



# Connect Newsletter May 2022

## I. Principal's Introduction

Ahead of the start of the Summer Term, I am delighted to write to you all and update you on the Connect programme which we launched in the Spring Term here at The Edge Academy.

Connect is an innovative and short-term Alternative Provision programme, helping Key Stage 3 students to connect with positive learning experiences. At present it is run exclusively for schools forming part of the OAKS Network in South Birmingham.



The programme is one of nurture and focused on behaviour, whilst also offering a blended approach of academic support. The emphasis is very much placed on therapeutic methods, to support the social and emotional development of the students we serve.

Connect focuses also on supporting students to develop “Essential Skills”, by being centred around the eight skills of the Skills Builder Framework. (Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Staying Positive, Aiming High, Leadership and Teamwork).



Unlike medium-term and long-term Alternative Provision placements, Connect aims to successfully reintegrate students back to mainstream schools. The programme consists of a carefully constructed package whereby students receive individual pre-visits at their home school, then attend 8 weeks of provision at The Edge Academy, then receive tailored after-care and outreach support when returning to their commissioning school.

So what does the package look like? In summary it aims to engage students through:

- Nurture group activities and reflective activities with a designated member of staff.
- Well-being activities to support teamwork, co-operation and communication between peers.



- Participation in a carefully selected and sequenced programme of AQA Unit Awards.
- Practical challenge activities, which aim to promote self-belief, increased self-esteem and motivation.
- English, Maths and STEM lesson delivery.
- Access to individual mentoring and/or psychotherapy sessions.
- Completion of neurodiversity and Boxall profiling which is subsequently shared with referring schools.
- Regular and enhanced communication with families to support progress and share success.
- Bespoke rewards which support effective decision-making and key learning behaviours.

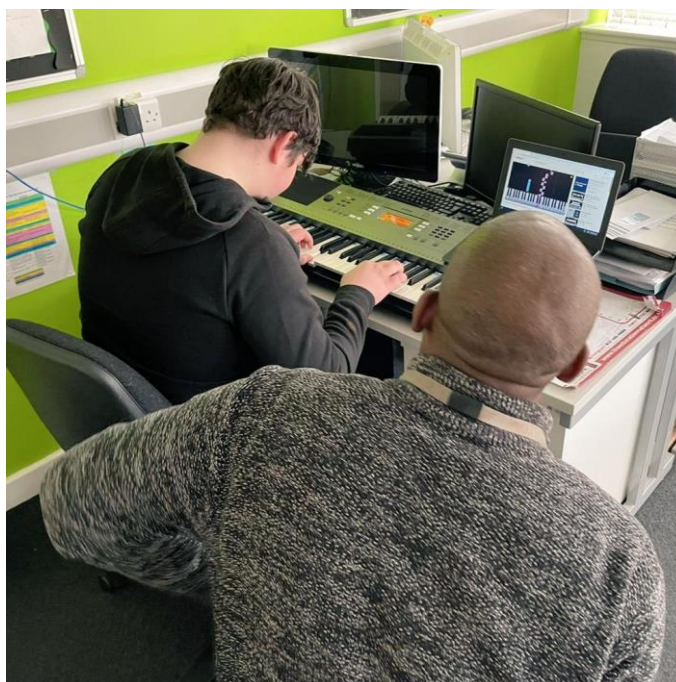
We now very much look forward to welcoming our second cohort of Connect students in the Summer Term and cannot wait to get started! As always, please feel free to contact me directly at [andrew.wakefield@theedgeacademy.co.uk](mailto:andrew.wakefield@theedgeacademy.co.uk) for any questions with which I can assist personally regarding this programme.

Andrew Wakefield,  
Principal, The Edge Academy



## 2. Curriculum Experiences

As you will see from the pictures in this newsletter, we have been able to provide students in our first Connect cohort in the Spring Term with a broad range of different educational experiences in recent months!





## 4. Admissions

As mentioned previously, Connect referrals can at present only be made by schools who are part of the OAKS Network. For any general questions about the programme however, please e-mail Vice Principal Adam Smith at [adam.smith@theedgeacademy.co.uk](mailto:adam.smith@theedgeacademy.co.uk).



## 3. Communication

Alongside the regular contact we make with parents and carers, we also post Connect reminders and highlights on Twitter (address @connectedgeacad and Instagram (address @connectedgeac). All of this is in addition to The Edge Academy social media platforms for which all links can be found on the school website. You can also watch our first YouTube video about the Connect programme which is online at: <https://youtu.be/EfRXZz1a0vI>

