

OPTIONS AFTER YEAR 11

At the end of Year 11 the main options available to you are:

- **College**
- **Apprenticeships**
- **Sixth Form**
- **Job**

You need to think carefully about which best meets your needs, and consider which type of placement and type of study and learning suit you best. The following information might help with your decision:

College

It's likely that you'll find the atmosphere at a further education college different from that of school. It will probably be more laid back, you'll be able to wear your own clothes, be in charge of your own time when you're not in lessons, and maybe even call your tutors by their first names.

You'll still be expected to stick to a timetable and attend lessons, but you might not have to stay in college during your free periods. You'll be given a lot of independence and expected to manage your own time. Everyone is different - would this way of working suit you? Think about that when you decide what kind of environment will inspire you.

Colleges tend to specialize more in vocational and practical courses and not all colleges offer A levels. They also have a much more varied body of students that can include full and part time students, day release students as well as school leavers and adults. There are a number of colleges around Solihull and Birmingham and you can find out more about them by looking at their websites:

Solihull College - Woodlands Campus - Smiths Wood

- Blossomfield Campus - Solihull

South & City College

Birmingham Metropolitan College

Warwickshire College

Stratford-upon-Avon College

University College Birmingham

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a form of work based learning and are very practical. You will spend about four days a week with an employer and one day a week at college. You will also receive a training allowance while you train. Apprenticeships are very good for people who are not keen on classroom study and like to learn by doing. The best way to look for and apply for apprenticeships is to use the apprenticeship website:

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

A levels or BTEC?

If you decide to stay in education after year 11 you will have the choice of studying A levels or BTECS Often people don't fully understand the difference between the two, but the points below might help you decide which is the best for you.

A levels

- When you do A levels you will need to choose a combination of three or four subjects
- A levels tend to be in more traditional subjects such as history, maths or science etc.
- Assessment in A levels tends to be very heavily exam based, so you need to be sure that you are good at doing exams.

BTEC

- When you study BTECs, you will specialise in one subject and this would take up as much time as doing three A levels
- BTECs tend to be in vocational areas such as engineering, catering and health and social care etc.
- BTECs use continuous assessment, and so the work you produce over your course affects your final marks
- There are some exams in BTECs, but not big ones
- BTECs are mostly offered in colleges
- Entry grades for BTECs tend to be lower than A levels
- You can use BTECs to apply to university and they can lead on to degree courses.

Sixth Form

If you decide you would like to study at sixth form. Sixth forms tend to mainly offer A levels, although some also offer BTECs too. The atmosphere in sixth form could be more relaxed than the one you're used to in school but it will still be structured. There may be free periods when you have no timetabled lessons. You'll be given more responsibility though, so you'll be expected to get on with homework or do further study in your free time, without a teacher checking up on you.

Even though you don't have a taught lesson every period, you may still be expected to attend for the full school day. And school uniform may not necessarily be a thing of the past! You could still be asked to wear it or follow a dress code.

Sixth forms often have strict entry requirements and so you should always check what these are and if you are likely to meet them.

Sixth Form College

Sixth form colleges fall half way between sixth forms and colleges. They tend to be bigger than sixth forms but smaller than colleges, but will offer both BTECs and A levels. Their students are all aged 16 - 19. The nearest sixth form college is Solihull Sixth Form College. You can find information on the sixth form college at:

Solihull Sixth Form College

Getting a Job

Fewer and fewer school leavers take this option up straight from school, but if you decide you would like this, any job you apply for will need to include training and qualifications. Often this will include day release. The best way to go about finding a job is:

- To approach employers direct to ask if they have any vacancies.
 - Ask family and friends if they are looking to employ.
 - Use local papers to look for job adverts.
 - Use internet job sites to search for vacancies.
 - Register with employment agencies who can help you find a job (could be good for finding a short term job, but not so great for long term jobs and careers)
- Visit local job centres or use their website (often these jobs are for 18 year olds though)