campus

Our Gillingham campus is a welcoming and inclusive environment designed to meet the needs of students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), anxiety disorders, and other special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We provide a safe, supportive space where students can grow, thrive, and achieve their full potential, with access to tailored resources and dedicated staff, ensuring students are fully prepared for their future through individualised learning pathways.

At Gillingham, our study programmes and curriculum are designed to empower learners to develop meaningful life skills, independence, and a sense of belonging within their community.

- Preparation for Adulthood
- Functional Skills
- Community Inclusion
- Discovery Pathway (interaction and sensory focused)
- Horizon Pathway (advanced independence and workplace preparation)
- Transitions

All programmes include English, Maths, Digital Skills and vocational learning tailored to each student's skill level and needs. This approach ensures that students receive a balanced education, combining functional, practical, and career-oriented skills. Additionally, we offer:

- An Independent Living Suite to learn life skills in a real environment
- Sensory spaces to support engagement and learning.

- Physiotherapy and hygiene spaces
- Multi-Use Games Area
- Hospitality training kitchen
- Accessible facilities, including adapted classrooms and outdoor areas
- Highly trained staff who provide individualised support
- A focus on assistive technologies and learning plans to meet every student's needs.

By combining functional, and life-skills education, we ensure our students are equipped to reach their full potential and transition successfully into adulthood.



PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

At Gillingham, our focus is on Preparation for Adulthood (PfA), making sure every young person is supported to build the skills they need for their future. This means that alongside communication, independence, wellbeing, thinking skills and creativity, our curriculum is always linked to the four key outcomes of adulthood: employment, independent living, community inclusion and good health. Whether it's through learning practical life skills, gaining confidence in the community, or exploring pathways into work, every part of the timetable is designed to help students prepare for their next steps.

The Independent Living Suite is key in the growth of independence. A fully equipped kitchen and dining room, with bed, and bathroom facilities, the suite mirrors the kind of environment students may encounter at home, with various appliances, utensils, and furniture. It provides a safe, supported space where they can build essential life skills.

Our approach is sensory-based, recognising that meaningful learning often happens through experience and engagement with the world around us. From sensory cooking and outdoor gardening to wellbeing sessions and creative projects, students are encouraged to explore, make choices, and build self-advocacy in ways that match their individual needs. By embedding sensory regulation, comfort and emotional wellbeing throughout the curriculum, we create an environment where students can thrive, grow in independence, and develop the confidence to move forward into adult life.



Independent Living Suite



Multi-Use Games Area

The training café comes with kitchen and front of house utilised to host Pop-up cafés, where staff, students, and visitors are invited for communal lunches, put on by the students. Pop-up cafés are a central part of our curriculum, giving every student the chance to take part in a real-life, hands-on project. In the café, students work together to plan menus, prepare food and drinks, serve their peers, and manage the running of the space. It's a fun and practical way for young people to apply their learning, with each element of the café linking back to our core curriculum areas - from communication with others, to money handling, problem-solving, and creative menu design.

For students, the café is much more than a classroom activity; it's a safe and supportive environment where they can build confidence, independence, and a sense of responsibility. They learn teamwork, time management and social skills, while also experiencing the pride of contributing to something that others can enjoy. The café helps prepare students for adulthood by giving them valuable skills for employment, independence, and community inclusion, all while celebrating their creativity and achievements.



Training Café



COMMUNITY

“Connecting with My Community” is an important part of the Gillingham curriculum and supports students to feel confident and included in the world around them. This focus gives every young person the chance to take part in community projects and experiences, from supported visits and social activities to shared initiatives like the Pop-up Café. These opportunities encourage students to practise communication, independence and social skills in real-life settings, helping them understand and enjoy their place within the wider community.

Through connecting with their community, students develop a strong sense of belonging and purpose. They learn how to navigate public spaces, interact with different people, and take part in meaningful activities that prepare them for adulthood. Whether it's building friendships, managing responsibilities, or contributing to group projects, these experiences help young people grow in confidence and independence while celebrating their role as valued members of the community. Our students also visit local care homes and social care provisions, take part in charity fundraising projects, and are involved with Shaftesbury's entry into Britain in Bloom, helping to plant and supply vibrant planter to an award winning local effort. Craft markets, charity fundraising, and open days are also part of the calendar, all enabling ways for our learners to not only feel connected with the community, but also give back, and showcase their skills and enthusiasm.



CAREERS

EMA is committed to enabling and encouraging all students to explore and experience different vocational and academic areas ensuring they have the tools to make meaningful decisions about their future career pathways. EMA recognises that Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance is crucial for our students' success and are committed to embedding the eight GATSBY standards using the Compass Tool that benchmarks good Careers Guidance across the curriculum.

These are:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Our Careers lead at Senior Management Level works in collaboration with the Senior Management Team, Work Placement and Next Steps Coordinator and wider colleagues to oversee and monitor the Policy and Careers Strategy, identify priorities and improvement plans, and works with external Careers IAG professionals to ensure all students have access to a career programme that is differentiated to meet their needs.



STUDENT SUCCESS



Yasmine

Yasmine graduated from the Gillingham campus and has transitioned on to one of our Supported Internships with Dorset County Hospital.

Our Supported Internships are run from Moreton and students also work off-site with our employment partners. Yasmine has transitioned to a new campus and has been adapting to a new location brilliantly. During college time she trains on site in our Dovecote Café. She expressed an interest in the NHS and through our close work with DCH, has been given a job carved role, which has never before been a placement with DCH, making this a unique new pathway we've built together. Yasmine will be working on the Evershot Ward, initially helping with drinks and lunches but as her confidence grows, so will her role and duties!

Sam

Sam graduated from Gillingham in July 2024, and since leaving EMA he has continued to develop his skills and even moved into paid employment!

Sam works as part of the front of house team in a café in Sherborne, and the Manager there has nothing but praise for him. During his time with EMA, Sam completed internal work experience in hospitality, and developed both his front of house and basic cooking skills. We're thrilled to see him adapting these skills at his job within the local community.

Sam has also enrolled at a Supported Internship with Yeovil College and we wish him continued success for his future.



SUPPORTING STUDENT'S DEVELOPMENT

Careers Strategy

We understand that making decisions about future career paths can be daunting for young people. We are committed to providing a supportive environment to help our students explore their career options. We provide guidance and advice on career options, as well as activities and resources to help young people make informed and confident decisions about their future.

We provide a range of learning opportunities that help students explore and develop their career interests including work experience, community projects, visits to next steps providers, CV writing and interviews, our curriculum provides students with the skills and knowledge they need to progress, developing the right attitude and behaviour and supporting them to make successful careers choices.

Our Work Placements and Next Steps Coordinator works with students to develop a pathway plan that is suitable and ambitious with a focus on the Preparation for Adulthood themes of:

- Good Health
- Employment and Careers
- Independent Lives
- Friends, Relationships and Community

Once the plan has been agreed, it is reviewed with the student to make adjustments as they gain more understanding of their choices. This ensures that the student remains on track to achieving their career goals and that any changes in the student's needs or interests are added to the plan.

All About Me

These are daily sessions where students get the chance to meet with their tutor and go through the work they are doing towards their EHCP Outcomes. Tutors will meet with students 1:1 and go through the evidence that has been captured on their vocational and functional studies each week and recorded on Evidence for Learning and how it links to their outcomes. They will also go through their wellbeing and what they have been doing with their work experience. Classes will also follow the tutorial scheme of work which covers tasks and topics that link to EHCP categories Cognition and learning, communication and interaction, social, emotional and mental health, independence and physical & sensory.

Listening to our Students

Students can access our Talk About group where they can explore how to express their feelings and build friendships and have an understanding and respect of other people and their feelings. We are committed to our student voice being at the very heart of everything we do at EMA. We have an active student council that meets every half term and has a representative from each tutor group. Our 'you said, we did' board lets students know how their suggestions have developed and changed the college.

Alongside our student council we are committed to extending activities to ensure all students have the ability and opportunity to contribute to curriculum planning and the assessment of their college experiences. We are committed to increasing the reach and influence of student voice activities.



Enrichment at EMA

Enrichment is all about boosting students' overall wellbeing to help them to perform at their best at college. They can improve their study performance through curricular enrichment and enjoy time away from their studies through extra-curricular enrichment.

Throughout the academic year, we run a range of tutor-led enrichment activities, including trips and offsite activities linked to students' academic and vocational outcomes. At the end of each term, students have the opportunity to engage in a week of extra-curricular enrichment provision which gives students varied opportunities to try something new or develop an interest alongside their main studies. Our student council take an active role in shaping and planning our extra-curricular enrichment offer so that it best meets the interests of our current students.

At the end of each year students, families and staff enjoy the EMA Graduation Celebration. It's a chance for our graduating students to celebrate their fantastic achievements with friends and families as we wish them an incredibly proud goodbye.

Speech & Language Therapy

The speech and language therapy (SALT) team at EMA aims to provide and promote a high quality, responsive and inclusive communication environment for all our students. We support students to work towards their EHCP outcomes, acquiring speech, language and communication skills and strategies which equip them for their futures. We do this using a combination of small group therapy, classroom support and specific short term interventions, taking a flexible approach according to what works best for each individual.

We adopt a multi-sensory approach to learning and communication throughout EMA, utilising a wide range of communication tools (e.g. signing, visual schedules, voice notes, Mind Maps™) to support understanding, recall and use of language. The whole education team at EMA receive ongoing support and training from the SALT team to enable them to create an environment where all methods of communication are valued and responded to.

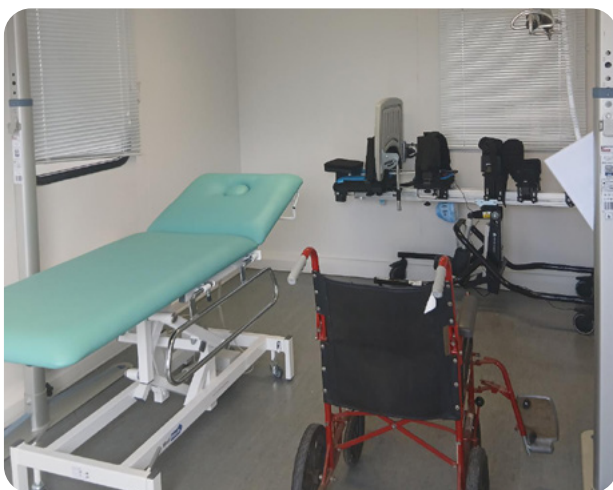


Some of the aspects of communication we support our students with include:

- Understanding and using the specialist vocabulary used in their courses
- Developing the social communication skills needed to make and maintain friendships and working relationships
- Identifying, expressing and managing emotions.
- Employing appropriate support strategies (such as visual schedules) to enable students to successfully carry out home and work tasks as independently as possible as they progress into the adulthood.

Physiotherapy and Sensory

At EMA we have introduced dedicated pods designed for physiotherapy, hygiene, and sensory support. These smaller, carefully tailored spaces provide a calm and focused environment where students can receive individualised support that meets their specific needs. By having access to these pods alongside their classroom learning, students are able to regulate, build independence in personal care, and develop physical and sensory skills in a safe and supportive setting. The classrooms themselves also have dedicated 'sensory corners'. This not only promotes comfort and wellbeing but also helps young people engage more fully in the wider curriculum and make progress towards their preparation for adulthood.



STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

EMA receive a small budget from the government for financial bursaries each academic year. These bursaries can help with the cost towards traveling to and from EMA, course equipment and college activities. This financial support helps students in completing their courses.

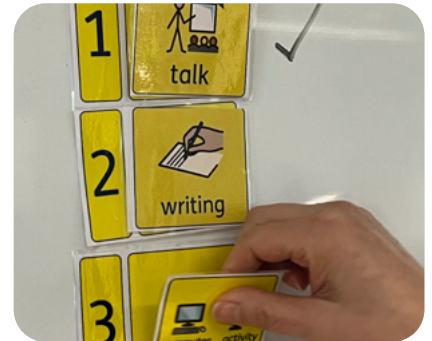
EMA also receives money from the government to support eligible students with free meals whilst at college.

The funding we receive from the government is not set and changes from year to year depending on what they have available to spend.

All applications are on a first come, first served basis and can be submitted each term.

**Further information, eligibility criteria and application forms can be found on our website:
www.employability.org.uk/aboutus/studentfinancialsupport**

**Alternatively, call reception on 01929 405685
for further information.**



SAFEGUARDING

EMA are dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all our students and staff. Our commitment to safeguarding means that we take proactive measures to identify and mitigate potential risks, provide appropriate support, and maintain a culture of respect and dignity for all. We share the belief that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and have a dedicated safeguarding team that promotes awareness and is always available to provide support to students, their families and our staff team.

All staff, volunteers and trustees are trained in both children and adult safeguarding, and we have established safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Safeguarding themes are embedded into our curriculum and we pride ourselves in going above and beyond to make college a safe, happy and thriving environment for all.



Pop-Up Cafés for students, staff, and visitors



ASSESSMENT

If you are interested in finding out more about us and would like to have a look around. We are more than happy to organise this. Just contact us on 01929 405 685 or email us at referrals@employmyability.org.uk. We believe every young person is different and we embrace this individuality, ensuring each young person's transition is tailored to meet their needs.

Visits

If you would like to come and visit us and have a look at EMA and meet staff and students, this can be easily arranged.

Referral

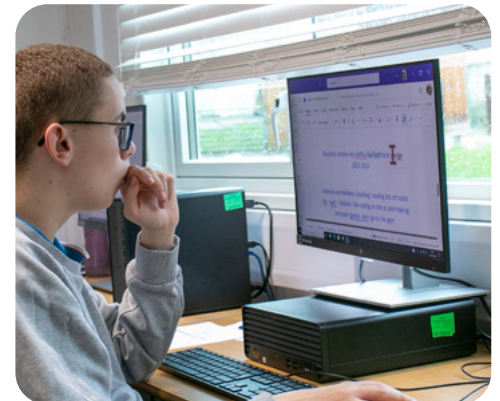
Once you have decided EMA is the place for you, you can make a referral. We will send / email you a referral form to complete or complete it during your visit. Students, parents, carers and professionals can make referrals.

Taster Sessions

We are more than happy to organise taster sessions for young people to give them an insight into what we do and support them in making their choice about their future.

Student Assessment

After we receive your completed referral we will arrange a time for our assessment to be completed. One of the team will come out and meet with you and your family in order to complete the assessment. This ensures we have all the information we need to support you academically and emotionally.





EMA INITIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL FORM

Name of Student			
Address of Student			
Contact Number			
Next of Kin			
Date of Birth		Allergies / Medication	
Current Provision		Site	Gillingham

Please note all students will be required to complete the induction skills package and will be encouraged to have taster sessions in a number of vocational areas.

Pathway you would like to do:	Yes / No
Preparation for Adulthood and Functional Skills (Pre-Entry-Entry 2)	
Discovery/Horizons Pathway	

Continue form on reverse of page

	Name	Email	Contact Number
Social Worker			
SEN Worker			
Other			

Referrer			
Contact Number			
Contact Email			
Relationship to Student		Date	

Additional comments:

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Please declare whether you have any unspent convictions or current proceedings against you.

Yes / No

If you answer yes we will ask you for further details. Your response will not stop you from being offered a place at our college. We need to have this information to ensure your safety and the safety of our students and staff and make our decision based on your full assessment, not on your answer to this question.

Please return to:

By post: Employ My Ability, The Walled Garden, Moreton, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8RG

Email: referrals@employmyability.org.uk Tel: 01929 405 685



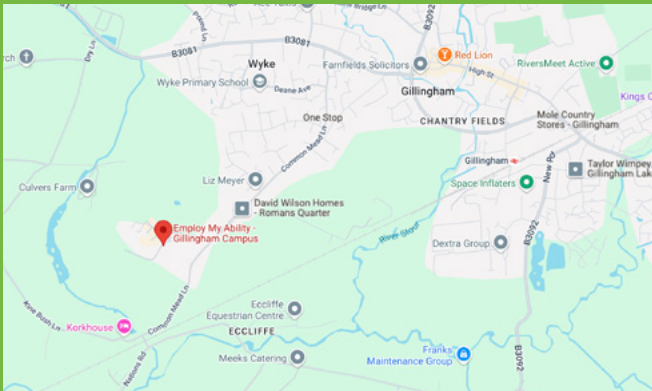
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Follow our story



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