



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH THEIR FUTURE CAREER PLANS

As a parent there is a lot you can do to support your child and help them find a career that's right for them. And, whatever age they are, it's never too soon to help your children start thinking about "what next?"

All students have lots of opportunities to start thinking about future career during their time at The Downs. They also have to make important choices that can significantly impact their future career options.

The purpose of this short guide is to highlight the many ways you can support your children during their time at the Downs.

And, if you would like to share your own career and experiences with Down's Students, then we would love for you to join **The Careers Network**.

Penny Alum
Careers Leader

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Making subject choices
for Years 10/11

Career-wise choices
after GCSE's

Options after the Downs

Work Experience

Share your own
experiences with Down's
Students

Join the Careers Network

How can I help my child with their future career plans?

As a parent there is a lot you can do to support your child and help them find the career that's right for them. General tips

Encourage them to:

- Talk about their career ideas and future plans
- Research a wide range of careers
- Think about their Year 10, 12 and post-school options in good time and be aware of application deadlines
- Prepare for and make the most of their careers guidance interview with the careers adviser in school
- Find out about entry requirements for school, college, university courses or jobs they are interested in
- Develop their skills through school activities and other interests. This will help them when they are applying for courses or jobs
- Find out about the world of work through work experience opportunities

In addition you can attend events at the school and talk to subject teachers at parents' evenings.

The support of parents is really important when key decisions like subject choices are being made.

You may not always think it, but you greatly influence their decision making. However, keep in mind that your child's choices and decisions should be based on their aspirations, abilities and future employment opportunities. It should not just be what you as a parent may want for them.

Making subject choices for Years 10/11

Subject choices in Year 9

During Year 9 your child will be asked to make a choice about some of the subjects or courses they will study in Years 10 and 11.

To help your child decide what to study in Key Stage 4, they should start exploring what sort of person they are and where these might lead in future. It is important that their subject choices don't close out any career options that may want to explore in future.

Get them to think about:

- Subjects they enjoy
- Subjects they are good at or find challenging
- Subjects that can link into career areas
- How they like to learn (through coursework, exams or a combination of both)
- Hobbies/interests they enjoy
- The type of job they would like to do

Encourage them to:

- Research jobs that interest them on the internet
- Talk to their subject teachers
- Talk to the Careers Leader at School
- Talk with your friends and colleague about their jobs

Career-wise choices after GCSE's

Understanding the different options after Year 11

Year 11 marks the end of compulsory education for your child and they will have to make a decision on what they want to do next. Making a choice about the future isn't easy as there are lots of options to choose from.

Options include:

- Full-time Education in the Downs 6th Form or at a different school
- Further Education College
- On the job training through the Training for Success programme
- Employment opportunities through apprenticeships
- Self employment

Full-time education in their existing school or transferring to another school.

Before thinking about embarking on further study discuss the following with your child:

- Do they enjoy studying?
- Do they need to study further for the type of job they want to do?
- Will they get the GCSE grades they need to continue into a 6th Form?

Some young people prefer to stay at school. Others may be keen to have a change and study somewhere new. There may be competition for some popular subjects and/or courses so encourage your child to apply in plenty of time.

If your child decides to continue in full-time education within school they can choose either to stay at The Downs or move to a different school for 6th Form. Post Year 12 pupils in school have a greater choice of a broader range of subjects to meet their needs, interests and aptitudes.

Options after the Downs

Understanding the different options after 6th Form

After Year 13 there are lots of different routes and options for your child to move forward in their personal career journey. From apprenticeships to foundation degrees, employment and gap years there are many opportunities to choose from.

The choice your child makes will be affected by many things like their financial situation, interests, attitude to study, qualifications, the job market etc.

Options include:

- Higher Education – full-time/part-time courses at university or a further education college
- Further Education (FE) – full-time/part-time
- Employment opportunities and Apprenticeships (refer to page 10)
- Self employment
- Gap year/Volunteering

If your child is thinking about going to university it is important to understand the application process and research fully the range of universities, courses and methods of study/assessment.

Work Experience

How can I help my child make the most of work experience?

The Downs provides students with the opportunity for work experience. This is a good chance for your child to find out about the world of work and for them to understand the skills that are needed in the workplace.

It can also be an opportunity for them to find out more about a career that interests them. For some courses or jobs relevant work experience is essential.

Making the most of work experience:

- Encourage your child to plan ahead and think carefully about where they would like to go
- They should keep a diary or record of what they did on work experience - this may be useful later when they are applying for courses or jobs
- Even if they don't get their chosen placement they can still learn a lot about the world of work and the type of skills that employers look for
- Use the long summer break to explore what type of work friends and family do

Other activities to help your child find out about the world of work.

Work experience isn't the only opportunity for your child to find out about the world of work.

Other activities include:

- Attending careers events where students get the chance to talk to employers and members of The Careers Network about work and training
- Talking with people who are doing the job they are interested in (the Careers Leader may be able to help put them in touch with someone in The Careers Network).
- Visiting local companies
- Research Online

Checklist

Helping your child with their future career plans

It is important to be aware of your influence in your child's career planning and to make that influence as positive as possible. The most valuable things parents can do to help their child with career planning is keep informed, listen, don't judge, be open to ideas and encourage them to explore all their options.

Here are ten ways you can help prepare and support your child with their future career plans:

- Encourage your child to prepare for and make the most of their careers guidance interview with the Careers Adviser in Year 10/11 and Careers Leader in Year 12/13
- Encourage them to participate in appropriate out of school activities
- Support your child to explore a range of careers
- Help your child plan their career once they have some ideas
- Encourage them to check university websites for the most up to date information and be aware of application deadlines
- Be aware that your child may change their career interest as they become aware of more options
- Encourage them to find out about the world of work
- Encourage your child to talk with adult relatives and friends about the kind of work that they do
- Help and encourage them to stay up-to-date with current careers events
- Remember that career choice is a personal decision. Do not try to steer your child to a particular career because you think it is something you might like
- Remind your child to be careful on social media. For many careers your on-line profile will be looked at by employers

The Careers Network

Share your own experiences as part of The Careers Network

Would you be willing to share your work experiences with The Downs Students?

Could you or your employer offer work placement opportunities?

If so, we would love to have you as part of our Careers Network.

At the Downs, we want to offer our students as much information as possible about the world of work. We want them to do work experience, to visit local companies and to meet and talk to working adults about the jobs they do and the choices they have made.

To help make those opportunities available to our students we rely on our contacts and connections with the world of work. Of these, the most important are our own former students, current and past parents, and local employers. They are all part of what we call The Careers Network.

If you would be happy to help us prepare our students for life after The Downs, then please let us know by signing up to this network, please use the link below to register on the Grofar Careers Network:

<https://links.grofar.com/6004-fqmWo5>

Grofar is the careers on-line software programme used by the school to record student careers engagement. The data entered and stored on the database would only be accessed and used by school staff organising careers activities, and only for this purpose. By signing up, you are not committed to any specific activities, but we will use this system to contact you about future events and ask whether you are able to support individual events.