

OPTIONS CHOICES

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS
AND CARERS

Liskeard School and Community College
Careers Department

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Preparing for the future

Learning pays

Knowledge, skills and qualifications are increasingly important in today's workplace. The law has changed so that teenagers must continue their education or training for longer, helping them to gain the knowledge, qualifications and confidence to get a job, go on to further training or to university. Research shows that on average, young people with at least level 3 qualifications earn more than 25% more over their lifetime than those without.

The Education and Skills Act 2008, 'Raising the Participation Age', came into effect from the summer of 2013. From this date, young people will be required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From academic year 2014/2015, they will need to continue up to 18.

This does not necessarily mean that they need to stay on at school. Young people will be able to choose how they participate post-16, which could be through:

- Full time education, such as school, college or otherwise
- An Apprenticeship
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

Options that suit everyone

There is far more choice at 16+ simply because some subjects are no longer compulsory as they were in year 10 and 11. (In Year 10 and 11 everyone has to do Maths, English, Science, RE and PE)

The options include:

GCSEs and A Levels - involve studying several subjects in depth, preparing teenagers for higher-level learning and for work. These suit students who like an academic learning style.

Vocational qualifications – e.g. BTECs and NVQs, offer teenagers insights into the world of work. They are also good preparation for further and higher education. These suit students who prefer a ‘hands on’ approach to learning.

Apprenticeships - allow teenagers to be able to learn skills and gain qualifications whilst earning money. They are open to all suitably qualified 16 year olds who know what they want to do for a living. Apprenticeships are now available in over 80 industry sectors.

Foundation Learning – provides options for teenagers who need more time to build their confidence and skills. They can go on to take more qualifications, apply for an Apprenticeship or prepare for supported employment and independent living.

After 16, teenagers can also choose to get a job, so long as training is attached to it.

Where can my child get support?

Making subject and careers choices is an important part of your child growing up. It can be a challenge for some and easier for others but however they deal with it, they will receive a lot of support to help them choose what is right for them. This support will include careers education, presentations, information and advice.

Careers Education

Lessons in school will encourage your child to think about and set goals for the future. They will learn how to find and use careers information and resources. They will then be able to research their ideas and explore different options. They will also learn how to make their own decisions and present themselves well in applications and interviews.

We will invite many speakers in to school who will talk about their own career and the path they have taken. It will highlight the opportunities open to students within that area and make them think of careers they had possibly not considered before.

Careers Advice

Your child will receive careers advice and guidance from many different people. Their subject teachers will discuss the many opportunities that studying their subject can open up. The Careers Co-ordinator, Mrs Carlin, will help them to think through their ideas and options through presentations, small group works and one to one sessions.

If your child is disabled or has a statement of educational needs, there will be extra help with decision making and transition planning. If you need further help or advice please contact their SENCO, Careers Co-ordinator, Key Worker or Careers South West.

If your child would like careers advice or just ideas on which subjects to study for particular careers, please ask them to make an appointment with Mrs Carlin.

Support for you

You will also receive support to help your child make choices that work for them. As decision time approaches, you will receive options information from school and invitations to attend events aimed at helping you and your child through the process.

If you have any queries or concerns, you should contact your child's tutor. If they cannot help, they will put you in touch with someone who can, usually the school's Careers Co-ordinator, Mrs Carlin, or subject teachers.

There are outside organisations that can offer help – most parents start with the organisations listed below.

Directgov at www.direct.gov.uk

Have a look at the 'Parents' and 'Young People' pages to find out all the information you need on choices, financial support for learning and sources of help.

The National Careers Service at www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

A government led careers service offering many aspects of advice and guidance

National Parent Partnership Network at www.parentpartnership.org.uk

This site provides information on local services which provide neutral advice to parents of children with special educational needs.

The Apprenticeship website at www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Everything you need to know about apprenticeships

How can you help your child to choose well?

It is important that you help your child through the process of choosing the right options. They need to:

- **Listen to your child and help them explore their options**

Be prepared to listen and do not judge

Be open to ideas and encourage them to explore all their options

Keep in mind that your child's choices and decisions should be based on their aspirations and abilities and not on what you think they should do

Remember that not everyone has a clear idea what they want to do so your child's career ideas may change as they get older

- **Find out as much about the courses and qualifications as possible**

Read all the careers and options information that is sent to you by the school and use on-line sites to help you.

Encourage your child to attend Option and Open Events and go with them for support.

Make sure they have prepared a list of questions to ask course Teachers of the subjects they are interested in – with lots going on during the event they may forget things.

- **What are their interests and ability**

Your child is far more likely to succeed if they enjoy the subject and it is within their capability.

Help them to discuss their likes and dislikes and how they feel about different lessons, practical projects, hobbies, assessments and examination processes.

- **What are the consequences of their choices**

If your child does not have a clear career path in mind at this stage, encourage them to opt for a broad range of subjects that will give them plenty of choice in the future.

If your child has a specific career path in mind, they may need to be course specific. This could include certain qualifications and grades to enable them to progress at 16+. Encourage them to find out more information on this, especially regarding entry requirements for further and higher education courses.

- **Gently challenge any choices that may concern you**

You may want to challenge one of your child's choices because you feel they have not done enough research into it.

You may feel that they have over or underestimated their ability in a subject.

Have they been over influenced by friends, think that a favourite teacher will be leading the course they have chosen or have a fear of what friends might say to them about being the only boy or girl in a group?

- **Learning pays**

The more education and training a student has, the more employable they will be.

Qualifications bring with them better job prospects, higher earnings and more job satisfaction. There is still a large pay gap between those with qualifications and those without.

Remind them that no career route is closed to them, whatever their background or achievements at school so far. There are many routes to get to the end product.

- **Supporting your child's decisions**

Try to give in gracefully if you disagree with your child's choices. Show them that you have their best interests at heart and that you only want the best for them. Make sure you fully understand why your child has chosen a subject to follow. If they decide that they have made the wrong choices later on, they will need your support to help them deal with the consequences.

- **Back-up plans help**

Certain things may prevent your child from doing the combination of option choices they have made. If they have made a back-up plan, they will still feel as though the choices put in place are theirs.

- **Be ready to help**

At some point during their school life your child will have concerns that make it hard to cope with all that is going on around them. You can help by:

- ❖ Offering your support as soon as you realise that there is a problem – it is much better to get involved earlier rather than later.
- ❖ Listen – try to see the problem from their point of view.
- ❖ Work on a solution with them. Involve others if needs be.
- ❖ Boost their confidence by helping them to recognise successes and new achievements.
- ❖ Encourage them to make the most of new opportunities e.g. mentoring, work experience, volunteering etc.