Heathfield
Community College and Sixth Form

Yr11 Future Choices: October 2026

Making decisions about what to do at after year 11 is never easy, and clearly even more complicated in the current climate. The purpose of the Future Choices Presentation and this booklet is to assist you and your child in this decision-making process.

The law changed some years ago regarding the school leaving age. Young people must now stay in education or work **with** training until they turn 18. They can continue their education or training at a school or college, with a specialist provider or in a workplace. This booklet contains information about the possible pathways to choose and local providers who deliver the different options. We believe it is important an informed choice is made which keeps as many options open as possible for the young person.

Unlike GCSE choices what is available after sixteen involves a wider range of routes. Whilst our extremely successful Sixth Form has a proven track record of providing the right courses and environment for the vast majority of our students it is still important that all options are considered for everyone in y11. As a number of these options are external to the school this means both students and parents have a higher degree of responsibility for researching what is available and the different application processes required.

Information specific to applications for Heathfield Sixth Form can be obtained from the Sixth Form Team sjackson@heathfieldcc.co.uk or through the School Website https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?page_id=3153

Additional personal advice and guidance can be obtained from subject teachers, Mrs Krouwel (Head of Year 11 and y11 PSHEe teacher), Ms Taylor (Head of PSHEe and Careers Lead), Mrs Saunders (y11 Pastoral Manager) or our Careers Advisor, Chantelle Kite, over the coming months.

Pathway 1: Work with Learning

If your child is interested in starting work, and they are keen to learn skills whilst gaining qualifications, they can work and access part time learning e.g. in a family business with an evening course to continue their learning or an Apprenticeship, which is a recognised qualification that involves learning too.

For an Apprenticeship they study for qualifications while working and they learn the skills they need for the job they are doing. To start an Apprenticeship, you must be 16 or over and not in full time education. An Apprenticeship is a set of separate qualifications, called a 'framework' and apprentices need to complete all parts to achieve their Apprenticeship. There are three levels of Apprenticeship which cater for young people with average GCSE grades to those with A levels, T levels or level 3 BTECs.

Apprenticeship benefits
There are lots of benefits to doing an Apprenticeship. You can learn while you earn and in a way that is best suited to you. As an apprentice you:

- earn a salary
- get paid holidays
- receive training and gain qualifications
- learn job-specific skills
- can progress to degree level

Apprenticeships are valuable for young people because:
1. They provide access to real-world practical learning with up-to-date methods and technologies, and highly skilled workers
2. They combine real-world practical learning with formal and theoretical learning.
3. They build character and employability skills.

Earning while you are learning
Apprentices do real jobs for real employers, so you're paid while you learn. As your skills develop, your pay will increase accordingly. You may also get additional money for essential books, clothing or equipment. From April 2026 all apprentices under 19 or in their first year of an apprenticeship will be paid a minimum of £8.00 per hour and will receive this for the time they spend working, plus the time spent training. This hourly rate increases as they get older. Some employers do pay more.

How does it work?
Apprenticeship training can take between 1 and 4 years to complete, the length depends on its level, the industry and the skills the apprentice already has. Training takes place in the workplace and they also spend some time at a local college or work-based learning provider. Apprentices are often hired by the employers once they complete.

These are real jobs like any other non-apprenticeship job so you have to apply to an employer and compete against other applicants. Entry requirements vary depending on the level of the apprenticeship and the industry. Competition can be strong, so you will need to show that you are keen and determined to progress.
https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

Pathway 2: Full Time Education

Academic and Vocational Qualifications
Academic qualifications are the easiest to understand. They are sometimes referred to as general qualifications and are associated with the traditional education system, which includes GCSEs, T & A Levels. Other general qualifications that are less well known are the International Baccalaureate (IB), the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma.

Typical academic courses include subjects like English, History, Biology and Art. The main characteristics of these qualifications are that they focus heavily on knowledge and are assessed by exams.

Vocational qualifications are much more focused on skills and therefore not so much on what you know but on what you can do. Rather than covering a general subject, they are relevant to a specific job sector and focus on the practical abilities you need to get a job in that sector. They include BTECs and the new T Levels (which are also academic).

School Sixth Forms, Colleges and Further Education Colleges offer a range of courses at different levels with baseline entry requirements, they sometimes require subject-specific grades to allow progression on specific courses.

Routes to Higher Education:
Successful completion of A, T-level or Vocational Qualifications at level 3 can lead straight to the workplace. *H*owever, for many it is the stepping stone to Higher Education. Choosing the correct exam courses at 16 can open or close particular routes post 18 so careful consideration at this stage is important.

Entry requirements for universities or particular degree courses can be researched using the UCAS website – www.ucas.com.

16-19 Bursary Fund
The bursary can help with any education-related costs that may arise during the school or College year such as the cost of travel, uniforms, educational visits, books and equipment. There are two types of bursaries:

Vulnerable student bursary – Students can receive up to £1,200 per year if they:

- are in local authority care, or have recently left local authority care; or
- receive Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name; or
- are disabled and receive both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their name.

Discretionary bursary – You can apply for a discretionary bursary if you are not eligible for a vulnerable bursary but you need financial help to stay on in further education or training. Each education provider has its own eligibility criteria as their funds are limited and they need to make sure they get to the students who most need financial help to stay on in further education or training. Payment of bursaries will depend on attendance, behaviour and standard of work.

College Open Days/ Evenings – for September 2027 entry

College	Location	Date/Time	Booking/Registration
Bexhill College	Penland Road Bexhill on Sea East Sussex TN40 2JG	Wednesday 21 October, 6.00 – 8.30pm	No need to book More info here: Bexhill 6th Form College
DV8 Bexhill (Specialist college for creative sector)	DV8 Sussex 41 St Leonards Road Bexhill TN40 1HS	Wednesday 7 October, 5.00 – 7.00pm Thursday 22 October, 4.00 – 6.30pm	As far as we know, there is no need to register. Please check DV8 website before the day: Dv8 Sussex: Creative College and Education in Brighton and Bexhill For any questions or if you need assistance, phone DV8 (between 9 and 5) 01424 213890 (Bexhill)
BHASVIC Brighton Hove & Sussex Sixth Form College	205 Dyke Road Hove BN3 6EG	Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 November, 4.00 – 8.00pm	No need to book, but register to receive information: https://www.bhasvic.ac.uk/admissions/open-events
DV8 Brighton	DV8 Sussex Victoria House 125 Queens Road Brighton BN1 3WB	Wednesday 7 October, 5.00 – 7.00pm Saturday 12 October, 10.00 – 12.00am	No need to book For any questions or if you need assistance phone DV8 (between 9am and 5pm) on 01273 550432
East Sussex College, Eastbourne	ECAT House Cross Levels Way Eastbourne BN21 2UF	Wednesday 15 October and Thursday 20 November, 3.45 – 6.45pm	No need to book. More information can be found here: Open Events | East Sussex College
East Sussex College, Hastings	Station Approach Hastings TN34 1BA Construction/Trades at Ore campus: 42 Parker Road Hastings TN34 3SU Motor Vehicles at: Unit 17-18 North Ridge Ind. Estate St Leonards Hastings TN35 4PP	Thursday 13 October Thursday 19 October Thursday 18 March 2027 3.45 – 6.45pm	No need to book More information can be found here: Open Events | East Sussex College

Heathfield Community College	Cade Street Heathfield TN21 8RJ	Thursday 23 October, 5.30 – 7.30pm	No need to book More information can be found here: September 2027 Application – Heathfield Community College
East Sussex College Lewes	Mountfield Road Lewes BN7 2XH	Tuesday 15 October Thursday 19 November Thursday 18 March 3.45 – 6.45pm	No need to book More information can be found here: Open Events | East Sussex College
Plumpton College	Ditchling Road Lewes BN7 3AE	Saturday 21 November Saturday 16 January Saturday 13 March 9.00 – 12.00am	Book here: https://www.plumpton.ac.uk/news-events/calendar-of-events/event/visit-us-at-our-open-event-on-10-october-2026/
North Kent College	Brook Street Tonbridge Kent TN9 2PW	Wednesday 4 November, 3.30 – 7.00pm	Book here: Events at North Kent College | News & Upcoming Activities
Hadlow College	Tonbridge Road Hadlow Kent TN11 0AL	Saturday 7 November, 9.30am – 1.30pm	Book here: https://www.nkcgroup.ac.uk/news-events/events

Further information on all these dates and course details can be found on the individual College websites.