

Year 11 Advice for Parents and Students

Don't Panic!

It is an important year for those in Year 11 and students will soon be making choices about their futures. Whilst students have already had some input on careers advice, parents may feel left out of the loop about what is going to happen, including deadlines and processes. This article, is here to help parents understand what lies ahead.

What is going to happen in Year 11?

Your child will receive a minimum of one face to face appointment from a careers adviser from TimelyAdvice, an organisation employed by the school to give independent advice on careers. Further ongoing advice and support will be provided where necessary.

You may feel that you aren't sure what is happening with regards option choices or you may be ahead of the game already (if your son or daughter has an older sibling who has already recently gone through the process). Our intention is to fill in some of the blank spaces or confirm what you already know (so you can sleep easier at night).

Applications

Year 11 students will be applying for courses in schools and colleges in Northamptonshire using their relevant websites and published prospectuses. TimelyAdvice will provide support in helping students decide the most suitable course for them. There are Open Days and Evenings held by every school Sixth Form and the Further Education Colleges such as Tresham, Northampton and Moulton amongst others. Details can be found on the web sites or through the links on our website - www.timelyadvice.org.uk

Most year 11 students will have made their initial applications for Schools and/or Colleges by the Christmas holidays. Some schools and colleges will also have deadlines for applications, so be mindful of finding out what these are by speaking to each school or college your son or daughter is interested in applying to or looking on their websites.

If your child wishes to stay on at their current school they will need to fill in a Sixth Form application form available from the school or on the website. College applications can be done online and are simple and quick to do.

The Open Days begin from the beginning of October. These events show what courses the schools and colleges have available and allow students and parents/carers the chance to look around. It is advisable to attend all of the places your child is interested in going to. Whilst there, it is important to do

your research; check the facilities, ask what equipment you may need to purchase (if looking to take a specialist course such as mechanics or catering), look at progression and drop-out rates as well as how much support is available and how far you may have to travel and what the cost is.

Speak to students who already attend the school or college and talk to the teachers and tutors, as well as support staff to find out what each place is like. Ensure you find out what their school policies are on dress code, attendance as well as how they assess progress. Online review sites such as <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables> can also be helpful.

Schools and Colleges often start interviewing students from January onwards, with some running a first come, first served process; when they are full they start a “waiting list”. It is for this reason that an early application is vital once your son or daughter knows what they wish to study. It is worth noting that there are not enough places on every course, for every student to always have their first choice... an early application reduces the chance of disappointment.

The level of course (Level 1, 2 or 3) will vary on the grades they are predicted by their teachers (which can be found in their academic overview or teaching reports). If they don't know what they are predicted they will need to find this out from their teachers as soon as possible. Courses at Post 16 vary significantly in their depth and breadth, with options available for students with complex SEND requirements, for those with no qualifications (or very few) all the way through to students predicted to gain grades 4/5 and higher at GCSE or Merit and distinctions in BTEC. Some courses are very practical, some are course work based and others more exam based; there really is something for everyone.

Some students may opt to do an Apprenticeship and TimelyAdvice will help students who wish to take this route. At this stage an Apprenticeship should be regarded as a backup option as you do not know what vacancies will be available next year. The application process is more complex and will become the focus for some students after the February holiday

Northamptonshire County Council

NCC “has a statutory duty to track the destinations of all young people at ages 16 and 17 during the two academic years of Year 12 and Year 13. This data is used to target resources and provide additional coordinated support to the most vulnerable young people.”

You may have heard of this referred to as the September Guarantee. For this reason, you may receive literature or be contacted during the school year with regards this. Part of this is to make sure young people are engaged in Education, Employment or Training to meet the Raising Participation Age and to make sure your son or daughter is placed for September. TimelyAdvice

may be in contact with you in September 2018 to ask where your child is being educated or trained.

Importantly, young people can apply to as many courses as they like and can keep all of their offers of places open until the day they enrol in September 2018 (they do not have to specify their final choice until they have received their GCSE results).

Worried, stuck or confused?

If your son or daughter is worried, stuck or confused about the future, they will receive help when they attend their careers interview. They will be given appointments over the next few months. Any student who feels they need advice urgently can contact their TimelyAdvice adviser to make an appointment as soon as they need it. Schools in England have a statutory duty to provide access to independent, impartial careers guidance, from a qualified careers adviser.

The National Careers Service can also be accessed for free on social media and telephone: <https://www.gov.uk/careers-helpline-for-teenagers>.

Top-tips:

If your son or daughter is looking to study Art, Design, Photography, Media or Illustration you may find they will need to put together a portfolio of work (including sketchbooks for some courses). The depth and breadth each school or college looks for varies but often they look to see a combination of work which has been completed at school, if studying a related subject, and work from home which evidences their enthusiasm and initial ability.

If looking to apply for Performing Arts, Music, Dance or Acting, an audition piece will need to be prepared for many places. If applying for private study elsewhere this website may be useful: <https://www.gov.uk/dance-drama-awards>.

Note: Schools and Colleges aren't looking for "finished Artists, Designers or Actors" they are looking for potential so keep this in mind when applying.

Back-ups

It is advisable that students apply to more than one place and have a **back-up plan**. If they do not achieve the grades they need for their first choice, it is advisable for them to have a second place with lower entry criteria. If they are unsure of their final choice and wish to keep their options open, a variety of applications is helpful.

Be mindful that courses offered can sometimes change or not run at the last minute so, have at least two applications made where possible. If your son or daughter has SEND requirements with an EHCP, this can be an exception if

they are undertaking a supported transition which may focus on just applying to one place (and supporting the transition through organised visits in the spring and summer).

If your son or daughter has SEND requirements but doesn't have an EHCP, it can be advisable to discuss supported transitions with your SENCO and the School or College you are applying to. Some have the capacity to offer support whereas others have less. If in doubt, speak to your school about the support you can access, ideally in the autumn term as getting support in place can take longer than expected in some cases. .

Financial help

A variety of help is available to you, depending on your circumstances and where you apply. Northamptonshire County Council can provide support with travel. There is the 16-19 Bursary for students under the age of 19 who household income is less than £28,000. Ask TimelyAdvice for more details. If your own circumstances are causing you financial concern, the School or College you are applying to may have hardship funds you can access through them.

Results day

As frightening as this is, results day on 23rd August 2018 will come round very quickly! It is so important that your son or daughter accesses as much help as they can starting now, as leaving it until after Easter to get additional study support in school can sometimes be a case of too little, too late! Schools will start extra Maths and English lessons in January and have teachers available to help, so speak to your school to find out what opportunities for extra study are available as soon as you can and encourage your child to attend these interventions.

Results day can be a mixture of emotions, depending on what has happened. If all has gone well, there will be no drama and just an enjoyable day. However, things can sometimes be tricky...

If you find that your son or daughter hasn't received the grades they need for their course (and hasn't got a back-up in place), the first thing to do is to speak to the school or college they applied to. They may still be able to accept them but on a lower level course. If not, they will need to start contacting local schools and colleges to see what is available with the grades they have as soon as possible. Choices at this stage can be limited, but TimelyAdvice will provide support services to help at this time.

Please note that most Sixth Forms require a minimum of five Grade 5/Cs or above with a B required to study many subjects at A level. Some schools require 8 Grade 5/Cs or above to enter their Sixth Forms.

It is worth noting that sometimes Schools and Colleges will have to cut courses at the last minute, if they don't get enough students applying or staff leave over the summer. For example, if a school has only two students applying for History A-Level they are likely to cut it. So, even if your grades look certain and you are offered a place at your first choice of School or College there is still no guarantee your course will run, until the start of the new academic year. Keep this in mind and consider having **backups** in place!

If your son or daughter doesn't gain their grades 4 or above in English and Maths GCSEs, they will find that they will be asked to re-sit these; either as Functional Skills or GCSEs – this is the same whether they attend School, College or a Study Programme (see below). Often these are in addition to their main studies or will form part of the GLH (guided learning hours) to bring them up to full time status.

If on the day, your son or daughter is really stuck, they will need to speak to a qualified and independent careers adviser as soon as possible.

Please take note of the date that GCSE results will be given out by the schools - Thursday 23rd of August - as it may be helpful to avoid being away on holiday that day when lots of support and advice will be available to students in their schools. A TimelyAdvice adviser will also be on hand if you need them.

Hang on, what about...

School or College is not the only option for young people. Some young people may wish to consider a Traineeship, Apprenticeship or Study Programme. These are alternatives to School or College which allow students to progress after Year 11.

A Study Programme is a course of study from six weeks to a year which include Maths, English and often an element of work experience and employability skills. Aimed mainly at students of a lower ability or those who find mainstream education a challenge, they form pathways into Apprenticeships and/or College. Students may find they take several Study Programmes over the course of a year, with each varying in length.

Traineeships can often follow College, School or Study Programmes; sometimes they are taken after GCSEs. Encompassing up to six months unpaid work experience, often they are seen as a stepping stone to an Apprenticeship. Some providers put together a programme of support that starts with a bespoke Study Programme and then builds to a Traineeship, with the end goal of gaining an Apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships come in all shapes and sizes, with varying entry criteria (the more technical Post 16 ones require 4s and above in English and Maths

GCSEs). Most are one day a week at a college or a training centre, studying theory, Maths and English, with the rest of the time (four days a week) at work. Students receive a training wage which, means that as a parent or carer, your benefits may be affected. Apprenticeships now include a guarantee of work when they complete.

Applications for these differ to the School or College process. Information about Study Programmes and Traineeships for Northamptonshire can be obtained from TimelyAdvice.

Traineeships can also be found via: <https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship> which is worth exploring during the year if interested in this option.

With regards to Apprenticeships there are many helpful and useful websites. Speak to your TimelyAdvice adviser in school to access the sites you need for the occupational areas which interest you. You will find that Apprenticeship listings will be open all year round, but for Year 11 the applications with a September start really crank up from around March onwards. Places are hard to find and competitive, so if taking this route make sure you also have a backup in place!

Many Apprenticeships are found through networks (as opposed to just the vacancy sites above). It is important for young people and their families to develop their networks and relationships with local employers, as this increases the chances of them finding an Apprenticeship. This can be via work experience with local employers. For example, if a student was interested in working in a hairdressers, finding either a Saturday job or work experience over the weekends and holidays now can be vital in that employer possibly deciding to take the student on as an Apprentice following Year 11.

If help is needed in developing a strategy to do this (such as how to write a CV or approach employers) students should speak to their TimelyAdvice adviser in school who will be able to support them with this where possible. Sometimes, students decide to undertake Post 16 study at School, College or a Study Programme/Traineeship first, as this can help build their confidence, before applying for Apprenticeships when they are 18.

Summary

All of this may feel a little daunting, but it is important to note that according to some experts many of us won't know what we really want to do until we are closer to our thirties. Our teenage years and twenties are often spent "trying out" and "finding out" about the things we may wish to do or who we wish to become. For our children, these years are a series of transitions and transformations, as they begin to fulfil their destinies.

We are also incredibly fortunate with regards how further education is structured in England, as it is incredibly flexible. For example, a student can study one subject in a training centre, college, school for a few years and then they can (if they have met the entry criteria) start an Apprenticeship in a completely different area, or a student may attend a couple of years at school, before spending a year in college. This means that young people are not stuck or trapped in silos, being forced to take one route. If there is a misplaced decision now or things don't quite work out as expected, other doors are available, if you know what is possible.

Whatever happens for your son or daughter, if help is required, please reach out.

For more information see www.timelyadvice.org.uk. And complete the enquiry form.

**Careers Information, Advice,
Guidance.**

TimelyAdvice



Right Advice, Right Time

TimelyAdvice Ltd is there to provide
support and guidance when needed.