



18 December 2025

Dear Student, Parent / Guardian,

Keeping up with post Year 11 applications & securing back-up options

We have put together some highly recommended actions for students in Year 11. Please read our top tips below to help you prepare for life after Year 11 and avoid disappointment / potential challenges on GCSE Results Day:

1) If not already done, you need to apply to more than one place / for more than one option – we recommend x3 places with at least x1 F.E. college option – please use your CAREER ACTION PLAN (sent to you by email) to apply (all guidance + website links included – per student). If applying for apprenticeships - search + until an opportunity is secured with x1 or more colleges +/- sixth form/s applications – as back-up. From our experience having back-up options is vitally important -

- Opportunities/options can fall through.
- Preferences can change.
- Unexpected events can happen on exam days that may mean you do not achieve the grades you expected (they may be higher or lower).
- If you have not applied already – finding/securing alternative options on GCSE Results Day is more challenging. You may not be able to choose your first choice of course – applying NOW means you can choose!
- **Competition for places can be high** – therefore – ensure you apply + secure options (ACCEPT OFFERS) – as soon as possible.

2) Apply for back-up options that have different entry requirements – for example: Students:

- Consider your current grades when applying – be aspirational **and** realistic.
- If you have applied to a sixth form/s to study A-Levels – you should apply to a college/s for another course (e.g. a BTEC OR T-Level at Level 2 or 3).
- If you've applied for an apprenticeship that requires certain grades – apply to college for courses with lower grade boundaries (e.g. Level 1 or 2).
- **If you have applied for one level of course (e.g. Foundation, Level 1, 2 or 3) at college – most colleges will move students to the correct level of course on GCSE Results Day – as per their GCSE grades.**

Please note –

- BTEC / some T-Level courses often require lower grades than A-Levels – please do not infer this means the qualification is less valuable / is viewed less highly – this is a common misconception. Students can go on to have highly successful careers having gained qualifications other than A-Levels. We can provide some wonderful examples of this! The key is for students to study the best style of course for *them*.

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3) Keep up with correspondence from sixth forms / colleges / employers (apprenticeships) until GCSE Results Day and beyond – ENSURE YOU COMPLETE actions required – for example:

Keep up with emails, phone calls, and letters – for example:

- **Send** a copy of your latest school report/grades, if requested.
- **Arrange** interviews – by phone / in-person, as required.
- **Book and attend** 'Meet the Teacher' events (Activate Learning – e.g. Reading, Bracknell & Wokingham, City of Oxford, etc. – these take the place of interviews)
- **Send** other information / details / complete forms – as required.
- **Complete required actions** until GCSE RESULTS DAY – you can then confirm the option you would like/need to take!
- **Accept every offer of a college/sixth form place** (including first choice and back-ups).
- **Confirm and decline places** on GCSE Results Day.
- **Avoid missing out on a place because you didn't follow through with your applications.**

Remember – you can gain some great information and advice via **UNIFROG** – www.unifrog.org – see the 'Know how Library' tool – e.g. type 'Apprenticeships', 'Interviews', 'Revision' in the search bar for top tips or explore other tools on your homepage. You can also search and apply for apprenticeships using the 'Apprenticeships' tool + colleges and sixth forms using the 'College/sixth form' tool. You can also explore grade requirements beyond Year 13 – e.g. university / higher or degree apprenticeships. All tools can be found on every student's Unifrog 'Home page'.

I have also asked Chatgpt to come up with skills & top tips when it comes to applications – found here: [A Student's Guide to Taking Charge of Your Applications.pdf](#)

Going forward, please do not be afraid to ask for help if you need it – I can be reached by email at a.finlason@maidenerleghtrust.org, alternatively, approach places you have applied to directly, you Tutor, and Head of Year.

May we take this opportunity to wish you the very best for your applications and a restful and blessed Christmas holiday & a very happy new year 2026.

With many thanks.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs A Finlason
Trust Careers Adviser

