2026-2027

THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

Apprenticeships

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The Parents' Guide to

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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.

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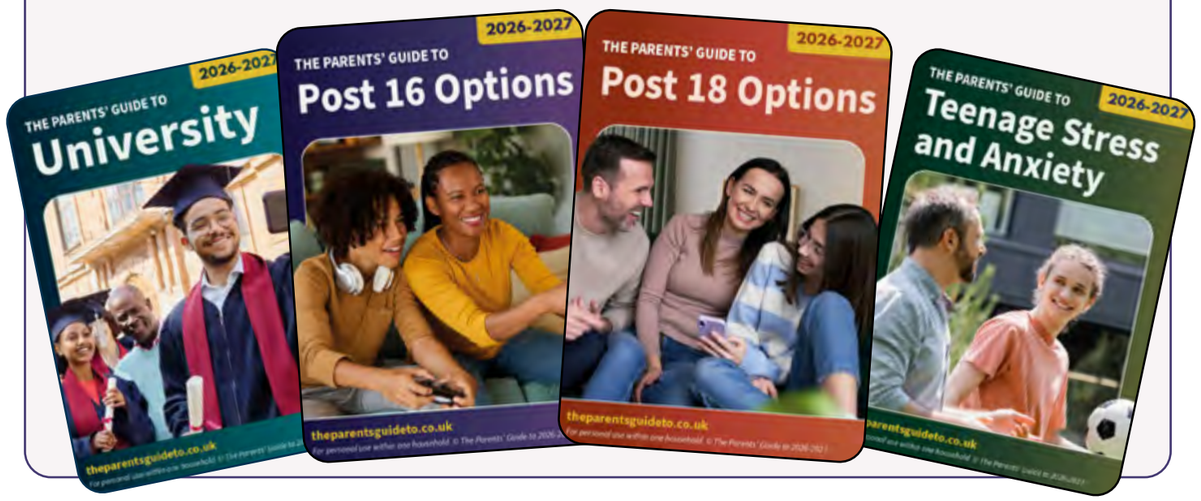

Parent Club

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, and Parent Club is there to give you clear, reliable help when you need it most. What you'll get:

☑ **Practical support** ☑ **Timely 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

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Introduction

Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to combine study with paid employment resulting in a professional qualification. There are no tuition fees, the salary can cover living expenses and apprentices gain first-hand experience of the workplace.

If you know more about the university route to careers rather than the apprenticeship route, don't let this sway you towards considering apprenticeships as a second-rate option rather than a first-choice career plan for your teen.

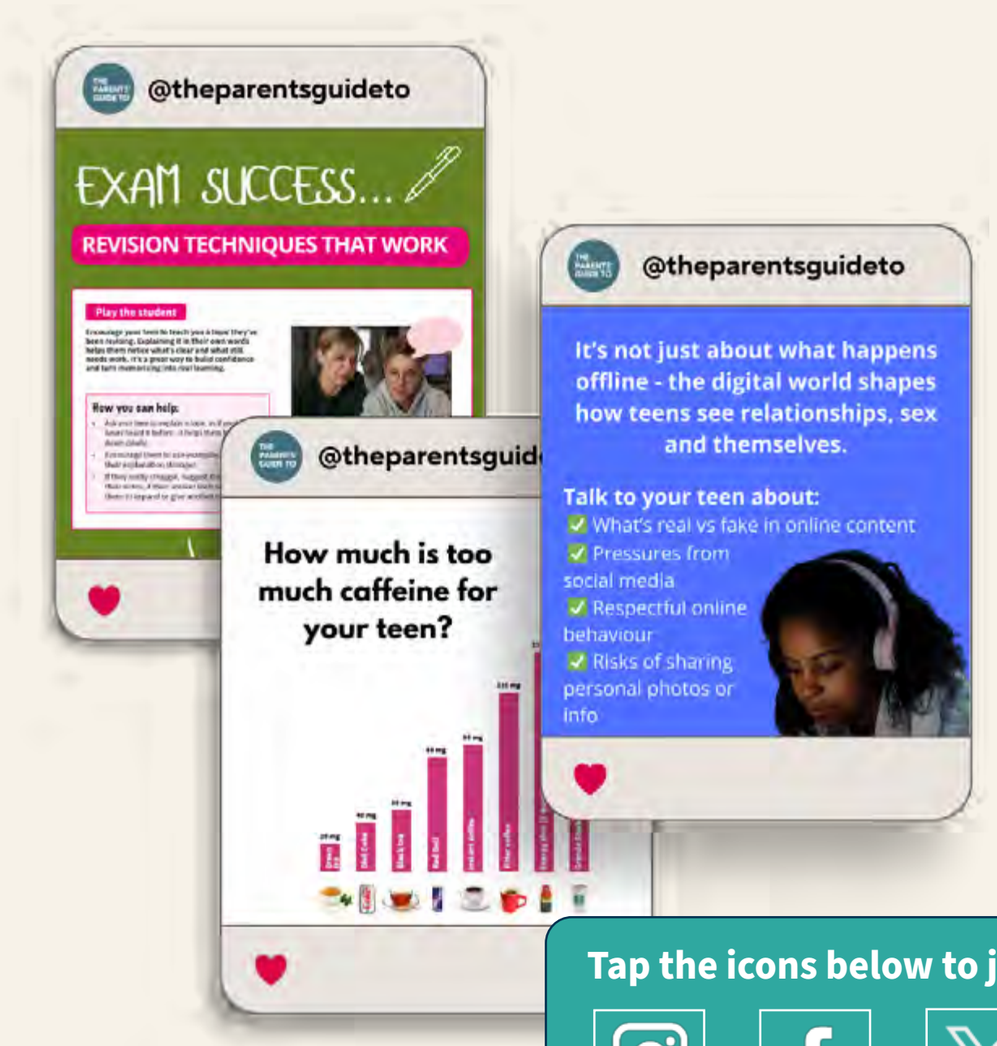
Apprenticeships used to be associated with trade industries (such as electricians, mechanics or plumbers). Nowadays, apprenticeships can be taken in a wide range of industry sectors and provide entry to all types of careers, including accounting, banking, IT, law, management and television. Relatively new to the apprenticeship suite are "degree apprenticeships", offering an "earn while you learn" route to BSc or BA status. In other words, the end qualification is the same as if your child had attended university full time, the difference is that they will not have incurred any debt in tuition fees and will finish their degree with robust and transferable workplace skills.

There are also options to take short term apprenticeships. If your teen isn't comfortable with committing to several years of further study, they can take one or two year options and still gain recognised, valuable qualifications. Better still, if they change their mind and decide they wish to extend the apprenticeship to gain higher level qualifications, this is often possible.

Taking an apprenticeship is not an easy option and competition can be fierce. It takes organisation and dedication to balance work, where your child will be expected to contribute to the same standards as everyone else, and study. Holidays are far fewer than at college or university. However, if they learn more easily through practical application, the work based nature of apprenticeships will suit them well and they will obtain valuable experience which will strengthen opportunities in finding rewarding work when the apprenticeship is over.

Follow us for bite-sized tips and support!

Practical advice you can actually use at home



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Chapters

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1. Apprenticeships Explained
From school leaver to degree-level: What apprenticeships are, how they work, and the different types available

2. Finding the Right Apprenticeship
How to help your teen explore opportunities that match their interests, strengths, and long-term goals

3. The Application Process
What the application process looks like, including CVs, interviews, and how to support your teen to succeed

4. Next Steps
Preparing for life after school – from budgeting and moving out to building confidence and independence

5. Final Words

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ORIEL HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1

Apprenticeships Explained

Highlights include:

Understanding Apprenticeships

What they are, how they work, and why they're a viable alternative to full-time study

Apprenticeship or University?

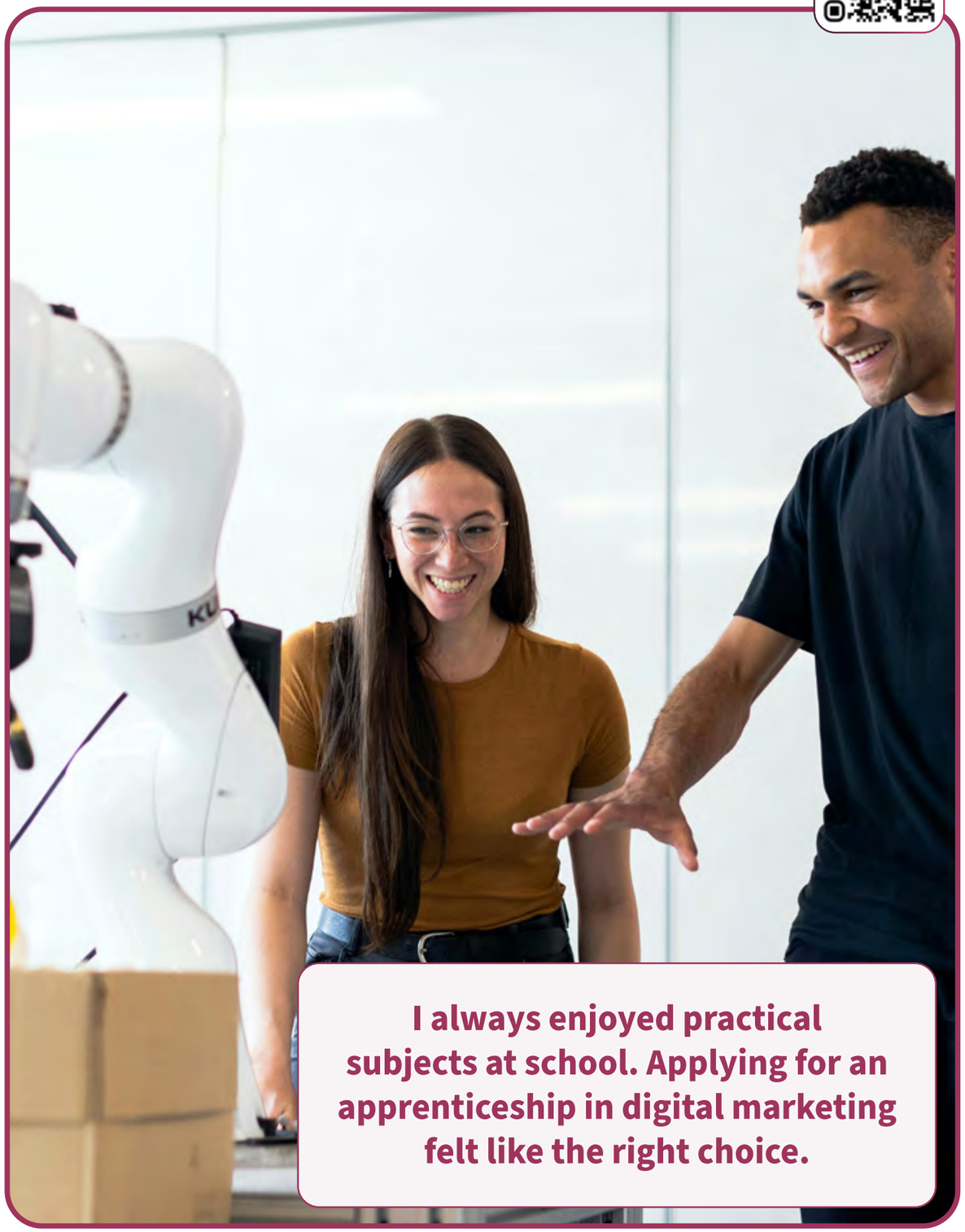
Helping your teen weigh up the pros and cons to find the right path for them

Non-Degree Apprenticeships

Hands-on experience and qualifications without the university route

Degree Apprenticeships

Earn a full degree while working – no tuition fees, no student debt



I always enjoyed practical subjects at school. Applying for an apprenticeship in digital marketing felt like the right choice.

Understanding Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships provide a way of combining learning with on the job training, which helps build solid, professional skills transferable from one organisation to another.

Apprenticeships can last from one to five years – and may be longer if undertaken part-time. They result in a professional qualification. Employers pay a salary and tuition fees are covered by the employer and the government.

Apprenticeships offer qualifications at all levels - starting at GCSE equivalent right up to masters degree level.

Who can become an apprentice?

Apprenticeships are aimed at candidates between 16 and 25 years old. However, they are now open to anyone age 16 or over looking to improve their expertise. This means there's plenty of competition from more experienced applicants, but organisations are often keen to take on school-leavers in order to train them both in the job and the organisation's values. Very often the relationship between employer and apprentice continues long after the apprenticeship is over, creating long-term work opportunities.

Apprenticeship levels

Apprenticeships range between Level 2 and Level 7. There is no "Level 1" because enrolling in an apprenticeship requires demonstrating a certain aptitude, which may be gained through trainee courses if examination result don't meet minimum requirements. Apprenticeship levels 2-3 are aimed at younger applicants, 4-6 are aimed at sixth form leavers with levels 6-7 offering degree or equivalent level qualifications.

A full list of the levels and what they mean can be found on the next page.

Flexibility

Apprenticeships are designed to be flexible. An employer may offer a level 6 or 7 apprenticeship without it resulting in a degree – although the qualification earned would be considered equivalent to a degree. It's important your child checks the qualifications on offer before applying for an apprenticeship.

Study at university

There is usually an element of academic learning during an apprenticeship, but degree apprenticeships are a specific type of apprenticeship (Level 6 and above) that include study at university resulting in a degree level qualification (BA or BSc). Be warned! Not all apprenticeships that include study at university result in obtaining a degree.

Discover more

- GOV.UK
- UCAS
- Interested in other options?

Apprenticeship Levels

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LEVEL 2
Intermediate apprenticeships

Typical length
12-18 months

Entry requirements:
None or few

Qualifications obtained:
GCSE, BTEC or equivalent

Who's it for?
Mostly for 16-year-olds with limited or no academic qualifications.

LEVEL 4/5
Higher apprenticeships

Typical length
3-5 years

Entry requirements:
A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:
Higher national diploma / foundation degree

Who's it for?
Mostly for those who want to qualify for professional career paths without attending university or college.

LEVEL 3
Advanced apprenticeships

Typical length
12-24 months

Entry requirements:
Usually 5 GCSEs

Qualifications obtained:
A levels or equivalent

Who's it for?
Mostly for 16-year-olds with reasonable academic achievements but who don't want to study in sixth form.

LEVEL 6/7
Degree apprenticeships

Typical length
3-7 years

Entry requirements:
At least 2 A levels or equivalent

Qualifications obtained:
A BA or BSc degree or higher

Who's it for?
Mostly for those with excellent sixth form results that want to study for a degree or similar whilst working.

Qualification / Educational Routes

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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 Ext Diploma BTEC certificate**	**V Levels (new for 2027)**	**Advanced app. / NVQ 3 / Supported Internships**
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**		**NVQ 1**

Academic route | **Technical / Vocational route** | **Applied / work route**

Levels of Education

After GCSEs, there are three main routes your teen can take:

Academic - e.g. A levels, typically leading to university

Technical/vocational - e.g. T Levels or other applied courses, combining classroom learning with practical skills

Work-based - e.g. apprenticeships, where students earn while they learn

From 2027, new 'V Levels' will be introduced as part of the vocational route. These are expected to sit alongside A levels, T Levels and apprenticeships, offering a more flexible option that can be combined with other qualifications.

There are 8 qualification levels. The easiest is 1, the hardest is 8. There is also an entry level qualification for those just starting.

History of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships date back as far as the 14th century and were closely related to medieval trades of the time. Skilled artisans taught their craft to apprentices who, eventually, became masters themselves and employed their own apprentices.

Early apprenticeships were not regulated; parents paid a master craftsman to teach their child a skill and the child was legally bound to the master for the duration of the apprenticeship which usually lasted six to eight years. Children started work when they were around 10-12 years old and the master was expected to provide moral guidance as well as food and shelter.

In recent years, governments have continued to modernise apprenticeships to reflect the needs of a changing economy. In 2015, degree apprenticeships were introduced, offering a credible alternative to university by allowing students to gain a full degree while working. Just three years later, over 210,000 students completed an apprenticeship - including 7,000 at degree level.

Although apprenticeships have evolved significantly, some misconceptions still remain. Today, they provide real pathways into professional careers such as law, finance and management.

Origins

In 1563, during the time of Elizabeth I, a more formal system was introduced to prevent crafts being practised by non-skilled workers including some terms and conditions of work for apprenticeships. In the following centuries, the rights and entitlements of the apprentice gradually improved and, by the mid-17th century, some apprentices started to receive a small wage for their work.

1500 and 1600s

Mid to late 1900s

By the 1960s, a large number of initiatives were introduced to modernise the traditional apprenticeship. Industrial Training Boards were set up to improve and monitor the delivery and quality of apprenticeship training schemes. Despite such efforts, by the 1980s and 1990s, apprenticeship recruitment slowed. This was largely attributed to the decline in manufacturing and crafts-based industries and the increased accessibility to further education.

Recent Developments

Apprenticeships or University?

Advantages

- Apprenticeships provide focused and applied training for those who already have a strong interest in a job or industry.
- Not everyone is suited to academic learning and apprenticeships provide a practical approach to obtaining qualifications.
- Apprenticeships provide paid employment with a structured approach to learning.
- Apprenticeships develop key transferable skills which are considered lacking in the labour market.
- Apprenticeships may provide future employment within the company and working within an organisation may reveal job roles they did not know existed.
- Gaining work experience and on the job training may provide your child with a competitive advantage when applying for a job.
- Degree apprenticeships offer the chance to gain a BA or BSc without incurring the debts associated with studying at university.

Considerations

- Apprenticeships may narrow options early on. Your child will need to have a fairly clear idea of the type of career they wish to pursue.
- It may be difficult for your child to combine studying with working.
- The salary of an apprentice can be quite low and your child will also need to consider financing their travel and living expenses if they are not living at home.
- Your child may feel that they are missing out on the 'student life' if taking a degree apprenticeship. However, some universities still offer their degree apprentices a strong student experience.
- Many companies provide graduate schemes for university leavers on completion of their degree.
- Entering the work place at an early age may lead to fatigue.
- Degree apprenticeships are still relatively competitive, with fewer places than traditional degrees.

Questions to consider:

- ✓ **Does your child have a clear idea of the type of career or job they want to pursue?**
- ✓ **Is your child more suited to an applied and hands-on working environment?**
- ✓ **Is your child organised and able to balance work with academic study?**
- ✓ **Will your child perform better under the guidance of a supervisor in a work environment?**
- ✓ **Will your child enjoy the combination of different learning environments?**
- ✓ **Does your child enjoy practical / active homework assignments?**

Non-Degree Apprenticeships

If your teen wants to continue their education after GCSE but doesn't want to continue full-time at school or college, apprenticeships could be a good option. Likewise, if your teen wants to get more qualifications after sixth form but doesn't want to commit to a further three or four years' study at university, apprenticeships offer the opportunity to sign up for just one or two years and still obtain a recognised higher qualification.

Qualifications

Most apprenticeships work towards one or more qualifications. These qualifications correspond to the level of apprenticeship. Intermediate apprenticeships (level 2) are equivalent to gaining five GCSEs at grade 4 and above. Most apprenticeships at this level will cover basic numeracy and literacy skills as well as providing level 2 qualifications, such as awards, certificates, diplomas or NVQs depending on the length and difficulty of the work and training provided.

Discover more

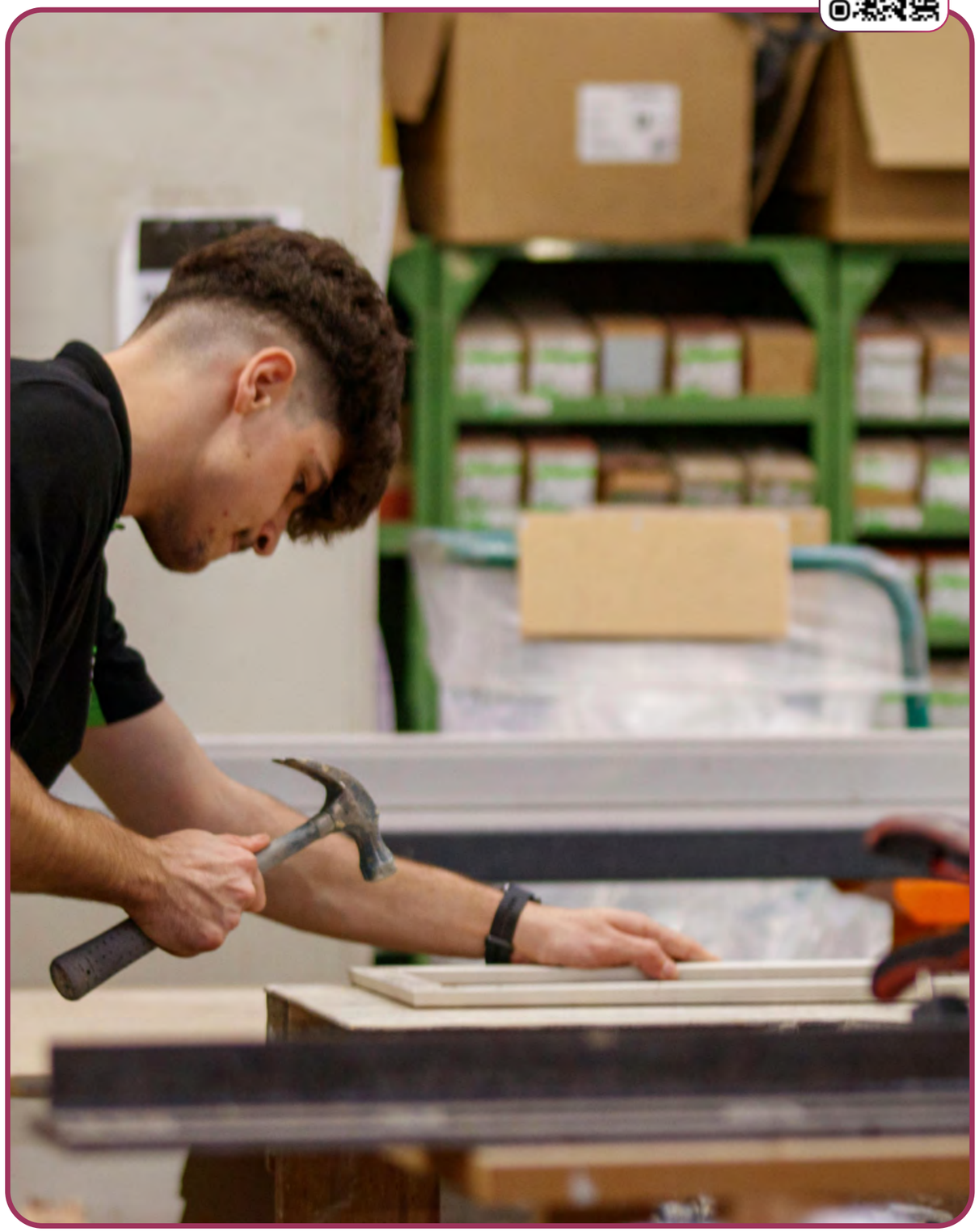
- GOV.UK

Advanced apprenticeships (level 3) provide qualifications equivalent to 2 A levels. Level 3 qualifications may include National Certificates, National Diplomas or NVQs, suitable as a post 16 or post 18 option.

Higher apprenticeships (level 4/5) provide a higher education qualification equivalent to the first or second year of university. Level 4 and 5 qualifications include Higher National Certificates (equivalent to the first year of university), Higher National Diplomas (equivalent to the second year of university) or foundation degrees.

Flexibility

Apprenticeships are often flexible in that it may be possible to extend the apprenticeship period and obtain a higher qualification. For example, some apprenticeships will allow your child to continue on to a higher apprenticeship (level 4/5) once the advanced apprenticeship is complete. This means students can sometimes extend their apprenticeship and obtain higher level qualifications if they are enjoying the experience, without committing to long-term programmes at the outset. Always check with their employer whether such progression is possible.



What's on offer?

Non-degree apprenticeships offer a practical, staged approach to learning through experiencing the job first-hand. There may be some separate study at a training centre or college, but most of the coaching will be provided by the employer as work experience. They are an ideal choice for students that prefer learning in real-life situations and who are practical learners. There are short-term options which offer a useful solution for those who do not want to commit to many years of study, but still want to obtain recognized further qualifications on leaving school, whether after GCSE or sixth form.

Apprenticeships are a significant investment for companies, in staff time, finance and other resources. Companies are keen to nurture talent because it demonstrates that they offer investment in people (not just products or services) and personal / professional growth.

It's worth remembering that this investment provides benefits for the company too:

- A workforce trained to their unique professional needs;
- Chance to reinforce their values with new employees;
- Flexible, mobile workforce to help fill any unexpected gaps.

One of the great advantages about an apprenticeship is that it works well for both employer and apprentice. As a result, it can often be the start of a long and rewarding professional relationship.

Typical entry requirements for non-degree apprenticeships

- Must live in the region where they are applying for the apprenticeship (i.e. England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) except for degree apprenticeships (level 6);
- Must work at least 30 hours per week – which includes teaching time (though additional study time will be needed);
- Must have a Grade C / 4 GCSE (or equivalent) in English and Maths or be studying towards it;
- Should commit to the full term of their apprenticeship;
- Additional apprenticeships (i.e. higher levels) can be added on at a later date if desired.

Examples of non-degree apprenticeships

Click on a logo to learn more!

vodafone

IBM

ARMY BE THE BEST

HONDA

sky

NetworkRail

Nestlé

Make the year ahead easier

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Whether your teen is preparing for exams, choosing their next steps or simply going through the ups and downs of teen life, Parent Club gives you clear, practical support month by month.

You'll feel more confident knowing:

☑ what's coming up over the term
☑ the key decisions your teen will face
☑ how to support them in the moments that matter
☑ how to guide them without adding pressure

Regular advice, at the right time

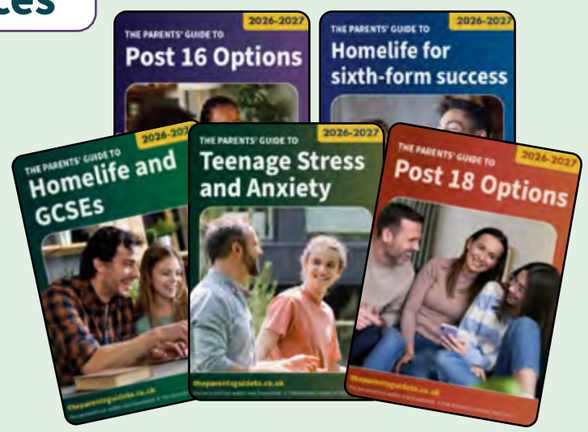
You'll receive helpful emails throughout the year, with clear, practical guidance on what's coming up and how to support your teen at each stage. Instead of trying to work things out on your own, you'll have timely advice to help you feel informed, prepared and confident.

Parent talks

You'll have access to all our online parent talks, covering key topics such as exams, wellbeing, choices, careers and teen life. Each session is focused and practical, giving you clear takeaways you can use straight away – with time for Q&A.

Parent guides and resources

You'll also get access to our most popular specialist guides and resources. These provide more in-depth support when you need it, helping you handle important moments with clarity and confidence.



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Degree Apprenticeships

Degree apprenticeships (levels 6 and 7), developed by universities, professional bodies and employers, offer the chance to qualify with a bachelors or masters degree whilst working. Time is split between work and study. This can be an attractive alternative to attending university.

Fees

There are no tuition fees to pay (these are covered by the employer and the government) and the apprentice will receive a salary to cover living expenses, paid holiday and sick leave of at least £8 per hour. Salaries usually range between £14k to £20k, although many employers offer more.

This should significantly contribute, if not totally cover, living expenses (such as accommodation, food, travel and entertainment) way beyond what their university peers can achieve through part-time work.

Links to universities

Degree apprenticeships were launched in September 2015 (2019 for graduate apprenticeships in Scotland). As they are relatively new, places are limited, but due to their popularity and success, new apprenticeships are being created regularly. Most organisations partner with a small number of universities so the choice of apprenticeship must be driven by the apprenticeship type (and reputation of the company offering it) and not location or university. Applications for degree apprenticeships are via the company offering the apprenticeships, not via UCAS.

Discover more

- Gov. UK
- Institute for Apprenticeships
- UCAS
- Learn more about university

Industry specialisms

Degree apprenticeships are available in a wide range of industries, including:

- Agriculture, environmental and animal care
- Business and administration
- Catering and hospitality
- Health, science and social care
- Construction, architecture and the built environment
- Creative and design
- Digital and IT
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Health and science
- Legal, finance and accounting
- Public sector
- Sales, marketing and procurement
- Transport and logistics

Finding a degree apprenticeship

There are a variety of ways to find degree apprenticeships, and we've listed some options below. Remember to select "degree level" apprenticeship and it may be necessary to widen the search across all of England to find opportunities that match the industry/area of interest. Don't forget – most degree apprenticeships follow UCAS (university) application timetables, with deadlines in January for September/October start.

Typical entry requirements for degree apprenticeships

- Applicants for degree apprenticeships can live anywhere in the UK;
- Must work at least 30 hours per week – which includes teaching time;
- Must have a Grade 4 "GCSE" (or equivalent) in English and Maths or be studying towards it;
- Must have Level 3 qualifications (minimum two A level passes or equivalent). Sometimes more is required;
- Some employers have specific entry requests;
- Should commit to the full term of their apprenticeship (which may be three to four years, or longer if part time).

What's on offer?

Degree apprenticeships are a very significant investment for companies, in staff time, finance and other resources. Employers promise to fund (or part-fund) three or four years' tuition costs, salary (and all the related additional costs, such as holiday/sick leave), a job opportunity for three or four years, mentoring and on the job training.

Such a commitment is not undertaken lightly and, for the most part, companies do this because they aim to develop talented individuals, skilled to fulfil the companies' unique needs, who will continue working for them long into the future.

There's no guarantee that a job offer will follow an apprenticeship, but a company's objective in investing in the apprenticeship is to create a top-pool of talent from which they can select the very best employees. Because apprenticeships include the development of many transferable skills (emailing, meetings, problem-solving, strategy, implementation, project management and team building to name but a few) as well as company specific skills training, it's not problematic to obtain a degree from an apprenticeship with one company but subsequently move to another. However, quite often an apprenticeship is the start of a long and rewarding professional relationship.

Examples of degree apprenticeships

As a top 100 employer, Accenture currently provide a Technology degree Apprenticeship in five locations including London, Edinburgh and Manchester. The apprenticeship lasts for 3 or 4 years and enables its apprentices to obtain a BSc degree in Digital and Technology Solutions.

Leonardo's four-year Software Engineering Apprenticeship programme is looking for people who understand the importance of communication. You will study for completion of a BSc Hons in Software Development for Business on a day release basis whilst you are at work.

On the successful completion of the Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship offered by the BBC, apprentices will gain a BSc Honours degree in Business Management and have the option to apply for professional recognition as Chartered Managers.

Offering apprenticeships in Digital Technology and Business, apprentices have the opportunity to gain degrees in Software Development, Digital and Technology Solutions or IT Management at one of CGI's four partner universities.

The Nestle Academy offers a Chartered Management degree apprenticeship, which consists of four placements within the business. The apprenticeship lasts for three years and entry requirements start from 104 UCAS points.

A top ten apprentice employer, BT offers an impressive array of apprenticeships including apprenticeships in Technology, IT, Cyber Security, Business Management, Engineering, Logistics and Digital Development. Apprenticeships are likely to be highly competitive.

KPMG offers a vast array of apprenticeships including apprenticeships in technology and engineering, consulting, business services, law and finance.

Santander offer a degree apprenticeship in Corporate and Commercial Banking which is designed to lead to permanent roles within the business. Entry requirements range from 104 to 112 UCAS points and a grade 4 or above is required in maths.

University or Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships now provide a viable alternative to going to university to get a full degree qualification. Let's take a look at the pros and cons of each route: the end qualification is the same, but the experience is different.

Choice

Traditional degrees offer far greater variety in the range of courses, subjects and modules available:- choose from over 50,000 different titles. Traditional degrees enable students to study subject areas that interest them and to tailor their degree during their study by opting for certain modules as their interests evolve. In contrast, degree apprenticeships are far more focused and industry-specific and the university and location of study is limited to the universities working with the employer.

The student experience

'Student life' will be different for an apprentice compared to a full-time student. Whilst degree apprentices will experience some aspects of campus life, it will be different to those students fully immersed / living on campus. Most university degrees offer plenty of flexibility with how students manage their study time, but times for study will be limited when also working. Holiday periods are different too. University students will have around 14 weeks' holiday each year, but apprentices will have only four or five. Some university apprenticeships offer the opportunity of full-time academic study during university term time, and full time work during the holiday periods.

Employability

One of the biggest advantages apprentices achieve over their peers who have similar level qualifications obtained through university is that they will have developed many commercially desirable soft skills. First-hand experience of meeting work deadlines, forming professional relationships with colleagues at many different levels, building rapport and trust with external stakeholders, and corresponding (whether by email, phone call or in meetings) in a work environment is highly valuable to future employers.

Direction

Degree apprenticeships enable students to develop the skills and knowledge needed for specific jobs and careers. They are an excellent choice for school leavers who have a clear idea of the type of job role and career they would like to do. In contrast, university degree courses remain relatively open and provide a springboard to a range of career prospects after graduation.

Style of learning

Although largely dependent on the type of university and the chosen course, full time students are likely to be better suited to classroom and teacher led learning. Degree apprenticeships offer a more vocational and applied learning environment where much of the learning and training is done on the job.

Discover more

- The Parents' Guide to University
- Amazing Apprenticeships

Finances

Degree apprenticeships are fully funded by the government and employer, and apprentices are paid a wage. Most complete their qualification without debt. In contrast, a traditional degree typically costs around £10,050 per year (excluding living costs). While loans, bursaries and scholarships are available, many full-time students graduate with significant debt — though repayments are linked to income and may never need to be repaid in full.

Flexibility

Don't worry if your child is still unsure whether a university degree or degree apprenticeship is right for them. Students can apply for degree and higher apprenticeships at the same time as applying to university through UCAS. Details on how to apply are covered in **The Application Process.**

Summary

Apprenticeships have changed considerably over the last few decades and both higher and degree apprenticeships are now an attractive alternative to full-time university courses. Degree apprenticeships have also opened up routes into jobs which previously could only be entered by obtaining a degree through university.

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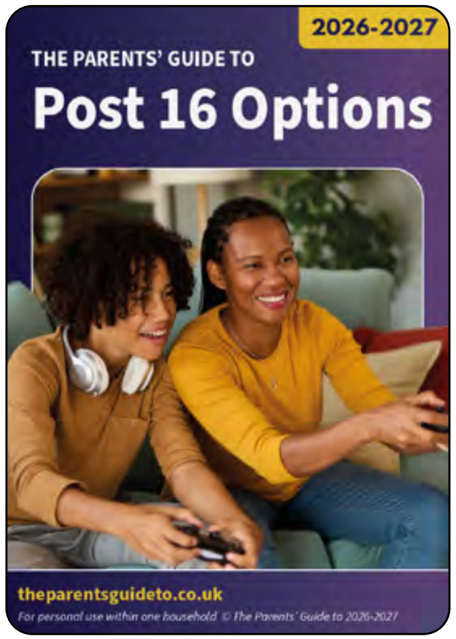
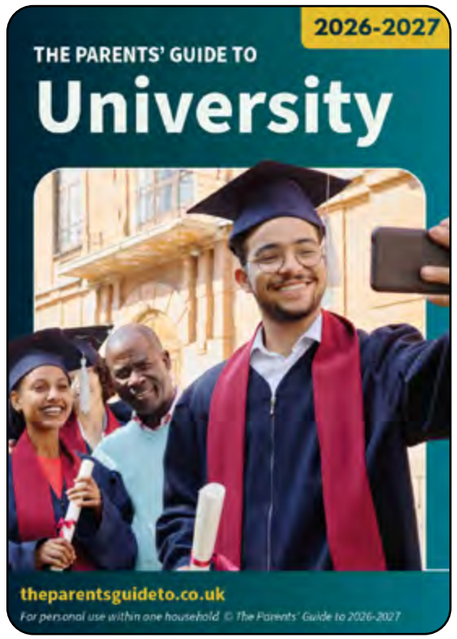
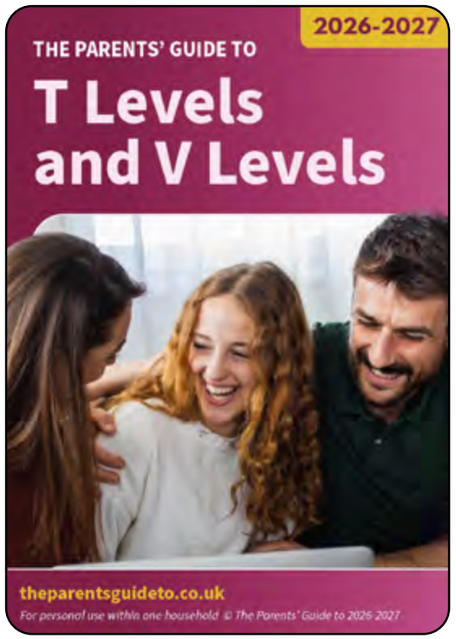
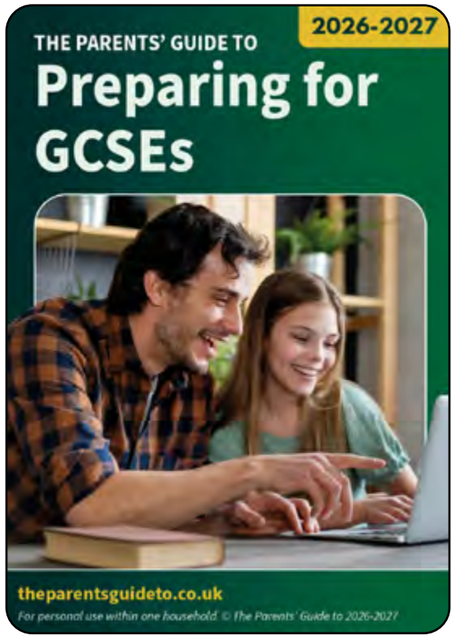
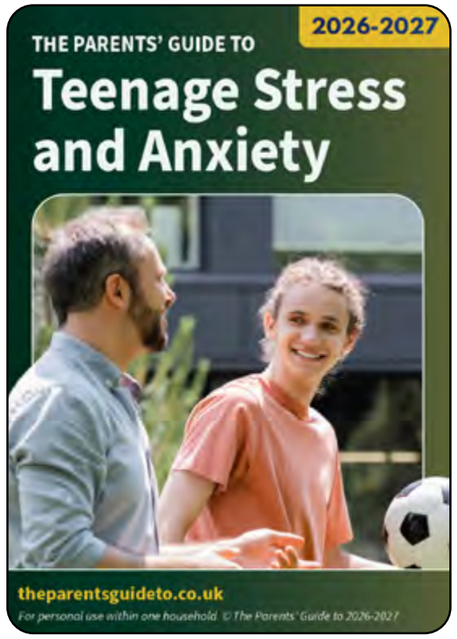










Parent Guides:

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

CHAPTER 2

Finding the Right Apprenticeship

Highlights include:

Researching Apprenticeships

Understand the different types, levels and industries to help your teen find the right apprenticeship for them.

Apprenticeships and Disability

How to ensure your teen gets the support they need, from reasonable adjustments to specialist schemes.

Finding the Right Apprenticeship

Explore reliable websites, careers platforms, and school resources to discover quality apprenticeship opportunities.

Top 10 Apprenticeship Employers

A look at leading companies that offer outstanding training, progression, and long-term prospects.

I was never keen on school and I didn't want to stay on for sixth-form. A level 3 apprenticeship got me straight into work whilst also studying for an NVQ in Design and Technology.

Researching Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships vary in the qualifications that can be achieved, length of commitment and balance between work and study. They may involve moving away from home. With so many variables, it might help to think about the different elements separately to work out which type of apprenticeship suits your child best.

What level of apprenticeship is appropriate?

First, your child needs to decide which level of apprenticeship they wish to take. This will be determined by two things:

- Having the necessary qualifications to be accepted;
- How long they intend to commit to their apprenticeship.

For post-GCSE apprenticeships, your child will need 5 GCSE passes to apply for Level 3 or a minimum standard of Maths and English to apply for Level 2.

To apply for a post-sixth form apprenticeship, your child will need Level 3 status (two A levels or equivalent) and in some cases (even for lower level apprenticeships), they may need to have exceeded this.

Degree apprenticeships offer an attractive alternative to studying full time at university, whilst still obtaining a BA or BSc. Like university, this will mean committing to three or four years study and – unlike university – it will mean working in a real job too! Level 7 degree apprenticeships offer the chance to obtain a masters degree.

What sectors are they interested in?

Next, they should decide on their area of interest and see what apprenticeships are available within that sector. If they don't know where their areas of interest lie, it's time to do some research! Of course, careers advisers can help at school, but they might want to jump online themselves. If they get bored reading about a certain sector, chances are that's an indication the sector isn't for them. Getting some work experience is also a good way of deciding whether reality matches up to the theory of a dream job.

Will the apprenticeship help them get the career they want?

There's no need to be too specific about the job or role they ultimately want, but it's important that they can see a correlation between their apprenticeship, the areas of study, the experience it will give them, and where they want to be in the future (say five years' time).

Apprenticeship Areas and Careers

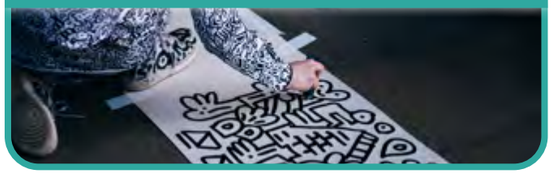
Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Suggested careers:

animal trainer, arborist, environment consultant, golf course manager, horticultural technician

Arts, media and publishing



Suggested careers:

broadcasting engineer, culture and heritage venue operations, games testing, illustrator, visual effects technical director, journalist

Business, administration and law

Suggested careers:

accountant, banking relationship manager, chartered manager, company secretary, economist, finance manager, HR consultant, operations manager, project manager, solicitor

Construction, planning and the built environment

Suggested careers:

architect, civil engineer, conservations officer, estates manager, town planner, surveyor, sustainability consultant

Education and training

Suggested careers:

internal systems trainer, learning and development consultant, lecturer, playgroup leader, teacher, training and quality management expert

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Suggested careers:

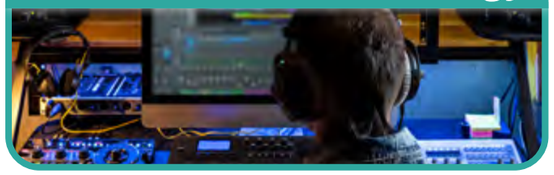
energy & resource management, engineering supervisor, mechanic, new product development manager, operations manager, photo imaging, structural engineer

Health, public services and care

Suggested careers:

army services, beauty therapist, dental nurse, healthcare consultant, medical researcher, medical writers, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, veterinary receptionist

Information and communication technology



Suggested careers:

digital and technology solutions specialist, flight simulator instructor, ICT network manager, IT manager, PR consultant, school technician, software programmer, architect

Leisure, tourism, retail and commercial

Suggested careers:

cabin crew, casino director, hairdresser, hotel manager, restaurateur, retail buyer, retail leadership, travel agent

Science and mathematics

Suggested careers:

aerospace engineer, laboratory assistant, medical adviser, pharmacist, research scientist, surveyor, teacher

Apprenticeships and Disability

In order to expand their pool of top available talent and benefit from a workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers they serve, many UK employers offer support and equipment to help apprentices with special educational needs and disability ("SEND") to do their jobs. This includes making reasonable adjustments during the application and interview process.

Look out for companies displaying the "disability confident" logo on job / apprenticeship adverts. These companies have signed up to the Government led scheme designed to recruit and retain disabled people and people with long term health conditions for their skills and talent. There are three levels of accreditation aligned with bronze, silver and gold standards: committed, employer and leader.

What financial support is available?

Access to Work ("AtW") funding is available to support apprentices in the workplace providing money towards extra costs, such as travel, specially adapted equipment or support workers. The money does not have to be paid back and is only available for additional costs, not expenses that any apprentice incurs.

To enable employers and trainers to make reasonable adjustments to provide a suitable training and work environment, there is extra funding via the Government and the Education and Skills Funding Agency ("ESFA") for those employing young people that previously were in care, had an education and healthcare plan ("EHCP"), or require adjustments under the Equality Act.

disability confident

Making reasonable adjustments

Under the Equality Act (2010) all UK employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for their disabled employees. Whilst it may be unreasonable to expect an employer to install a lift for a wheelchair user, it is reasonable to expect the employer to provide a ground floor office or work space. Other reasonable adjustments may include providing additional time during tests for employees with learning needs or by providing appropriate resources, such as voice-activated software, a laptop or a dictaphone.

Meeting minimum standards in English and Maths

If SEND prevents meeting the minimum standard in English and Maths needed to obtain the appropriate apprenticeship qualification or entry requirements, there may be some flexibility. Any concerns should be discussed with the training provider who, if appropriate, can arrange an approved assessment.

Finding local opportunities

Local authority websites, in “The Local Offer” section, include details about supporting young people with SEND to get into work, including apprenticeships.

Discover more

- Gov. UK
- Disability Rights UK
- BASE
- Disability confident

Finding the right Apprenticeship

There's a wide range of ways to seek out apprenticeships and we recommend using a selection of options rather than relying on one.

► Government website

Most apprenticeships are posted on the Government's website. By creating an account, your child can set up alerts and filters to see opportunities that are of most interest to them and to be emailed when new opportunities arise. However, not all apprenticeships will appear.

► Industry sector

It's smart to check apprenticeships directly on company, university or college websites. If your child doesn't know which of these sites to select, then they should first do some research on which industry sector may be of interest, and then find companies within this sector.

► Companies direct

Another alternative is for them to identify companies that are of interest and check those websites for apprenticeships.

Be warned! Applications to well-known international companies (such as Amazon, Coca-Cola, Facebook, Google, Virgin) will be highly competitive; however, it might be a good starting point for identifying what's included in the apprenticeship and seeking out other companies that provide similar content. The descriptor names can then be used in search functions on the government website or job boards. Not all companies offer apprenticeships.

► Job boards

National job agencies will also advertise apprenticeships and options can be narrowed to review within local distances from home or specific job types. This might be a particularly good way to seek out apprenticeships in level 3-5 range.

► School careers advisor

If your child is still at school or college, then getting them to speak with their careers adviser is a good move. Careers advisors are often the first to hear from companies advertising new apprenticeships

► Reviews

To find out what other students have thought about an apprenticeship and how they rate them, there are reviews on ***Rate my Apprenticeship***.

Apprenticeship checklist

- ✓ How long does your child want to commit to studying?
- ✓ Is there a valuable role at workplace?
- ✓ What skills and subjects will be learned?
- ✓ What types of career will be available afterwards?
- ✓ Does the provider have a quality statement?
- ✓ Is the provider's reputation solid? (i.e. knowledge/ skills behaviours)
- ✓ Degree level apprenticeship or other apprenticeship?
- ✓ With or without a university component?
- ✓ What do current apprentices think of the training?

Top 10 apprenticeship employers

2026 edition

1. Mitchells & Butlers
2. BAE SYSTEMS
3. amazon
4. JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS
5. Busy Bees
6. Department for Work & Pensions
7. GXO
8. WHITBREAD
9. McDonald's
10. pwc

Based on 4,000 reviews - statistics compiled by *www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk*
For a list of the top 100 apprenticeship employers click *here*.

CHAPTER 3

The Application Process

Highlights include:

Applying for an Apprenticeship

A quick look at the application process, including timelines, key documents, and how parents can help.

Writing the Application

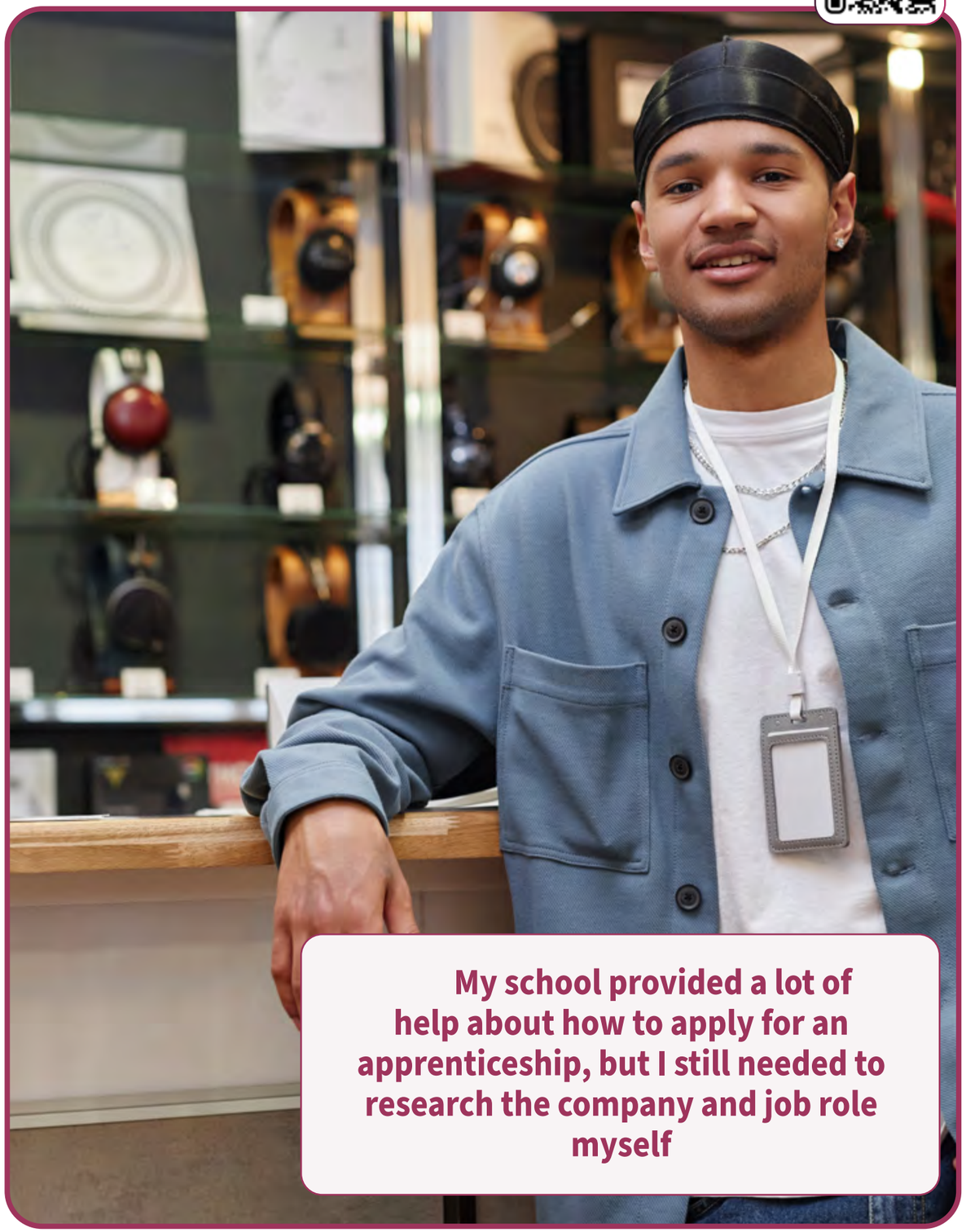
Tips for supporting your teen with writing a strong CV and cover letter that highlights their strengths and interests.

Interviews

What to expect, how to practise common questions, and the importance of asking for feedback afterwards.

Finalising the Process

Understanding offers, accepting an apprenticeship, and what your teen needs to do next before they begin.



My school provided a lot of help about how to apply for an apprenticeship, but I still needed to research the company and job role myself

Applying for an Apprenticeship

The application process is very similar to applying for a conventional job and, with the exception of degree apprenticeships, opportunities can arise at any time of the year. Your child will need a CV, to be able to complete an application form, be interview ready and may need to complete aptitude tests. Plenty of practise is a good way to prepare.

Timelines

Unlike university applications where there is a fixed process that takes place at the same time each year, applications for apprenticeships come up throughout the year. This might feel disconcerting if your child's peers have all made their university applications and even received offers, whereas your child has yet to secure an apprenticeship, but the system is different because apprenticeships are tied to genuine jobs. Don't worry that your child might miss out; they can set up alerts so they know when new opportunities in their areas of interest emerge.

For degree apprenticeships, most companies have set application windows that run alongside the UCAS university application timetable (i.e. January application for September intake. Some companies do offer the opportunity to pre-register.

Final dates

Apprenticeships will advertise a deadline or final date for applications, and your child should try to apply as early as possible. Unlike UCAS, where the time of submission has no bearing on whether or not a place at university may be obtained, with apprenticeships, some companies will close opportunities ahead of the advertised deadlines if they have enough appropriate candidates.

Application process

The application process is much more closely aligned to job applications than university applications. The longer the apprenticeship, the more rigorous the application process is likely to be. It differs between organisations and may include:

- Online application form – may also require a Curriculum Vitae ("CV");
- Online competency tests (these can be in any or all of English, Maths, logic, personality assessments, verbal reasoning);
- Video response (usually this takes the format of your child answering questions that appear on screen, rather than a two-way video interview);
- An assessment day, which may include group activity as well as individual interviews.

Employers are trying to ascertain whether your child can:

- Present their ideas and thoughts clearly so they are easily understood;
- Obtain core competency in English and Maths;
- Assimilate, digest and learn the information provided during the apprenticeship, both in theory and in practise;
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in the subject matter/industry area;
- Reveal what kind of thinker are they:- imaginative, creative, logical, rational;
- Apply themselves to different situations;
- Work and integrate well with others;
- Identify values and ambitions;
- Show they would be a good fit within their organisation.

Key tip:

If your child's contact details change, it's important they update their applications, registration websites, CV etc, as soon as possible. If they don't, they could miss out on an offer.

Writing the Application

There are likely to be several elements to an apprenticeship application and each serves a slightly different purpose. Understanding what the application form, CV and cover letter are meant to achieve will help your child include the right information.

The application form

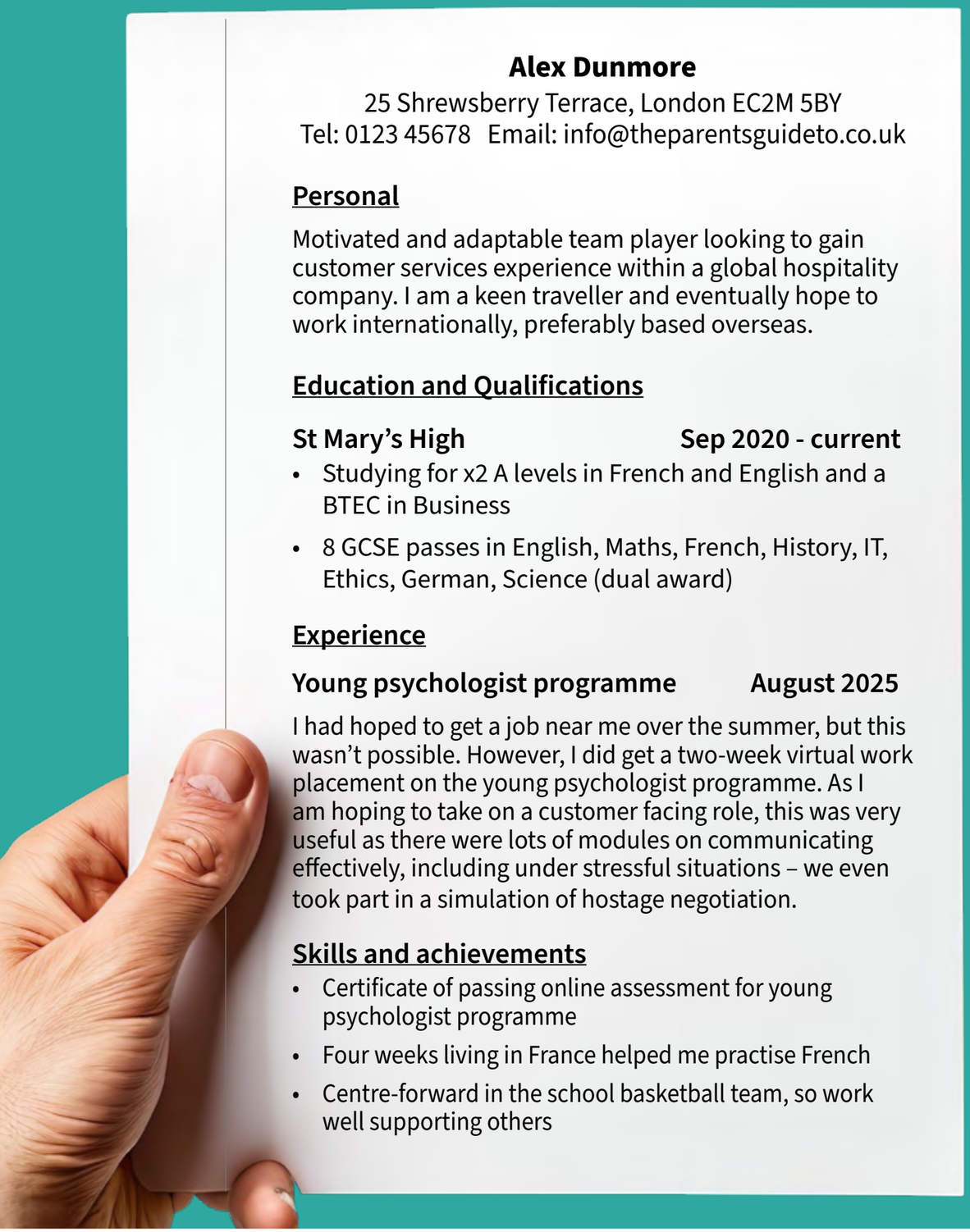
It's always best to look through the application online, and then write answers in Word (or elsewhere), prepare and spell check them thoroughly, before copying and pasting into the online form.

This avoids risking a computer crash and losing the work, gives thinking time and allows comparisons between different questions so that answers are not repeated.
Answers will be different depending on the apprenticeship. Preparation for one apprenticeship will not be sufficient for application to another (although it may form a good basis). Applications should be tailored according to the specification outlined in the advert and your child must check the company website for any specific advice and tips offered.

Giving examples is a key differentiator in applications. Make sure your child always gives examples to support their statements and does not make unsubstantiated assertions such as "I am a great team leader" and "I am a good communicator" without showing why they hold this opinion.

Discover more

- Gov. UK
- UCAS
- Prospects - CV and letters



Alex Dunmore
25 Shrewsberry Terrace, London EC2M 5BY
Tel: 0123 45678 Email: info@theparentsguideto.co.uk

Personal

Motivated and adaptable team player looking to gain customer services experience within a global hospitality company. I am a keen traveller and eventually hope to work internationally, preferably based overseas.

Education and Qualifications

St Mary's High **Sep 2020 - current**

- Studying for x2 A levels in French and English and a BTEC in Business
- 8 GCSE passes in English, Maths, French, History, IT, Ethics, German, Science (dual award)

Experience

Young psychologist programme **August 2025**

I had hoped to get a job near me over the summer, but this wasn't possible. However, I did get a two-week virtual work placement on the young psychologist programme. As I am hoping to take on a customer facing role, this was very useful as there were lots of modules on communicating effectively, including under stressful situations – we even took part in a simulation of hostage negotiation.

Skills and achievements

- Certificate of passing online assessment for young psychologist programme
- Four weeks living in France helped me practise French
- Centre-forward in the school basketball team, so work well supporting others

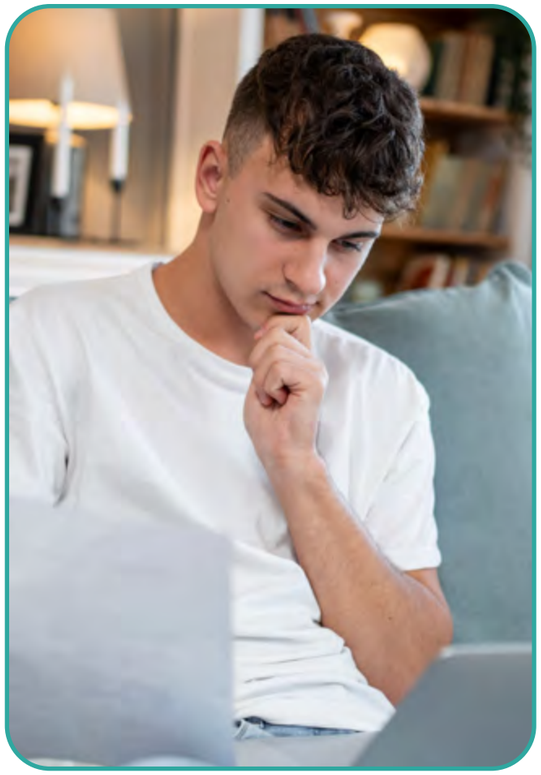
Writing a CV

A CV is a brief synopsis of experience and qualifications. Whilst it should reflect the personal style of the person it describes, all CVs should include:

- Personal information, including address and contact details;
- Education and Qualifications;
- Professional and voluntary experience with the most recent job first, whether voluntary, paid, temporary or work placements;
- Skills, strengths and achievements – including a full clean driving licence if they have one;
- CVs should not exceed two sides of A4;
- Check for spelling mistakes!
- Use a professional font which is easy to read.

Covering letter

Where possible, your child should include a cover letter along with their CV. CVs are generic whereas a cover letter gives them an opportunity to specify why this particular apprenticeship appeals to them and what qualities they have that make them a good match. Make sure they read the job description carefully and use the letter to illustrate how their skills match up to what has been requested. If necessary, they should explain why they would be happy to relocate.



Make the year ahead easier

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

Whether your teen is preparing for exams, choosing their next steps or simply going through the ups and downs of teen life, Parent Club gives you clear, practical support month by month.

You'll feel more confident knowing:

☑ what's coming up over the term
☑ the key decisions your teen will face
☑ how to support them in the moments that matter
☑ how to guide them without adding pressure

Regular advice, at the right time

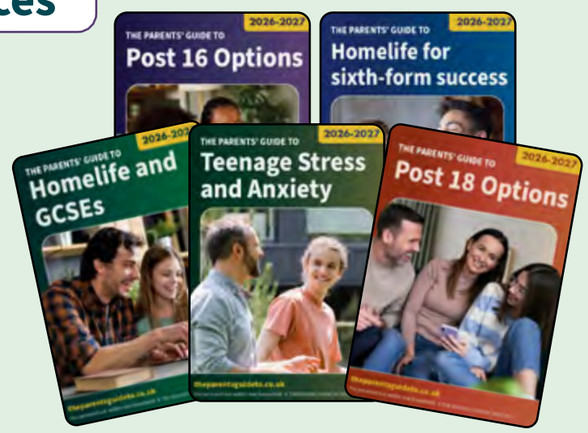
You'll receive helpful emails throughout the year, with clear, practical guidance on what's coming up and how to support your teen at each stage. Instead of trying to work things out on your own, you'll have timely advice to help you feel informed, prepared and confident.

Parent talks

You'll have access to all our online parent talks, covering key topics such as exams, wellbeing, choices, careers and teen life. Each session is focused and practical, giving you clear takeaways you can use straight away – with time for Q&A.

Parent guides and resources

You'll also get access to our most popular specialist guides and resources. These provide more in-depth support when you need it, helping you handle important moments with clarity and confidence.



Join Parent Club

Interviews

Interviewing can be nerve-wracking, so it's worth reassuring your child that interviewers are not looking to catch them out and pick fault with them. Quite the opposite! They are just as keen to find the right person to take up their apprenticeships as students are to find the right opportunity!

That said, employers like to be taken seriously as there's a lot of time and money invested in the interview process. There are some fundamental must-dos before moving on to some of the tips that could make your child stand out from others.

Fundamental things they should do for an interview:

- Dress smartly, irrespective of whether the interview is face-to-face or online. Be fresh, clean and alert (make sure they have not been out partying the night before!). Wear smart, suitable shoes (no trainers, slip-ons or open toes). No brightly coloured nail varnish and minimal cosmetics. If the interview is online, make sure the background is appropriate and uncluttered;
- Find out about the organisation. Your child must be able to supply a heartfelt, credible reason why they want to work for whomever is offering the apprenticeship – if they've had work experience with them already, so much the better;
- Be on time! It reflects very poorly to arrive late for an interview – even if it is just a few minutes. In most cases, interviews will run to a tight schedule; aside from making a poor initial impression by being late, they will have less time than others to make themselves stand out – the interview is unlikely to be extended;
- Allow some contingency. Make sure your child plans their journey so they can arrive with time to spare. If there are problems with public transport or traffic en route, they will have factored in a buffer. If they need to visit the rest room, they will have time. If it's hot outside, they will have chance to cool down in air-conditioning. If they are suffering with nerves, they can get a glass of water;
- Check whether they will be expected to give a presentation – and prepare for it if so;
- Be able to talk fluently on what they have mentioned in their CV and application. It can be a long time between making the application and getting the interview. Also, brush up on anything relevant that has happened in between.

Preparing for an interview

To help your child prepare for their interview, a list of commonly asked interview questions have been included in this guide. The aim of this is not to encourage your child to learn answers off by heart, but to help build their confidence in speaking around these topics.

Research the company & job

Questions on the company itself are likely to be asked - so make sure your child has researched carefully the values and aims of the business. Direct them to the required skills / competencies found in the job description to gain a better understanding of what the employer is looking for and how they can demonstrate these in their responses.

Reflect on past experiences

Make sure your child can support their answers with specific examples of when they have previously demonstrated the skill or character trait they are talking about.

Discover more

- Target Careers
- UCAS

Prepare responses

Get your child to write down some short-hand answers to each of the questions on the opposite page. Preparing thoroughly prior to the interview gives your child thinking time and will help them to provide considered responses to difficult questions.

Practise:

One of the key things employers will be looking for is good communication skills. Encourage your child to practise their responses out loud to improve the way they come across. You may wish to role-play interviews with your child using the list of questions opposite to guide you. Pay particular attention to what your child says, how they speak and their body language.

Prepare your own questions

It is very common for interviewers to ask their applicants if they have any questions at the end of the interview. This is a great opportunity for your child to demonstrate their interest in the apprenticeship. Help your child to prepare some questions in advance - some ideas are **shared with you on the next page.**

Questions about the company:

Why do you want to apply for this apprenticeship?

Why do you want to work for this company?

What do you know about this company?

What qualities do you think are important to this role?

Which part of the job role do you think will be the most challenging?

What do you think are the most challenging issues facing the company at the moment?

Questions about the applicant:

Tell me about yourself.

What skills can you bring to the role?

What do you think makes you stand out from other applicants?

What are your three key strengths?

Do you have any weaknesses? (the answer is always yes!). What are they and how are you addressing them?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

What do you think you would like least about this role?

Give an example of why you feel you are a good communicator / team member?

How have you influenced team decisions?

How do you respond to stressful situations / under pressure / difficult customers?

What are your hobbies and interests?

Questions your child might ask:

Where do you think this company is going to be in the next five years?

What do apprentices usually go on to do?

Will there be the option to continue my training after the apprenticeship finishes?

How regularly will my work performance be reviewed?

TIP: Get your child to find a recent news article on the company / industry they are applying in. Based on what they have read, help them think of a question they might like to ask at the interview.

Dealing with Rejection

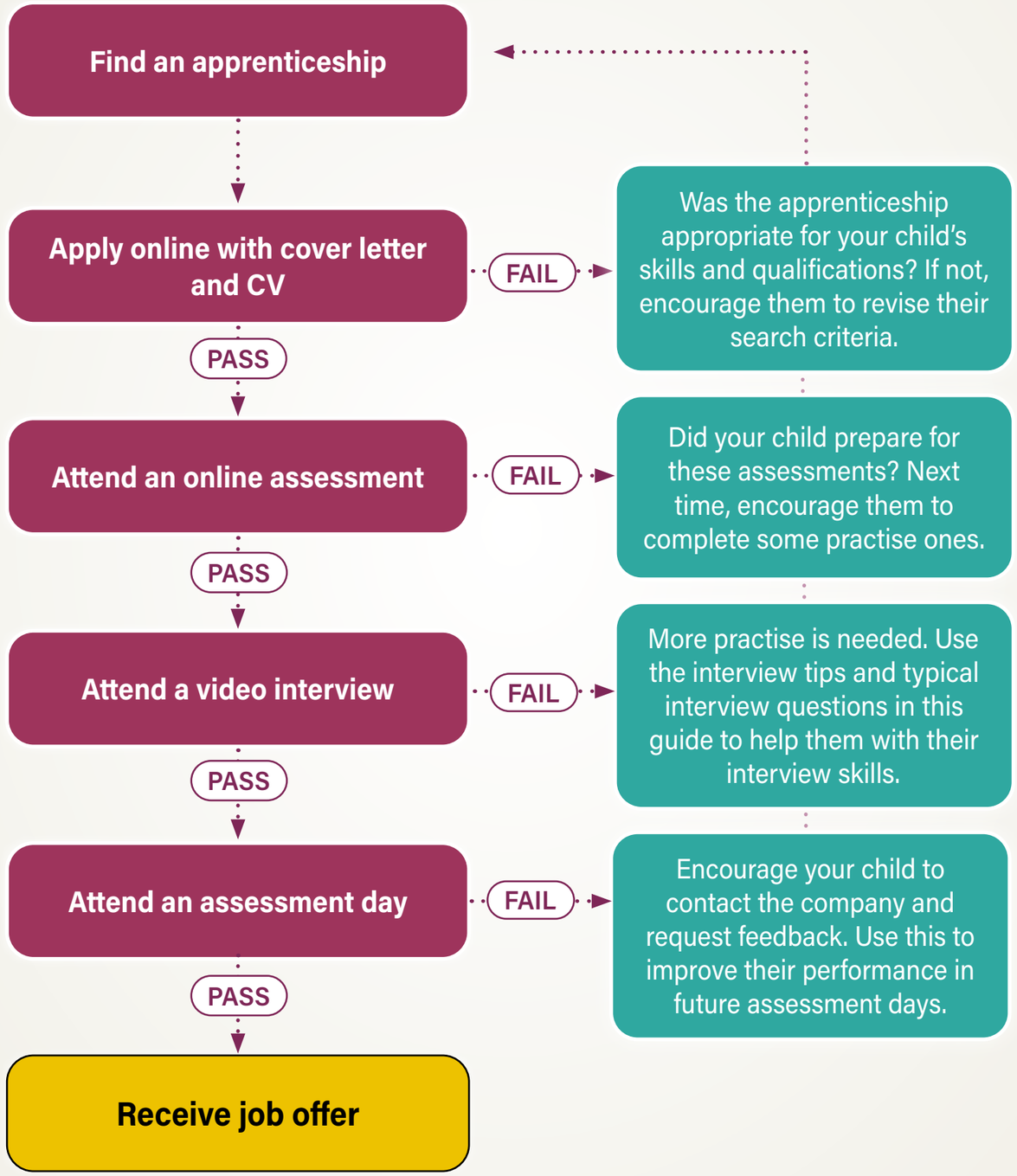
Experiencing rejection for the first time can be tough. As adults, we have had many years to develop the coping mechanisms to deal with this type of disappointment. However, this may be your child's first experience of rejection so it is important to know what to do if this situation arises.

As apprenticeships continue to grow in popularity, so too have the number of student applications. For some of the larger company names, places can be highly competitive.

Bear in mind that letters of decline are likely to happen in the lead up to exams. Try your best to prevent this from having a negative impact on your child's study or revision efforts by following some of these strategies.

- Try to encourage your child to research and apply for more than one apprenticeship scheme. Aim for at least five apprenticeships - just like university applications - choosing five apprenticeships helps your child to avoid placing all their eggs in one basket.
- Encourage your child to request feedback from the company. Whilst not all companies offer this, many do. Feedback will help your child understand the reasons for not being successful and will help them improve for future interviews.
- Be there. Listen carefully to their feelings and reassure them that in the long-run, things will work out.
- Apprenticeships are available all year round. If they have not been successful yet and have already finished school, encourage them to take on an internship or some additional work experience to help strengthen future applications.

Application flowchart:



Finalising the Process

Just as you would expect a contract outlining terms and benefits when starting a job, similar rules apply with new apprenticeships. Check carefully that terms have been clearly set out, so that expectations on both sides are understood.

As well as checking the paperwork ahead of the apprenticeship, there should be regular review meetings with both employer and training provider to make sure the apprentice is staying on track and that the employer is providing appropriate support. This should be referenced in the agreement.

Apprenticeship agreement

This is signed by the employer and apprentice, it is equivalent to a contract of employment, giving details of what the employer and apprentice agree, including:

- How long they'll be employed;
- The training offered;
- Their working conditions (such as pay, working hours, holidays, and any support or benefits provided);
- The professional qualification they're working toward;
- The apprenticeship framework or standard they will be working to;
- The skill, trade or occupation for which they are being trained;
- Study time allowed (often one day per week);
- Mentor provision.

Discover more

- ACAS
- UCAS

Apprenticeship Offers: Terms & Conditions

Minimum wage
As of April 2026, the minimum wage for an apprentice under the age of 19 is **£8.00 per hour**. Apprentices are paid not only for their working hours but also for any training that is part of their apprenticeship. They may be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly depending on company policy.

Holiday pay
All apprentices are entitled to the statutory minimum of 20 days paid holiday per year, plus 8 bank holidays.

Fair working hours
The limit for an average working week is 48 hours, including any training or study time. No apprentice should be expected to work more than this. Your child will also be entitled to at least a 20-minute break for every 6 hours of work. On average, apprentices are likely to be working around 30 hours a week, excluding study time.

Fair treatment in the work place
As an apprentice, your child should not face any unfair or discriminatory treatment based on their religion, race, age, gender, disability or any other protected characteristic. They are entitled to the same rights as other employees.

Note that the above list demonstrates the **minimum requirements** set out by UK law.

CHAPTER 4

Next Steps

Highlights include:

Get Financially Savvy

How to help your teen plan and manage their income - from apprentice wages to everyday spending.

Moving Out

What to pack, what to buy, and how to make sure your teen has everything they need to live independently.

Life Skills

Essential things they should know before they leave home - like cooking, cleaning and managing time.

Final Words

My time as an apprentice was much more social than I expected. I made some great friends at work as well as some great friends at university.

Get Financially Savvy

It might be tempting to try to manage your teen's finances for them (especially if you're worried they will not do this well themselves). Hard though it may be, we encourage you to help them be independent and look after their money themselves.

Regular expenses

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. They need to understand it's important to keep enough money aside to cover the cost of living before they spend on luxuries (such as going out and new clothes).

Track spending

There are lots of apps that can help with this (or an old fashioned spreadsheet will work too!). Help them work out how much money they have at the beginning of term (if they are in further education) or the beginning of the month (if they are taking an apprenticeship) and then which bills (and how much) will be due before they get the next payment. This will enable them to know how much is left over (disposable income) for them to spend AFTER bills and food have been covered and how to spread it out evenly.

Money saving ideas

It's worth giving your child tips on money saving ideas, such as buying non-branded food items and attending free social events. Reward cards and student discount cards might offer valuable reductions on a variety of items - both essential and non-essential, which will help them make their money go further.

Can they find part-time work?

Ideally during holiday time, but term time too if money is a significant issue, is there part-time work they can do to supplement their income? Of course, it's not beneficial for them to work too many hours and negatively impact their studies (research shows no more than 20 hours each week), but working can not only give them an opportunity to gain experience and meet people beyond their immediate circle, it will also be time when they are occupied and not spending on entertainment.

Moving Out

Depending on the apprenticeship, your child may need to move away from home either full-time or during academic term time (some degree apprenticeships are designed such that your child attends university during term time and works at the company during the holiday periods).

If your child's friends are going to be based in the same area, they may prefer to live in private accommodation together – for example renting a house with four bedrooms, where each can take their own bedroom and share the other areas of the house. As well as rent, they will need to consider bills, such as gas, electricity, council tax and internet.

This might be a good arrangement if they are all doing similar apprenticeships, but it could present challenges if one or more of the students are going to study for university only degrees. There are practical considerations, such as noise during the evening when apprentices may need that time to study and rest before an early start for work but the same restrictions do not apply to full time students.

Additionally, rent and bills need to be considered if house-sharers want to go home during the holiday time and don't feel they need to contribute to costs when they are not there. This could be around 25% of annual costs.

Home

If the apprenticeship is local, your child may stay at home with you. Financially this is a good choice, as they won't incur expensive rental and associated charges when they are on low-income, although transport costs may be higher. However, do use the opportunity to teach your child about the cost of living, particularly if they are earning a good apprenticeship salary. They need to learn how to manage costs before luxuries for when they do leave home, otherwise they could be in for a nasty shock! You'll both need to adapt to different "house rules" about comings and goings, as your child (who is now an adult!) at work is very different from a child at school.

Discover more

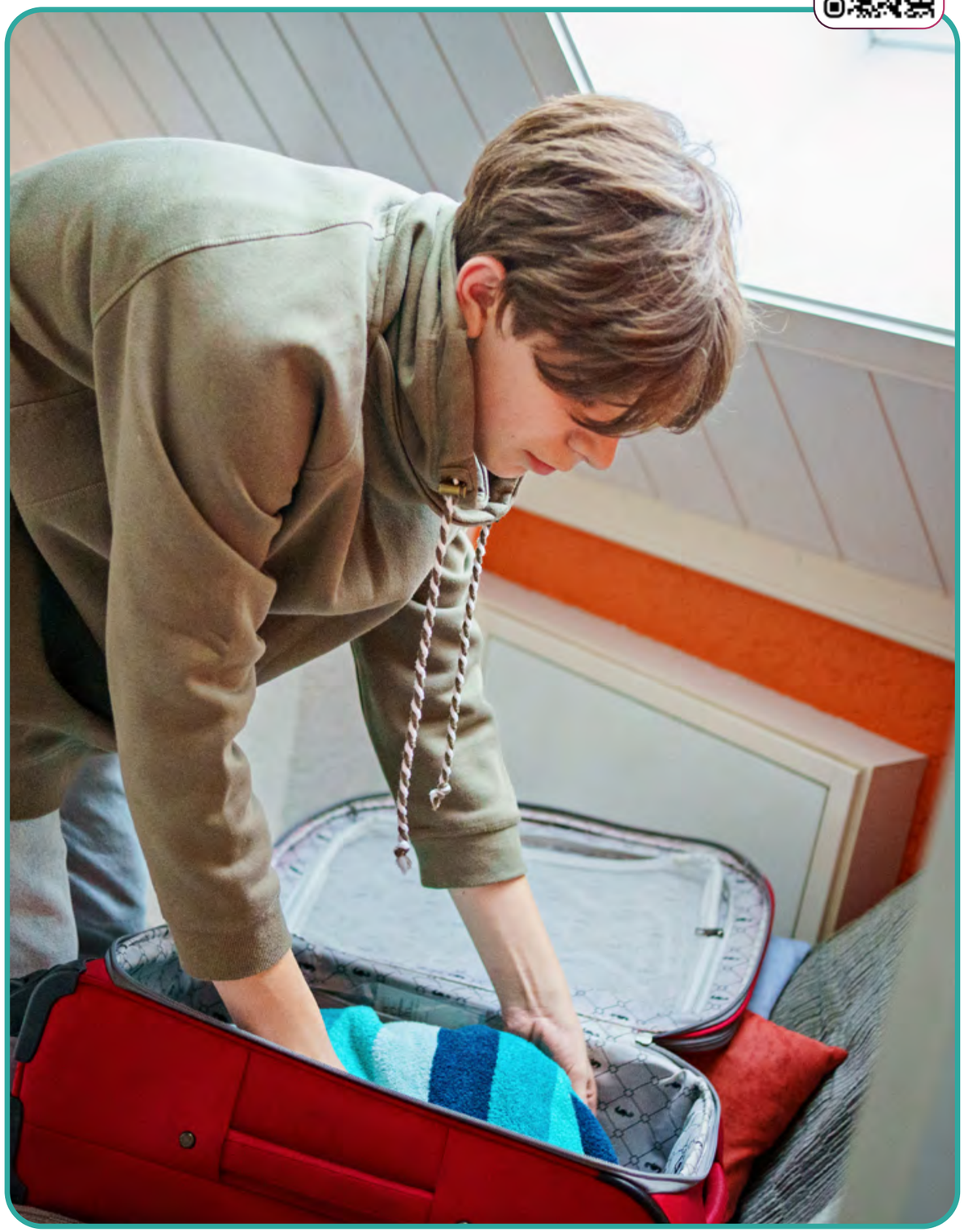
- GOV UK
- Ultimate shopping list

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 work clothes, casual 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.



‘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

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for ongoing support

Healthy eating

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 and colleagues too.

Work preparation

Remind your child to check their new working hours, study timetable, pre-reading and travel time so they become familiar with the rhythm their new life will take. Once they know where they'll be living, it's a good idea for them to try a practise journey to the office (preferably during the rush hour) and their training centre to get a feel for the journey time and what's in the local area. It's not recommended for this all to be new on their first day!

Time management

Apprenticeships are not an easy option. Balancing work, study and some fun time in appropriate measure takes skill and commitment. A new job is intimidating for anyone; there's lots to learn, new people to meet and a longer working day than school.

It takes discipline to study after a tiring day at work but your child will need to find a timetable that suits them to keep up with the academic element of their apprenticeship as well as learning the job hands on. For some, they may prefer to weight study over the weekends, whereas others may prefer to do a couple of hours each evening and have more free time at the weekend to relax.

Relaxation and having fun are vital too. It's equally important to factor in some downtime as it is not to factor in too much! However, late nights and early mornings are not sustainable, so they will need to establish a balance between all three components of their new lifestyle.

Our Student Recipe Favourites

- Jamie Oliver - student meals
- BBC student food
- Hungry Student
- Student Eats

Work etiquette

Most work places have their own atmospheres and what is the norm in one may not be acceptable in another. This takes time to work out, so new starters should err on the side of caution. It's important your child doesn't lose their own identity, but fitting in will make their early days easier. The starting point to this is dressing appropriately for the work place. It's awkward arriving in a suit when everyone else is dressed casually and vice versa. The best way to find out about expectations is to check with the Human Resources department.

Other tips include looking at the company website and seeing how employees in the images are dressed or making a note during interview. It's probably a good idea for them to buy a suitable working wardrobe so they have a small range of outfits that are always work appropriate. It will also make getting ready for work in the morning easier! If it's a formal environment, it's well worth investing in a hand-held steamer to make sure clothes are fresh, crease-free and look smart at all times – especially useful for trousers, skirts and jackets which don't need laundering frequently.

Final Words

You're bound to feel excited and proud about what your teen's achieved as they embark on their first independent step towards adulthood by attending university. But it may be tinged with an element of sadness as you realise your parenting role is about to evolve into something different. Please don't forget your teen still needs you very much - albeit in a different way.

Be there for them! Leaving school and long-term friends is exciting, but emotional too. For your teen, everything is changing: new teachers, new ways of studying, a new place to live, and a new peer group in which to make friends. If they've been at the same school since Year 7, this shift can feel especially big.

Even if they are not moving away to study, there's still much in their new life that will be different from before. In this sea of change, you are likely to be their only familiar anchor. Yes, they need space to adapt at their own pace, but they may also need to know you are still there for them and that there is some certainty and consistency in a fast-changing environment.

And finally ... don't forget about yourself! University is a short-lived experience that leaves a life-long impression so, alongside your teen, make sure you also enjoy all the rewards and challenges this unique opportunity offers.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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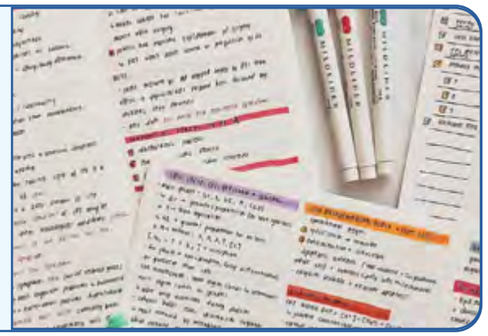
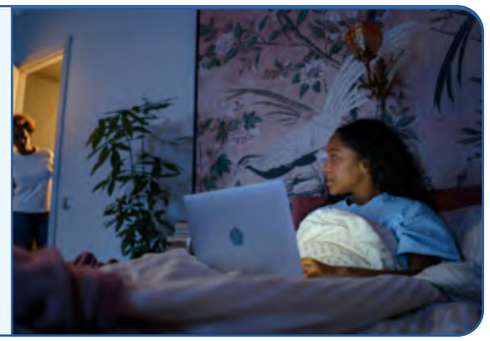


Staying Safe Online

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



2026-2027

THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

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