AUG 2026

THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

Year 13 Results Day

theparentsguideto.co.uk

For school use | © The Parents' Guide to 2026–2027

The Parents' Guide to

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

The teenage years bring a lot of change - and not always clear answers for parents. From school and friendships to wellbeing, revision and next steps, it can be hard to know how best to support your child.

The Parents' Guide To gives parents practical, easy-to-use support to help them feel more informed, more confident and less alone.

What you'll find in this guide:

✓ **Clear, up-to-date information**
Straightforward explanations to help you understand the topic without jargon.

✓ **Practical advice**
Helpful ideas and tips you can actually use at home.

✓ **Links to trusted sources**
Signposts to reliable organisations and further support when you want to explore something in more detail.

✓ **Helpful next steps**
Simple suggestions to help you feel clearer about what to do next.

Explore the full range:

See something you like? Click on any guide below to visit our shop.

Parent Club

Parent Club is our monthly membership for parents of teens, offering practical, ongoing support across the school year. From revision and future choices to wellbeing and family life, the teen years bring plenty of questions and decisions. Parent Club gives you month by month support at the times you need it most. What you'll get:

☑ **Practical support** ☑ **Useful resources** ☑ **Live calls** ☑ **Specialist guides**

Learn more

Parent Talks

Join live calls on the topics parents ask about most, with practical advice, expert insight, and time for questions and answers.

Free for Parent Club members.

See what's on

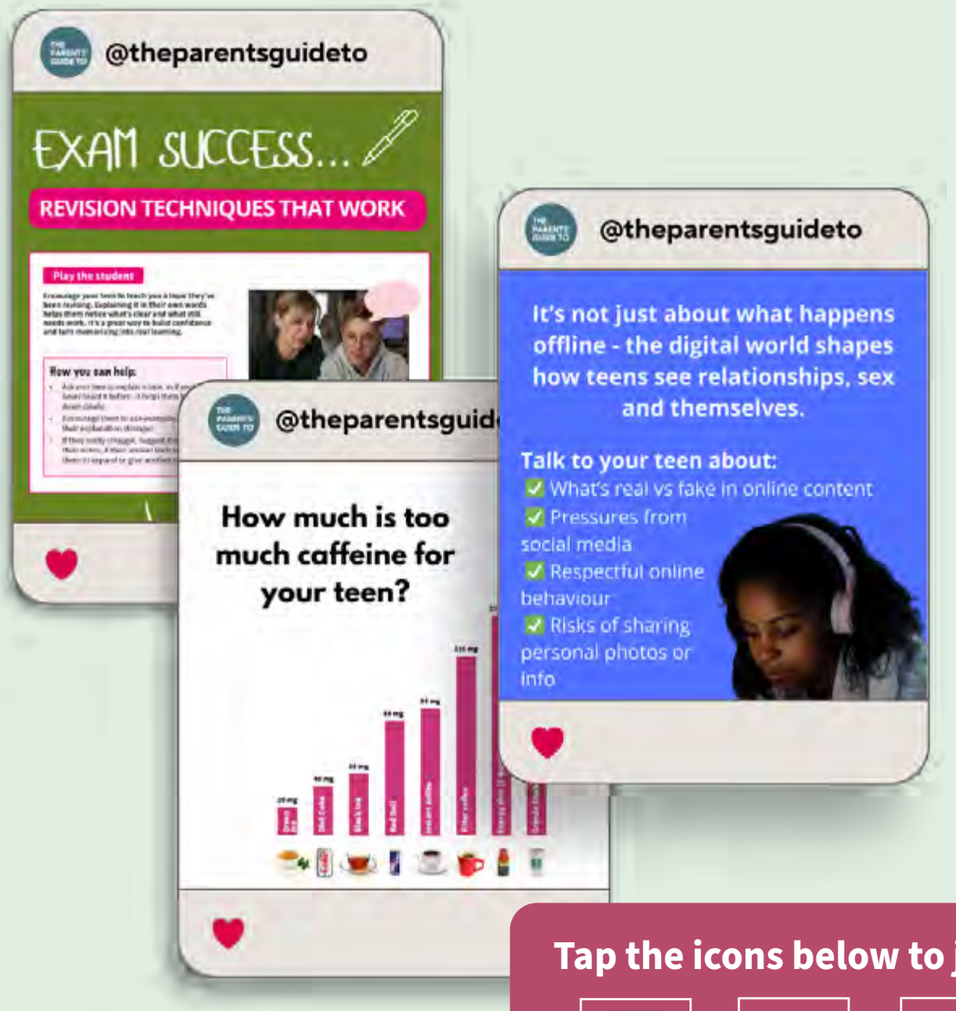
A note on sharing:

If you've downloaded this guide on our website, thank you. It's for your personal use on any of your own devices. Sharing with others breaches the copyright terms.

If you're a **school or college** and would like to share our guides with your parents free of charge we offer school licences. **Details about purchasing a school licence can be found here.**

Follow us for bite-sized tips and support!

Practical advice you can actually use at home



Tap the icons below to join:

Highlights

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

1. **Preparing for Results Day 2025**
   How to prepare for every possibility

2. **Making the most of the summer holidays**
   Simple habits to help them get ahead.

3. **Results day nerves**
   Easy ways to help them feel calm, confident, and prepared.

4. **On the day**
   A step-by-step guide to help you support your teen on the day.

5. **Making sense of results**
   Understanding grades, offers, and what they mean for the future.

6. **University and leaving home**
   Supporting your child with offers, decisions, Clearing and change.

For school use © The Parents' Guide to 2026-2027

Introduction

There's intense focus on results day and it can be a nerve-wrecking time for you and your teen, both in the lead up and on the day itself.

Once final exams are over in May/June, it seems as if nothing more can be done except wait out the long weeks until results are announced. All this tension and anticipation can build, setting off a wonderful release if the results are good, but something potentially damaging if things haven't gone as planned.

Results Day is an important marker in your teen's academic achievements. It can seem like the ultimate verdict on what your teen's got out of studying at sixth form or college; however, the more realistic perspective is that it's a useful indicator as to whether your teen's on the right path. If results are poor, perhaps they need to take a different track, such as going into the world of work, focusing on qualifications that involve more practical studies instead of classroom studies, or where coursework and ongoing assessment are the basis for grading rather than examinations.

A-level results day is a pivot point, marking the transition from one phase to another. It's not the final destination, it's one step in a much longer journey. In this guide we'll share with you what you can do to help your teen prepare for their results, what you can do if they don't get the results they'd hoped for with an outline of all the options available, and advice on where to get more help if you need it.

Leading up to Results Day

It's a myth that there's no action to take ahead of results day, so neither you nor your teen should feel you just have to sit it out. One of the best ways to help the day go smoothly is to plan ahead and make sure they know what steps to take, especially if the worst happens and their results are disappointing.

Don't forget, as well as being a time to rest up after a busy summer term, the holidays are also a time for your teen to explore their hobbies and interests, including trying new ones. This is a fun way for them to broaden their experience and will help them do better in interviews later.

If they are anxious, we've also got tips on how you can help them manage stress and improve their mental resilience. This is an important life lesson and it's never too early for them to find effective ways to wind down.

Results day checklist:

- ✓ Get an early night on Weds 12th so they're rested, even if they can't sleep properly! Trying to cope with emotional situations will be more difficult if they're tired.
- ✓ Rise and shine to head off early to get their results within an hour of them being ready – delaying could let anxiety build up.
- ✓ Eat a decent breakfast and drink plenty of fluids before heading to get their results. This will stand them in good stead if they get caught up and delayed once they're there or if they head off to celebrate with friends afterwards.
- ✓ Find out who they should speak to at school and at their next educational establishment, including phone numbers and email addresses. If they need to make calls, they'll want all the information right on hand.
- ✓ Make sure they've got pen, paper and a fully charged mobile phone with them.
- ✓ Read our guidance on **pages 28-41** about next steps BEFORE results day, so they've got a good idea of what appeals most as Plan B if Plan A falls through.
- ✓ Reassure them that you are there for them, with love and support, because of who they are. Your love is not dependent on what results they get.

Making The Most of Summer

What your teen does outside the classroom can be extremely valuable in shaping their future. Over the summer, it is worth encouraging them to do more than simply wait for results or drift through the break. Hobbies, interests, responsibilities and new experiences can all help them build confidence, develop useful skills and stand out later on.

Activities that may not seem directly connected to future plans can still make a real difference. They can help your teen discover what they enjoy, widen their experience and start to build strengths that will serve them well in sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships or work.

More than just a hobby

Hobbies and interests are often where teenagers develop some of their most valuable transferable skills. Whether they enjoy activities with others or prefer something more independent, they may be learning to communicate, manage their time, solve problems, show commitment or think creatively without even realising it.

Typical hobbies might include reading, football, gaming or vlogging, while other interests could include stand-up comedy, candle making, pet sitting or rapping. The key question is not whether the hobby sounds conventional, but whether it helps your teen learn, grow, connect with others or develop a skill.

Why balance helps

Balance matters too. Teens who are able to combine rest, fun, activity and responsibility often cope better with pressure and use their time more effectively. Having a range of interests gives different parts of the brain a chance to work and rest, which can help with resilience, adaptability and overall wellbeing.

A summer that includes a mix of different activities can also help your teen return to the new school year feeling more refreshed, more motivated and more confident.

Developing their passions

As a parent, this might mean encouraging your teen to keep up a hobby, try something new, take on some responsibility or use some of their time in a purposeful way over the summer. This does not have to be formal or impressive. What matters most is that it helps them grow.

If an activity leads to your teen meeting new people, learning a skill, communicating well, working in a team, being creative or managing their time effectively, it is likely to be helping them build strengths that will benefit them in the future.

And, of course, it is no bad thing if some of this takes them offline too.

Skills they'll develop

- ✓ **Commitment** – Understanding the benefit of maintaining interest over the long term
- ✓ **Communication** – The ability to express complex ideas clearly and simply with others, either in writing or speech
- ✓ **Critical thinking** – Unafraid to ask questions and delve into deeper meaning
- ✓ **Focus** – Being able to concentrate on one thing at a time and not getting distracted
- ✓ **Leadership** – Being able to motivate and inspire others to take or follow action
- ✓ **Listening** – Actively listening and hearing what others are saying
- ✓ **Passion** – Feeling strongly about certain things and taking appropriate action to demonstrate and channel this passion
- ✓ **Problem solving** – Being able to think of, and develop, inventive solutions to problems
- ✓ **Resilience** – The ability to manage stress and bounce back when faced with difficulties – required to succeed under pressure
- ✓ **Teamwork** – Being able to collaborate and co-ordinate with others
- ✓ **Time management** – Using time effectively to maximise outcomes

Why transferable skills matter

Transferable skills are the qualities young people carry with them into all sorts of situations. These include communication, teamwork, initiative, adaptability, problem solving and reliability. They are often developed through experience rather than taught directly.

How teens build them

Teenagers often build these skills through everyday life outside the classroom - through hobbies, clubs, volunteering, part-time work, creative projects, sport, wider reading and taking on responsibilities at home.

Why they matter later on

When young people apply for sixth form opportunities, work experience, apprenticeships, university or jobs, they are often competing with others who have similar grades. Transferable skills help them show what kind of person they are, how they approach challenges and what they can contribute.

What you can look out for

If your teen is showing commitment, learning something new, solving problems, working with others, communicating well or taking responsibility, they are likely to be building strengths that will help them in the future.

Over the summer, encourage your teen to make time for interests, new experiences and small responsibilities, as these are often the moments in which transferable skills begin to grow.

Discover more

- ✓ National Careers Service
- ✓ UK Skills Builder
- ✓ The Parents' Guide to

Managing Results Day Nerves

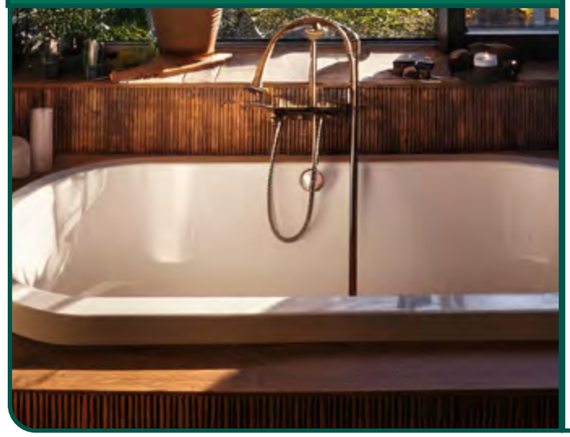
In the lead up to results day, help manage your teen's stress and nerves with our tips on instant ways to reduce stress. They're easy to put into action and most of them can be done anywhere at any time, with a positive impact in minutes.

However, don't forget, some of their stress may be caused by fear of letting you down, so let them know you love them for who they are and, whatever their results, that won't change.

1. Get laughing

Laughter literally changes the chemical composition in the body. Put on a favourite comedy show, sit back and watch. Easy to do even if concentration and energy levels are low. Half an hour is ideal, but there are lots of short clips on YouTube and a burst of laughter will reduce stress instantly.

2. Take a bath



Another easy one when energy levels are low. For best effect, add some essential oils, bubble bath or anything that creates a smell that makes them feel nurtured (good examples are lavender, vanilla, chamomile or cinnamon). Lay back, relax in the warm water and stress will wash away. Great to try ahead of bedtime, to help promote a restful night's sleep.

3. Take a walk!

Being physical is fantastic for both physical and mental health. This needn't be a great long trek – just ten minutes of brisk walking can get the circulation flowing, activate muscles, clear the head and stimulate the mind with more positive thoughts.

4. Look at what inspires you

Whether it's a photo, picture, painting, fabric, building or statue, looking at inspiring things will give them a lift. Encourage your teen to keep photos of anything that sparks joy in them on their phones so it's easy to look at; each time they do, they'll get a boost of feel-good hormones.

5. Read (or listen) to a book

One of the great things about reading a book is that it's a creative process. Unlike a film where they're presented with images and just need to watch, as they read a book the writer is inviting them to picture the situation in a way that resonates with them. It's a terrific way to step into another world and place – even if only for a few minutes at a time.

For school use © The Parents' Guide to 2026-2027

6. Help someone else

Good deeds create virtuous circles. They're not only helpful to the recipient, the giver gets a feel good boost from helping someone else. Win-win all round. It's one of the reasons volunteering is a great idea. Doing the occasional thing for our friends, family and neighbours can create the same effect.

7. Stretch

Stress tends to make us tense up, contracting muscles, folding inwards on ourselves, compressing the lungs and body. Combat stress by stretching one body area at a time and loosening the tension that's built up.

8. Breathe

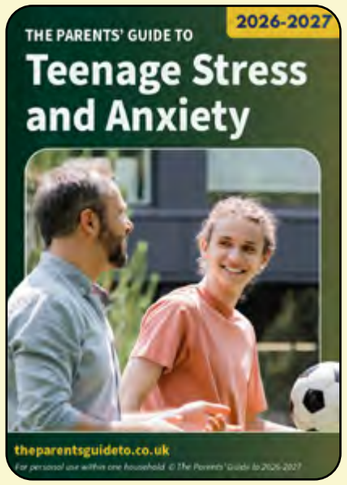
Stress can cause unhealthy breathing, so teach your teen some breathing techniques to help them instantly restore balance, reduce their heart rate and feel calmer. Simply breathing in through the nose for five seconds and then out through the mouth for five seconds can help – repeat this for two or three minutes.

9. Play some music

There is no quicker and easier way to completely change their mood than listening to a piece of music. Make sure your teen's playing a feel-good vibe if they need uplifting, or a calming tempo if they're trying to relax.

10. Snuggle up with a pet

Having a cuddle with our furry friends can be very soothing and help relieve anxiety.



Support Beyond Results Day

Results day can bring a lot of emotion, but the worries do not always stop there. Our Teenage Stress and Anxiety guide is full of practical advice to help you support your teen through stress and anxiety more broadly.

Shop now

When to Get Support

Don't be tough on yourself and expect to have all the solutions for your child's needs. It's absolutely fine to call on professionals to help you help them. Professional support includes more than counsellors and psychiatrists (although both these approaches can be helpful). There's a range of professional options available including:

1. **Teachers at school** – both in an academic capacity to help understand subjects better, as tutors to help create better ways of working outside school and pastoral experts who can help with emotional issues;
2. **Some schools have an independent counsellor** available with whom your children can talk in confidence (i.e. they will not relay the information to the school);
3. **Peer support networks** – these can be very helpful as speaking to someone of a similar age can sometimes feel easier than speaking to an adult, or speaking to someone just slightly older, who has more recently been through a similar experience can be very reassuring;
4. **Charities** – most now offer both online and telephone support. This anonymity (i.e. not being face-to-face) can make talking over problems and worries easier.

Too much anxiety

If your child is showing several signs of anxiety on a regular basis (several days each week) over a prolonged period of time (several weeks) then do seek help from external support services and a good place to start might be visiting your GP.

Discover more:

AnxietyUK

NHS

mind for better mental health

SAMARITANS

Results Day

When are results available?

Students can collect their results as early as 08.00 am on **Thursday 13 August**. Be sure to check with your teen's school/college or educational establishment, as they may open at different times.

The best idea is for students to collect their results in person because there will be staff on hand to help them with next steps, whatever their results might be.

Students will receive a result slip (sometimes called a Candidate Statement of Provisional Results) detailing grades that have been awarded, and the individual mark per paper. They'll get their certificates in the autumn.

Preparing to collect results in person

Tempting though it may be to hold their hand, allow them to go alone if that's what they want to do.

We'd recommend a good breakfast ahead of heading off early to collect results, so they're properly fuelled for whatever lies ahead.

Don't let them put it off (especially if they're worried about the grades they might get) as they'll end up spending the day worrying about what's to come and increasing anxiety.

Being prepared makes life easier.

Make sure their phone's fully charged, they have pen and paper (or something for note taking when using the phone), photo id, any acceptance letters and contact names and phone numbers of people they may need to speak to.

Other ways to collect results

If your teen can't collect the results themselves, they can be sent by post or there may be different secure ways to collect results (such as by telephone or via the parent portal) depending on the school/college/ education provider. You can check this with them ahead of results day.

Alternatively, someone else can collect the results for them, so long as they have a signed letter of authority from your teen and ID. Results are in a sealed envelope, so there can be no sneaky-peeking before your teen!

Why join Parent Club?

Support that arrives at the right time

Parenting a teen can bring different challenges at different points in the year. That is why **Parent Club** gives you month-by-month support that reflects what is actually coming up, from exams and next steps to wellbeing and everyday worries. You'll get helpful advice at the right time, so you feel more supported and better equipped as things arise.

Live calls

All Parent Club members get free access to our expert-led live calls on the topics parents ask about most, with practical advice, helpful insight and the chance to ask questions and take away ideas you can actually use at home.

Helpful guides

You'll also get access to selected digital guides across the year, giving you extra support on key topics and more depth when you need it.

Join today

Live Talks - What's Coming Up

Finding Work Experience

Struggling to know how to help your teen find work experience? This talk looks at realistic ways to find opportunities, what counts, and how you can support them.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

Applying to University

If university applications feel confusing, this talk will help you make sense of the process. From course choices to personal statements, learn how you can support your child.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

Revision Techniques That Work

Not all revision advice is useful. This talk focuses on the strategies that genuinely help students revise effectively, with practical ways to support without adding pressure.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

Staying Safe Online

Worried about the online world your teen is growing up in? This talk explores the issues parents worry about most, with practical advice you can actually use.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

What Results Are Available?

GCE Qualifications:

GCE Qualifications		EPQ	UCAS POINTS
A level	AS level		
A*			56
A			48
B			40
C			32
		A*	28
D		A	24
	A	B	20
E	B	C	16
	C	D	12
	D		10
		E	8
	E		6

T Levels:

T Levels	UCAS POINTS
Distinction*	168
Distinction	144
Merit	120
Pass (C or above on the core)	96
Pass (D or E on the core)	72

BTEC Qualifications:

BTEC Qualification (QCF/RQF)				UCAS POINTS
Extended Certificate	Foundation Diploma	Diploma	Extended Diploma	
			*D*D*D**	168
			*D*D*D*	160
			*D*DD*	152
			DDD	144
			DDM	128
		*D*D**	*DMM*	112
		*D*D*		104
		DD	*MMM*	96
	*D*D**			84
		DM	*MMP*	80
	*D*D*			78
	DD			72
		MM	*MPP*	64
	DM			60
*D**				56
D	*MM*	*MP*	*PPP*	48
	MP			36
M		*PP*		32
	PP			24
P				16

International Baccalaureate

Results for International Baccalaureate (IB) will be released on 6 July 2026.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA				UCAS POINTS
IB DIPLOMA HIGHER LEVEL	IB DIPLOMA STANDARD LEVEL	IB EXTENDED ESSAY/ THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE	WELSH BACCALAUREATE SKILLS CHALLENGE	
H7			*A**	**56**
H6			*A*	**48**
H5			*B*	**40**
H4	*S7*		*C*	**32**
H3	*S6*		*D*	**24**
	S5		*E*	**16**
	S4	*A*		**12**
	S3	*B*		**10**
		C		**8**
		D		**6**
		E		**4**

Functional and/or Essential skills:

Results of Functional and/or Essential skills are not released on specific dates, so speak to the assessment centres to find out when these will become available.

Apprenticeships:

Whilst most Higher apprenticeships (level 4 and above) run alongside the academic year, there's no official date to receive apprenticeship results. It will vary depending on the length of the apprenticeship and when it was started.

Qualification/ Educational Routes

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

Level **8**	**Doctorate (PhD)**				**NVQ 8**
Level **7**	**Masters degree (MA)**				**Degree apprenticeship / NVQ 5, 6, 7**
Level **6**	**Bachelors degree** BA or BSc				
Level **5**	**Foundation degree** FdA or FdSc			**Higher National Diploma (HND)**	
Level **4**				**Higher National Certificate (HNC)**	**Higher apprenticeship / NVQ 4**
Level **3**	**A levels** Grades A-E	**International Baccalaureate**	**T Levels**	**BTEC (extended) diploma BTEC certificate**	**Advanced apprenticeship / NVQ 3**
Level **2**	**GCSE** Grades 4- 9 (C, B, A or A*)			**BTEC first diploma**	**Intermediate apprenticeship / NVQ 2**
Level **1**	**GCSE** Grades 1- 3 (D,E,F or G)			**Foundation diploma / entry level qualifications**	**Traineeship / NVQ 1**
	Academic route		**Vocational route**		**Applied / work route**

Levels of Education

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are 8 qualification levels (1 - 8) plus an entry level qualification for those just starting. Generally, the higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is.

With so many different qualifications, it can be hard to know what they mean and where they might lead to next. To help you understand, we've created a summary of what the levels mean highlighting academic, vocational and work-based routes to higher education.

For school use © The Parents' Guide to 2026-2027

Understanding Options

Getting the results they'd expected

Congratulations! This is wonderful news - time to celebrate.

Getting better results than they'd expected

Congratulations! This is wonderful news and they can go on to their next steps as planned, or reconsider their options if there is an alternative path they would prefer to take. Time to chat to their teachers at sixth form, college, or other education provider about their options before celebrating!

What to do if results are disappointing

The most important thing is to remember that this is not the end of a successful career for your teen, albeit that they may need to take a different approach than what they had originally planned. Try to be supportive and reassuring; there are always alternatives, and a positive outlook usually speeds up finding the right solution.

Staff will be on hand to help

Make sure you know who to contact at your teen's school or college for advice and support if results do not go as planned. Find out this information ahead of results day so you have the details to hand, should your teen need them.

Resits

Students can retake their exams if they are disappointed with the results. This is not a decision to be taken lightly. In most cases, it will not be possible to resit until 2025 summer exam period and students will need to pay for retakes. They can choose to resit at school, college or online – it does not need to be the same place they took their original exams. If they obtain a lower mark when resitting an exam, they can choose to use the higher mark achieved.

Appeals

If the marks seem inappropriate given your child's skill level, it's possible to apply for a remark. It's vital your child speaks to their subject teacher first and confirms their opinion.

Grades can go down as well as up

An important consideration when applying for remarking is that, whilst there's a possibility that the paper may have been unfairly marked down and, following reassessment, a higher grade allocated, the reverse could also be true, in which case your child may be allocated a lower grade than originally awarded.

If applying for re-grades, keep the university advised of both intention and progress. They are not obliged to hold the place open through Clearing.. Check the deadline for submitting the review application with the exam board.

Where to get independent help

Sometimes it's easier to discuss next steps during times of disappointment with someone who isn't directly or personally involved.

The Exam Results Helpline is also available and can be used to access free support from trained careers advisers. They're open 08.00-20.00 Mon-Fri and 10.00-17.00 Saturdays and Bank Holidays. Opening hours are extended around results day.

If They've Applied to University

UCAS will receive your child's results directly and update their system which adjusts to reflect university status offer.

This happens from 08.00 am, but the system can be busy, so access could be delayed. It does not show your child's results, so it may be better to wait until the results have been reviewed and consolidated, rather than being faced with a disappointing rejection ("unsuccessful") without a full understanding of why the desired outcome hasn't been achieved.

Key terms:

UCAS will show the university status offer. It will show:

- **"Unconditional"** (place and course confirmed – this means that the entry requirements for the previously conditional offer have been met)
- **"Unsuccessful"** (conditions not met, no place)
- **"Unconditional changed course"** (they have not succeeded in achieving a place on their desired course, but are being offered an alternative with lower entry requirements)

Achieving the desired results

Celebrations ahead! If your child has a conditional offer and meets the grades, that offer will switch to "unconditional" and they should receive a confirmation letter from UCAS with details of next steps (it varies university to university). However, if they've matched their offer but since changed their mind about their university or subject choice, they can reject their offer and go through Clearing to try something else.

Don't forget, there is no guarantee that they will get the course they want through Clearing but it does provide alternatives and options if they realise they've made a mistake earlier on in the application process rather than reapplying the next year.

Surpassing the desired results

Previously, "adjustment" was a process where students who received better grades than anticipated could apply to another course or university where entry options were higher than they thought they could achieve. Few students took up this option, because most were happy to accept the university place they had been offered, and as of 2022 university entry, the adjustment process has been discontinued.

Students who want to apply to a different university, because they have outperformed the conditions of their offer, can decline their place and go through Clearing to apply for a course with higher entry requirements. If they use Clearing Plus, they will be signposted to relevant universities with spaces whose entry requirements match their results.

Failing to get a place

Yes, it's disappointing, but there are still plenty of options available and it's all important to keep your child motivated and not let them feel like a failure. This can be difficult if you feel they ignored warnings and did not put in enough effort, but this is, itself, a significant learning experience and may put them on a more productive path in the future.

Options will vary dependending on the variance between their predicted grades and what they actually achieved. If they missed by a small margin, it's possible to speak to the university and see if they will make an exception. Alternatively, they can apply for another place by going through Clearing. If they need time to refocus, a gap year could be an option or check out the information in "other choices".

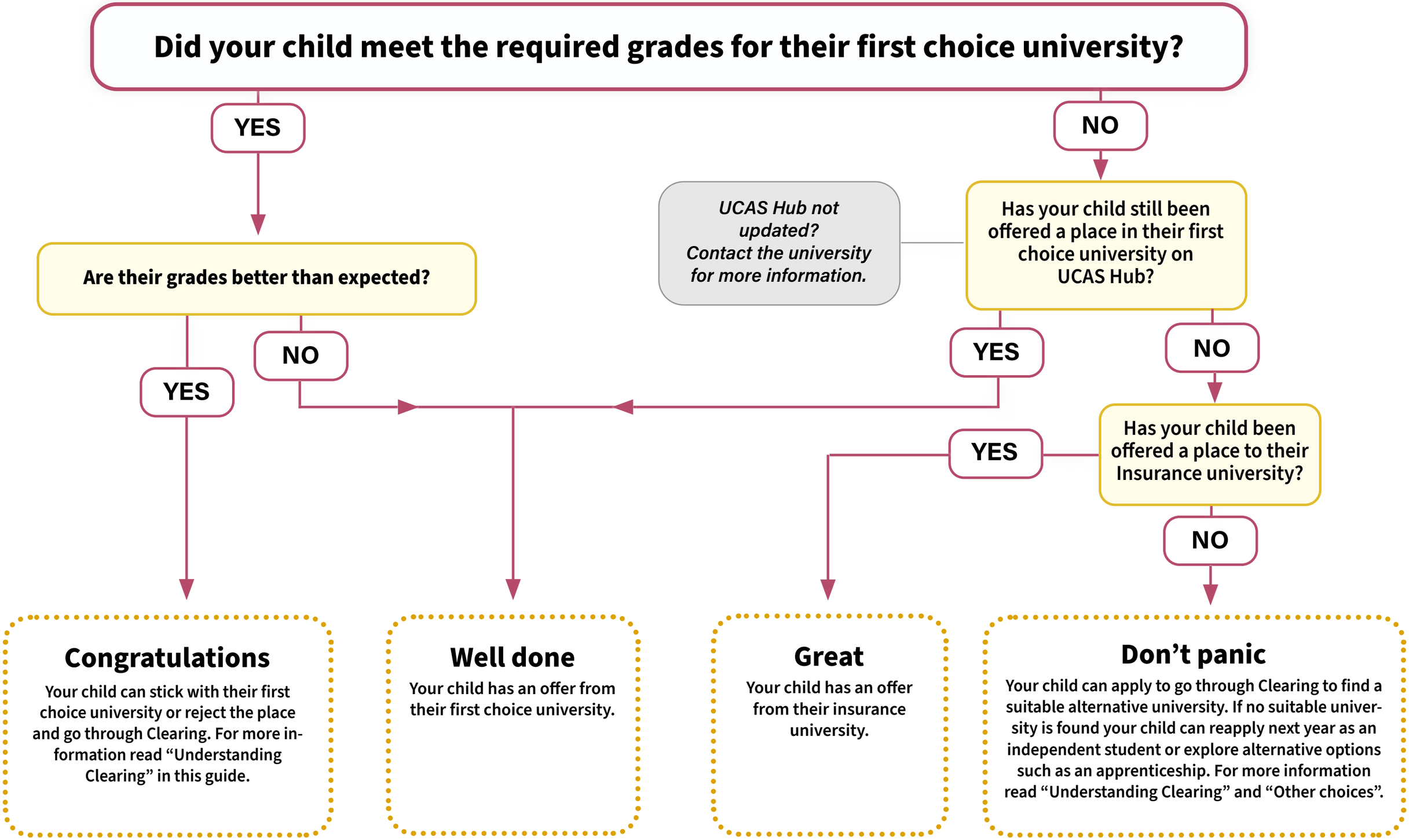
Declining a place

A student can choose to decline a university place for many reasons: their circumstances may have changed, they may prefer another course, or they may no longer want to go to university.

Declining a place is allowed, but it is usually irreversible. Once they turn it down, they may not be able to get the offer reinstated. Before making this decision, make sure other options have been fully researched or confirmed. It would be a shame to give up a good opportunity in the hope of something better, only to end up with no place at all.

Results Day Flowchart

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support



For school use © The Parents' Guide to 2026-2027

Understanding Clearing

Clearing is the system universities use to fill up any vacancies they have on a course. It's available to students that don't have any offers: either because they have not succeeded in meeting criteria for conditional offers or because they have rejected all the offers they have.

Don't feel that because a university offers a university place through Clearing this means the courses are undesirable. It is possible that fewer students applied than anticipated; students didn't achieve the minimum entry requirements; or successful students had a change of heart.

How it works

Students must apply (through UCAS) to participate in Clearing.

If a university hasn't responded and confirmed the place for which your child originally applied (for example, they may be just below entry requirements and the university is considering whether to make an offer) they will not be eligible to apply for another course through Clearing until such time as they have received a rejection. In this scenario, it's worth making direct contact with the university in question to get an update on status.

Find out what is available

Use the UCAS website to find out which courses are available via Clearing. This will not be a full list of all university courses, but a list of all those that are available now that results have come out and universities know whether or not the students to whom they have offered places have met the grades. Of course, some courses will not appear because they are fully subscribed, but there will still be plenty of choices. In some cases, courses in which your child may have been interested but did not meet entry requirements might appear if many students failed to meet the entry requirements at the time of results.

Some courses (such as Oxbridge and medicine) do not offer places through Clearing.

Don't waste valuable time

It's a good idea to speak to the university in person before applying for a place through Clearing to find out if the course is still available, whether your child meets the entry requirements, and whether the course is suitable for them. Students need to call themselves rather than have someone call on their behalf. The university is going to consider whether to offer them a place, not their representative! In some cases, the universities may make an offer over the phone – but if not, they will revert relatively quickly.

It may seem obvious, but worth remembering: the most popular universities have the most applicants and field spare places first, so your child needs to be ready to act quickly to secure the best options.

Clearing Plus:

Clearing Plus is a relatively new UCAS Clearing tool which will match unplaced undergraduate applicants to relevant courses with vacancies. Designed to help speed things up, UCAS uses what they know about your teen to suggest courses they might like to express an interest in. Your teen can access this tool by logging into their UCAS account and clicking on the button 'View Matches'.

We recommend that your teen uses this alongside the Clearing search tool.

Considering Other Options

It's important to remember that university isn't for everyone. An increasingly popular alternative is apprenticeships and traineeships. Or there are school leaver programmes which give a direct route into employment and can result in further qualifications. If your teen needs more time to figure out their next steps, a gap year can offer breathing space.

Apprenticeships:

Apprenticeships combine study at college or university with work. If your child knows what sort of job they might like to do, this provides an ideal opportunity to go straight into the workplace whilst still formally developing their skills and gaining a qualification. It's certainly not an easy option – holding down a full-time job (albeit with one or two days each week to attend university) and keeping up with studies can be tough.

But with a salary, holiday entitlement and sick pay along with access to the university experience and no post qualification loan (their employer and the government fund all costs), it makes for an attractive proposition. Most apprenticeships last for about two to four years and the minimum wage is £8.00 per hour. There are entry requirements at four different levels, from the equivalent of five GCSE passes to the equivalent of a master's degree.

Traineeships

Traineeships were short-term education and training programmes designed to help young people prepare for apprenticeships or work. The national traineeships programme ended in August 2023, but similar local opportunities may still be available through colleges, training providers or employers.

School leaver programmes

School leaver programmes offer opportunities to join the workplace straight after sixth form studies and commence skills development and career progression through experience as well as studying to obtain a nationally recognised qualification. Entry requirements vary from employer to employer.

Discover more

- ✓ UCAS
- ✓ Apprenticeships
- ✓ GOV UK

Gap year / deferred entry

Taking a year out between school and university can provide the opportunity to find out a little bit more about personal preferences rather than being directed by schools, colleges (and parents!). It's also a good opportunity to find out how your child fares fending for themself.

A gap year can be taken while entry to university is being deferred, once a place has been accepted (allowing a year between leaving school and starting university), or if university is not the next step at all.

Traditionally, this is a year spent travelling overseas, but it needn't focus exclusively on that. Volunteering and work experience can also be incorporated and inform your child's likes and dislikes, as well as giving them valuable first-hand experience in a variety of areas they may not have had chance to try out. However, for some a gap year can be distracting and, if not well-planned, could prove somewhat directionless, which is unlikely to be beneficial.

Some students want to enter the world of work straightaway or, if they haven't achieved the results they had hoped, they could always try retakes or other sixth-form subjects.

University reapplication

Should your child decide to reapply to university for any reason, be sure they save a copy of their UCAS application so they do not have to rewrite everything, as the original application is deleted from the central database each year.

A Summary of All Their Options - Part 1

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

	Qualification Type	Length of Commitment	Tuition Costs	Living Costs	Alternatives
University Degree	Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science	3-4 Years (Some degrees, such as medicine, are longer)	£££ - Students take out a "tuition fee loan" to pay course costs. No repayments are made until the student is earning £25k in the April after graduation. Any outstanding debt is wiped clear after 40 years.	£-£££ - May receive a "maintenance loan" dependent on parents' income; however, this is rarely sufficient to cover all costs and students will either need to supplement by working or have help from their parents (or both!).	Degree apprenticeships
Degree Apprenticeship	Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science	3-4 Years (Some can be longer, even up to 7 years)	£0 - Course costs (at university) are paid by the company and government.	£-££ - A salary is paid, but parents may need to subsidise living expenses, especially if relocating to an expensive area.	Could also consider school leaver programmes (non degree apprenticeships)
Non-degree Apprenticeship	Advanced or Higher apprenticeship	6 Months – 3 Years	£0 - Course costs (usually at college or by an education provider) are paid by the company and government.	£-££ - A salary is paid, and shorter apprenticeships may be local so students can continue living at home, but parents may need to subsidise living expenses, especially if relocating to an expensive area.	Higher education courses
Higher Education Courses	HNDs HNCs, Foundation Courses, Diplomas	1 – 3 Years Some are part-time.	££ -Tuition fees need to be paid but these are less expensive than university fees. Students can apply for an "advanced learner loan".	£ - Students can often find suitable courses at colleges commutable from home, but there are still living expenses to be covered.	Non degree apprenticeships

A Summary of All Their Options - Part 2

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

	Qualification Type	Length of Commitment	Tuition Costs	Living Costs	Alternatives
Traineeship	Short-term support to build skills and experience before an apprenticeship or work.	6 weeks to 6 months	£0 - Training fees are paid by the government.	£-££ - Not paid to work, but some expenses (such as travel) may be provided. Accommodation costs may be expensive if needing to relocate.	Job with training, internship or
Job with training	Depends - varies by organisation	n/a	£0 - Training funded by the employer	£ - Salary provided and jobs are usually within commutable distance	Traineeship, internship
Job without training	Work experience but not a qualification.	n/a	£-££ - Any training would be self-funded	£ - Salary provided and jobs are usually within commutable distance from home, though travel can be expensive	Higher education courses
Internship	None	1-6 months, but some can be longer	£0 - Internships are about gaining practical work experience so there are rarely any formal qualifications undertaken	£-££ - Legally interns should be paid although many aren't. Some companies may cover travel expenses. Depending on the location, living and travel expenses could be costly.	Traineeship, job with training
Gap year	Could include a year working for a charity or other employer to gain skills – not just about travelling	1 year	£0 - There are no tuition costs unless retaking examinations.	£-£££ - Gap years need not be expensive. Flights and accommodation are usually covered for overseas volunteering. Personal travel can be funded by working for part of the year	Volunteer, start a business

Why join Parent Club?

Support that arrives at the right time

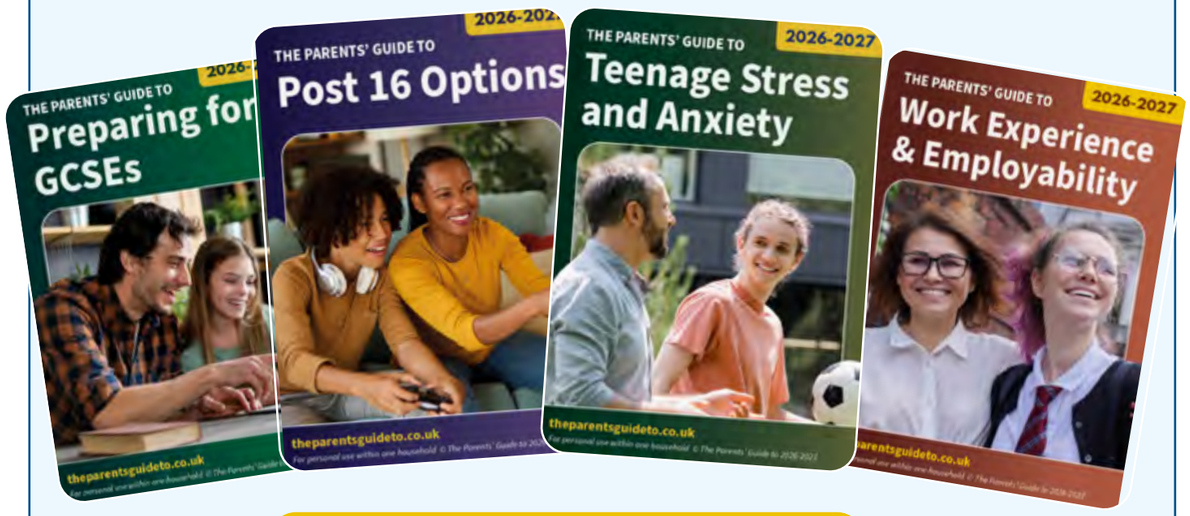
Parenting a teen can bring different challenges at different points in the year. That is why **Parent Club** gives you month-by-month support that reflects what is actually coming up, from exams and next steps to wellbeing and everyday worries. You'll get helpful advice at the right time, so you feel more supported and better equipped as things arise.

Live calls

All Parent Club members get free access to our expert-led live calls on the topics parents ask about most, with practical advice, helpful insight and the chance to ask questions and take away ideas you can actually use at home.

Helpful guides

You'll also get access to selected digital guides across the year, giving you extra support on key topics and more depth when you need it.



Join today

Live Talks - What's Coming Up

Finding Work Experience

Struggling to know how to help your teen find work experience? This talk looks at realistic ways to find opportunities, what counts, and how you can support them.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

Applying to University

If university applications feel confusing, this talk will help you make sense of the process. From course choices to personal statements, learn how you can support your child.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

Revision Techniques That Work

Not all revision advice is useful. This talk focuses on the strategies that genuinely help students revise effectively, with practical ways to support without adding pressure.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

Staying Safe Online

Worried about the online world your teen is growing up in? This talk explores the issues parents worry about most, with practical advice you can actually use.

Free for Parent Club members

Book your place

Next Steps - Life Skills

Budgeting

Teach them how to budget. If you're supporting them financially, don't budget on their behalf by paying bills directly or limiting their money to a weekly allowance – in the long run it won't help them. If they receive financial loans, it's highly likely they'll get the full term's allowance at the beginning of term straight into their bank account, so it could be easy for them to spend all the money and then have nothing for the rest of the term.

Teach them how to budget for rent, bills, course materials, food and entertainment so they understand what expenses are coming up and how to put aside money so they have enough to cover the cost of living.

Discover more

✓ Which?

✓ NatWest

Financial worries

Overspending is an issue faced by many students, which can cause anxiety for both you and your child. Consider the following:

- Make sure they apply for student discount cards, such as TOTUM, UNiDAYS, Student Beans and 16–25 Railcard.
- Encourage your child to find part-time work, ideally during holiday-time, but term-time too if money is a significant issue. However, make sure your child is not neglecting their academic studies as research shows working more than 20 hours each week during term-time can have a negative impact on academic performance;
- Encourage your child to speak to a student money advisor at their university;
- Give your child tips on money saving ideas, such as buying non-branded food items and attending free events; and as a last resort
- Speak with your child's bank about extending their interest free overdraft.

Cooking

Spend some time cooking with your child, so that they know how to prepare a few meals with fresh ingredients. These should be easy one-dish dinners that don't require lots of pots, pans and other kitchen utensils. This will not only stand them in good stead for inexpensive and healthy eating, but being able to host dinners will make them popular with other students too.

Course preparation

If your teen is going on to higher education, remind them to check their new timetable, pre-reading and travel time so they become familiar with the rhythm their new life will take.

Some courses may also require several key text books. Check whether the university/college has a second-hand book shop and try to visit early to find the best bargains.

© The Parents' Guide to 2026-2027

Next Steps - Moving Out

What to pack

If your child is leaving home for the first time, they may need help with deciding what they'll need to take with them. This means everything from clothes, course materials, laptops, phones to bedding, cooking equipment and all the appropriate paperwork such as bank accounts, TV licences, insurance and new travel passes. It will make their life easier if they know how to plan ahead and it will make you feel more comfortable knowing they are well-prepared.

Try to keep to the basics when it comes to kitchen utensils and try to purchase items, which are easily identifiable - bright colours or patterns will help your child keep track of their items, especially if they are in shared accommodation.

If you are helping your child move, then it may be a good idea to factor in some time for a trip to the local shopping centre for any last minute purchases, such as household cleaning items.

10:10

Don't forget:

Important documents

- Passport
- Driving licence
- All university / college and accommodation correspondence
- Apprenticeship contract
- Insurance documents
- Bank details
- Parking permit

Electricals

- Laptop and chargers
- Mobile phone
- Headphones
- Extension cables

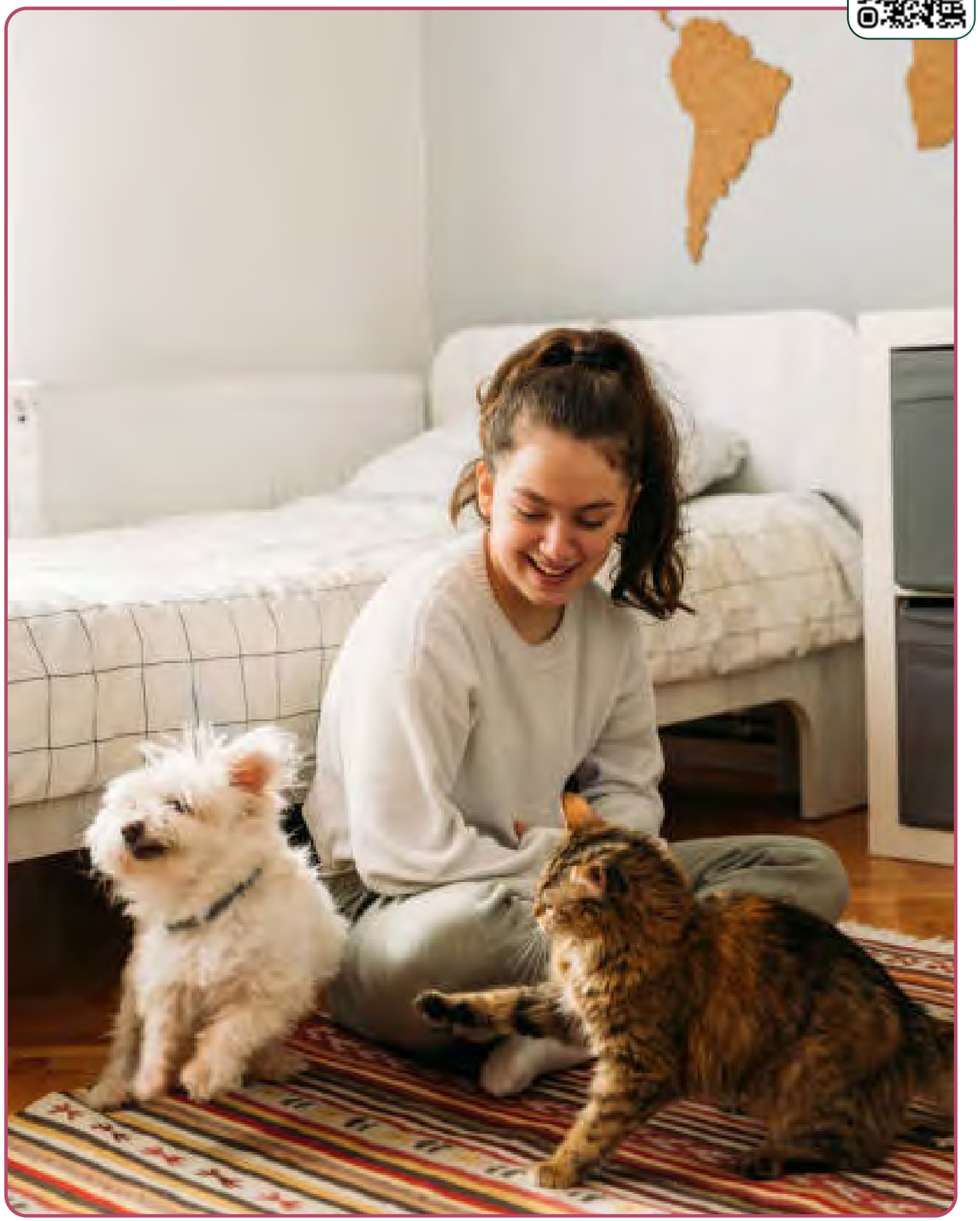
Stationery and course books

Kitchenware

- Cutlery and crockery
- Kitchen utensils
- Family recipes
- Cook books

Bedroom

- Coat hangers
- Duvet, pillow, mattress protector and sheets
- Wash kit
- Photographs of family & friends



For school use © The Parents' Guide to 2026-2027

Leaving home shopping list - *click here for our best buys*

I'm interactive! Click each item for inspiration!

BEDROOM

Essentials:

- ☐ Alarm clock
- ☐ Bin (small)
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Coat hangers
- ☐ Mirror

Extras:

- ☐ Beanbag
- ☐ Cushions
- ☐ Door wedge
- ☐ Extra storage
- ☐ Family photos
- ☐ Over door hangers
- ☐ Plant
- ☐ Rug
- ☐ Wall art / posters

SLEEP

Essentials:

- ☐ Bed sheets
- ☐ Duvet
- ☐ Duvet set
- ☐ Mattress protector
- ☐ Pillows
- ☐ Pillow cases

Extras:

- ☐ Diffuser / oils
- ☐ Mattress topper
- ☐ Night lamp
- ☐ Warm blanket

BATHROOM

Essentials:

- ☐ Bath towels
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Hairbrush
- ☐ Hand towels
- ☐ Nail clippers
- ☐ Razor
- ☐ Sanitary towels
- ☐ Shampoo
- ☐ Shower gel
- ☐ Toilet roll
- ☐ Toothbrush / paste
- ☐ Wash bag

Extras:

- ☐ Bath mat
- ☐ Flip flops
- ☐ Hair dryer
- ☐ Make-up
- ☐ Moisturiser

FIRST AID

- ☐ Complete sets

Essentials:

- ☐ Antibacterial wipes
- ☐ Antiseptic cream
- ☐ Hot-water bottle
- ☐ Hydration salts
- ☐ Painkillers
- ☐ Plasters
- ☐ Sewing kit
- ☐ Torch
- ☐ Tweezers

KITCHEN

- ☐ Complete sets

Essentials:

- ☐ Baking tray
- ☐ Bowls
- ☐ Cheese grater
- ☐ Chopping board
- ☐ Cling film
- ☐ Corkscrew
- ☐ Cutlery
- ☐ Glasses
- ☐ Knives
- ☐ Mugs
- ☐ Plates
- ☐ Pots and pans
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tin foil
- ☐ Tin opener
- ☐ Tea towels
- ☐ Wooden spoons

Extras:

- ☐ Casserole dish
- ☐ Colander
- ☐ Masher
- ☐ Measuring jug
- ☐ Plastic bag sealers
- ☐ Recipe books
- ☐ Scales
- ☐ Shot glasses
- ☐ Slow cooker
- ☐ Spice jars
- ☐ Tupperware
- ☐ Vegetable peeler
- ☐ Whisk
- ☐ Wok

CLOTHING

Essentials:

- ☐ Casual clothes
- ☐ Evening clothes
- ☐ Fleece
- ☐ Gym clothes
- ☐ Smart clothes
- ☐ Pyjamas
- ☐ Smart shoes
- ☐ Sports equipment
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Rain jacket
- ☐ Swimwear
- ☐ Thermals
- ☐ Trainers
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Winter clothes

HOUSE KEEPING

Essentials:

- ☐ Coat hangers
- ☐ Door wedge
- ☐ Iron
- ☐ Laundry bag
- ☐ Washing powder
- ☐ Wet wipes

Extras:

- ☐ Drying rack
- ☐ Mini vacuum
- ☐ Laundry basket

STUDY

Essentials:

- ☐ A4 folders
- ☐ File Dividers
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Notepad / paper
- ☐ Pens and pencils
- ☐ Plastic wallets
- ☐ Post-it notes
- ☐ Stapler
- ☐ White-tac

Extras:

- ☐ Calculator
- ☐ Desk lamp
- ☐ Diary / planner

DOCUMENTS

Essentials:

- ☐ Bank accounts
- ☐ CV and references
- ☐ Discount cards
- ☐ Exam certificates
- ☐ NHS number
- ☐ NI number
- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Passport photos
- ☐ Uni paperwork

Extras:

- ☐ TV licence

ELECTRICS

Essentials:

- ☐ Batteries
- ☐ Chargers
- ☐ Extension lead
- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Laptop case
- ☐ Multi plug adaptor

Extras:

- ☐ Mouse
- ☐ Keyboard
- ☐ Printer
- ☐ Printing ink
- ☐ Speakers
- ☐ Television

FUN & GAMES

Extras:

- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Board games
- ☐ Computer games
- ☐ Dress-up costumes
- ☐ Fairy lights
- ☐ Games console
- ☐ Gym equipment
- ☐ Photo albums
- ☐ Playing cards
- ☐ Polaroid camera
- ☐ Projector
- ☐ Recipe books
- ☐ Sports equipment

Final Words

We hope you've enjoyed reading this guide and feel better prepared for results day. Now it's time to enjoy the holidays with your teen, creating happy memories.

This can be a strange time for you both. Your parenting role is also about to evolve into something different as your teen steps across the threshold to adulthood. But don't forget - they still need you very much.

Leaving school and long-term friends to start a new life is exciting for your teen, but it's daunting too. There's a lot about their new life that will be different from before, especially if they're moving away from home. In this sea of change, you are likely to be their only familiar anchor. Yes, they'll need space to adapt to their new life at their own pace, but they'll also need the comfort of home and of you. In different ways, you'll both be embarking on a new journey.

Wishing you a wonderful summer ahead.

Enjoyed this guide?

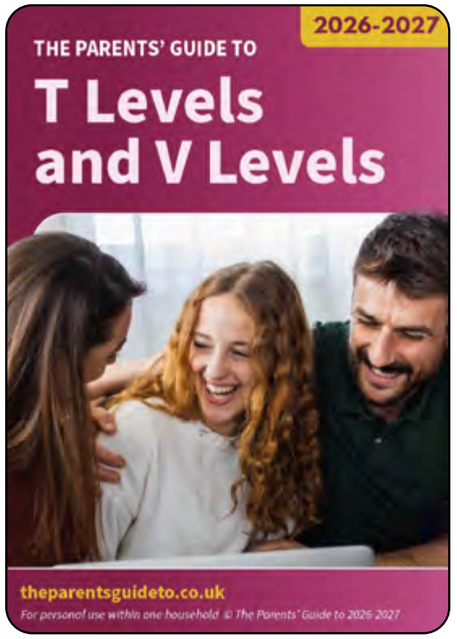
For more support, practical advice and helpful next steps, choose where you'd like to go next.

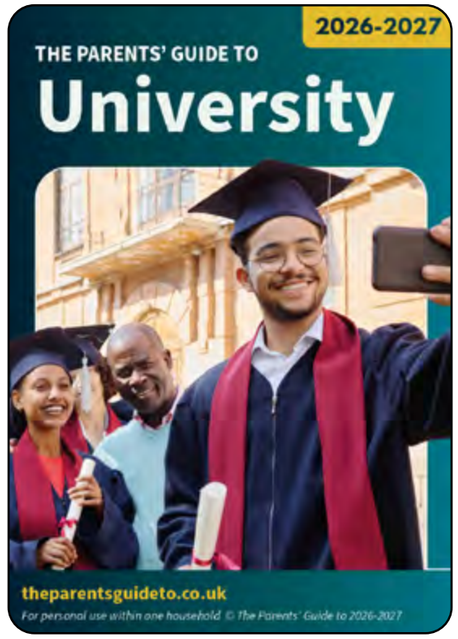
Join Parent Club

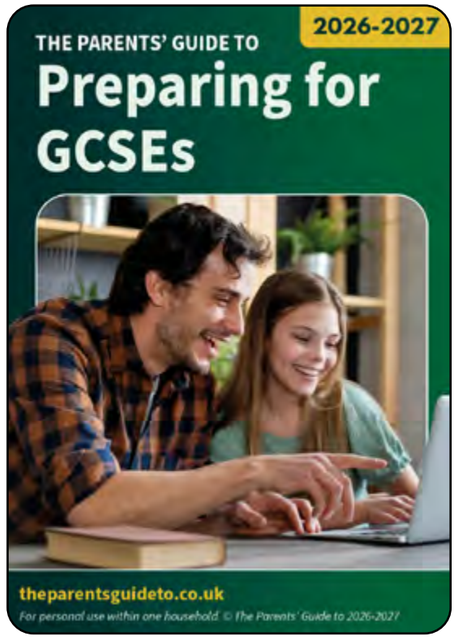
Explore more guides

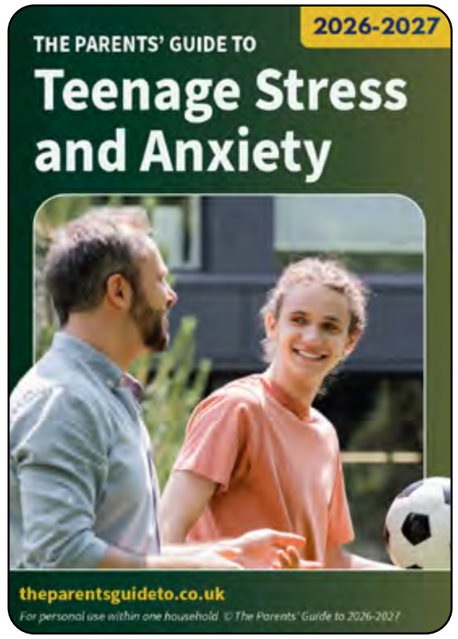
The Parents' Guide to

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support









Parent Guides:

Our range of interactive guides provide you with easy to follow advice, hyperlinks to reliable sources and the most up-to-date information.

Shop now

AUG 2026

THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

Year 13 Results Day

theparentsguideto.co.uk

For personal use within one household © The Parents' Guide to 2026-2027