



7 September 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Careers Support for Year 11 Students at Maiden Erlegh

I would like to introduce you to an aspect of the Careers Service provided for Maiden Erlegh students by the Maiden Erlegh Trust. My name is Anna Finlason. As an Independent Careers Adviser from the company Adviza, I am looking forward to meeting your son or daughter for a 30 minute appointment, and helping them consider career options and next steps.

Some students will already be feeling clear around career plans and next steps, others may have some vague ideas, and others may be feeling unsure, even stuck.

Helping students with career planning and next steps is really a team effort. Research has shown that parents are one of the biggest influencers in students making decisions around career choices. Teachers, other family members, peers and even TV and Social Media can also play their part – although TV is not always as helpful. As a Careers Adviser, I am trained to help students think through ideas and options, show them what is available in terms of steps towards careers, and how to research these.

I have a number of tips and general points below, which may help in supporting your son / daughter as they make important decisions around career choices and next steps:

- 1) To get the best out of their Careers Appointment, it is helpful if students have already started **to think and talk about careers ideas**. Don't panic if they are unsure...encourage them to do some quizzes (*see 'Student Careers Pack').
- 2) **Personality and Careers Quizzes** help students identify their unique set of skills, interests, values and preferences. Encourage your son / daughter to complete the 16personalities quiz as soon as possible, within the **first week of school** (set as homework). Print off the results / make a note of their result – this can aid discussion.
- 3) **Assumptions and potentially unrealistic expectations may need to be gently challenged** – e.g. young people may have a more romantic/unrealistic idea of what it means to be a doctor, lawyer or detective – based on what they have seen on TV. Part of my role is to help gently challenge misconceptions/wildly unrealistic expectations. Most importantly, it is to help students feel empowered to make their own, informed career and next step decisions.
- 4) **Student's career aspirations and plans may not reflect our own** deeply held hopes for them. This can be difficult. Allowing students to choose careers and routes which suit them best is important. We all flourish and succeed in educational pursuits and careers which reflect our unique skills, abilities, interests and preferences.
- 5) **Failure is not permanent** and can be a powerful learning tool.

- 6) **Each student has their own, unique race to run.** It is far better not to compare themselves to peers, siblings, even celebrities!
- 7) There are **many career options! It is ok to change our minds.** Students may follow more than one career in their lifetime – requiring them to take further courses / re-train at later stages and ages. It is helpful for students to know this, as fear of making a ‘wrong decision’ can cause some students to become stuck.
- 8) Assisting students in **choosing post 16 paths which suit them well**– enables them to achieve their best. Some students will do well at A-levels, others will excel through more vocational courses. Work toward options where they will achieve **their** best. These days, there are many routes of study and training into careers (only a small number require very specific paths – I can advise on these).
- 9) **Students may need time to decide.** They may continue to feel unsure around careers / next steps – don’t panic. Continuing to encourage quizzes (increasing self-awareness), gentle discussion with you and others, and careers research (very important) – can all help. It is a process and journey. Some students may require more support as they decide.
- 10) Each student will receive a **paper copy of their own Career ‘Action Plan’** a day or two after their careers appointment. It will include a brief summary of their career ideas and next steps, plus recommendations if they are feeling stuck. Students are usually happy for the school and parents / guardians to have an electronic copy, too.
- 11) **Career Appointments are part of a process** – enabling students to question ideas, options, assumptions and expectations, and begin to formulate goals. Researching, and processing ideas is an important and ongoing process.
- 12) **Attend Open Days and Evenings** during the Autumn Term, at a variety of educational institutions, as well as researching apprenticeship opportunities, if this is their preferred option. Students applying for apprenticeship opportunities are encouraged to also apply for other options, e.g. college, as back-up.
- 13) **Research and apply for three Post Year 11 options** (e.g. Sixth Form, College, etc.) ideally, during the Autumn Term of Year 11, or later if students are still deciding. Some Sixth Forms have earlier deadlines (Autumn or very early Spring Term). Well researched back-up plans are important as some courses no longer run, or students may achieve differently than they expected. Early applications can help as popular sixth forms/college courses can become oversubscribed. Colleges will always have places for students. Consider where / how the students will achieve **their** best – e.g. sixth form or college, A-levels, vocational courses or an apprenticeship. Do these fit with their career aspirations?

Once students have applied + received offers, which may be *conditional* (meaning it is subject to achieving certain results)–they can be encouraged to go full steam ahead in achieving their best and what is required for entry.

- 14) Please **use the electronic ‘Student Careers Pack’** attached, which includes helpful information and website links around careers and next steps.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your son / daughter the very best over the next year, and success for each student as they work towards creating a successful and fulfilling future working life.

With many thanks.

Anna Finlason
Careers Adviser

