

Timeline for applying for post-16

Students will begin applying for their post-16 options in Autumn **2025** and the application process for sixth form, college and apprenticeships takes place throughout the course of the academic year. Here is a projected timeline for **2025-26**:

All students	Year 10 & 11 one-to-one/group personal guidance interview with Level 6 Careers Adviser (by appointment) srooney@willingdonschool.org.uk
	Year 10 & 11 Wednesday lunch time drop-in session (Careers office)
June 2025	Personal statement guidance in English lessons and coaching time.
June 2025	Year 10 mock interview workshop
June - July 2025	Taster days at local FE colleges and schools.
June - July 2025	Personal statements to be completed during coaching time and added to Careers East Sussex (college application website), along with personal information, by end of Term 6 2025.
July 2025	Year 10 one-to-one employer mock interview.
Sept - Nov 2025	Further Education and Apprenticeship assemblies.
Sept - Oct 2025	Parent forum on post 16 options.
1st October 2025	Sixth form and college courses for 2026-27 visible on Careers East Sussex.
Oct – Nov 2025	Open days / evenings at further education colleges.

1st Oct – 30th Nov 2025	College applications to be completed during coaching time and at home.
30th November 2025	All college applications to be completed.
December 2025	Year 11 one-to-one employer interview.
Dec 2025 – Feb 2026	Students invited to sixth form/college interviews.
Feb - Mar 2026	Students begin to receive offers from sixth forms and colleges.
March - July 2026	Students accept or reject offers for different courses.
May - June 2026	Apprenticeships on websites.
September 2026	Applications for 2026/2027 close for most colleges and last-minute clearance.

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/> - The government's apprenticeship portal, which allows students to make an account and search and apply for apprenticeships.

NOTE: Apprenticeship and Traineeship applications run throughout the academic year and students must be 16 and have finished full-time education before starting. Apprenticeships have a much more detailed application process than sixth form or college and may require students to find their own placements if taken via colleges.



Post-16 Education – What are my options?

Since 2013, the Raising of the Participation Age law has stated that young people must be in some form of 'education or training' until they are 18. This can include:

Full-Time Study – this could be a qualification taken at a sixth form, college or training provider, totalling 540 hours of learning time per year, or around 18 hours per week.

Apprenticeships – this involves working for an employer while studying for a qualification as part of your training. Usually, work makes up 80% of an apprenticeship and at least 20% (or one day a week) should be dedicated to studying.

Traineeships – this is an option for students who would like to do an apprenticeship but may not have the experience, skills or qualifications to do so yet. Traineeships can last up to six months and involve a work placement, Maths and English qualifications and support with finding an apprenticeship.

Part-Time Study with Employment or Volunteering – this could be working in a full-time job (classed as any work that takes place over more than two months and is over 20 hours per week) or volunteering (again, over 20 hours per week) while studying part-time at a college or training provider (totalling 280 hours of learning per year).

How do I pay for post-16 education and training?

Education and training in the UK are free for young people until they turn 19. In addition, there is a **16-19 Bursary Fund** to help students from low income families pay for things like transport, food and stationery, which can be accessed at any sixth form, college or training provider you attend after Year 11 - www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

If you receive financial benefits from the government, such as **Tax Credits** or **Child Benefit**, it is important that you are aware of how these can be affected once your child leaves school. If your child is in full-time education, such as sixth form or college, your benefits will remain the same but if your child progresses into paid employment or an apprenticeship, they will no longer be

considered your dependant and your benefits for them will stop. More information can be found via the **Gingerbread** website:

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/information/benefits-tax-credits-and-universal-credit/money-when-your-child-turns-16/>

Many organisations also have their own financial support for students, so check first!

Useful Links:

<http://www.parentalguidance.org.uk/help-information/raising-the-participation-age-rpa>

<https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school>

Sixth Form Colleges

Sixth form colleges offer several A-Level (Advanced Level) qualifications – two-year courses that end in an overall examination and a grade from A*-E, with a similar structure to GCSEs but looking at the subject in a lot more depth. Students can study:

Traditional A-Levels – Subjects like **Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English Literature, English Language, Mathematics, Geography, History, Languages, Religious Education, Music, Art**

Alternative A-Levels – Subjects like **Photography, Law, Sociology, Psychology, Business Studies, Film Studies, Media Studies, Economics, Politics, Sports Science**

Students studying A-Levels usually select three or four subjects (depending on their GCSE grades) that they want to study at sixth form and if they study four, can choose to drop one subject after their first year of sixth form. Sixth form colleges also offer something called the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), an independent project that can provide students with UCAS points to put towards university.

Entry Requirements – Most sixth form colleges usually ask students to have 5 GCSEs at Grade 4/C or above but make sure that you do your research, as some courses, such as A-Level Maths, Physics, Biology and Chemistry, require

students to achieve a Grade 6 at GCSE in order to demonstrate their deeper understanding of the subject.

BTEC L3 Diplomas – Sixth form colleges do also offer BTEC qualifications that are vocational, industry specific, and can be taken alongside A-Levels. These are usually made up of a number of separate modules and include practical assessments and coursework, as well as exams. Subjects can include **Health and Social Care, Applied Science, Travel and Tourism and Engineering.**

T Levels - Some colleges offer T Levels which are an alternative to A levels but are equivalent to 3 A levels. T Level students spend 80% of the course in their learning environment, gaining the skills that employers need. The other 20% is a meaningful industry placement, where they put these skills into action.

Apprenticeships- An apprenticeship can be done directly after leaving school. Apprenticeships provide an opportunity to get paid while developing the skills required to work in that type of employment. Students would look for an advanced apprenticeship (Level 3 - which is A level equivalent) on the following website, <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship> from the May/June of the year they are leaving school or approach companies directly.

Some secondary schools have their own Sixth Form, such as Seaford Head, Hailsham Community College, and Heathfield Community College.

Local College Information

East Sussex College Group <https://www.escg.ac.uk/>

Bexhill College <https://www.bexhillcollege.ac.uk/>

Hailsham Community College <https://www.hccat.net/>

Seaford Head Sixth Form <https://seafordhead.org/>

Heathfield Community College <http://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/>

Plumpton College <https://www.plumpton.ac.uk/>

DV8 Sussex: www.dv8sussex.com/

BHASVIC <https://www.bhasvic.ac.uk/>

BN1 Arts: www.bn1arts.co.uk

BACA (Brighton Aldridge Community Academy): www.baca-uk.org.uk

Private Schools/ Colleges – Parents should be aware that both schools may offer fully or partially funded scholarships for post-16 education, if specific criteria are met.

Eastbourne College <https://www.eastbourne-college.co.uk/>

Bede's School - <https://www.bedes.org/>

Smaller Training Providers – In addition to the larger FE colleges, there are a number of smaller training organisations around the city and further afield that offer a range of vocational courses for students, including **Motor Vehicle, Business Admin, Customer Service, Health and Social Care, Construction, Personal Fitness, Hair and Beauty** and **Hospitality and Catering**, as well as support with **Maths** and **English** and help for students wanting to progress on to apprenticeships or work, all delivered in a much smaller environment with class sizes of 10-15 students.



