



THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

HELPING YOUR CHILD

**STAND OUT FROM
THE CROWD**

2020-2021

Find out what's new

The Parents' Guide to provides parents with the information they need to help their teenage children make the right choices to create successful futures after GCSE and sixth form.

Our online guides are designed to inform, involve and guide parental support. They include the most up to date information on topics such as apprenticeships, universities and revision techniques.

If you're interested in regular updates about other ways you can help your teenage children, [click here](#) and join our online community.

How to get the most out of this guide

Useful links

If you want to delve deeper and find out more, we've included useful links to other reliable sources. Simply click on the picture icons to be taken to our recommended websites.

Summaries

To help save you time, we have provided useful summaries at the end of each chapter containing the key points.

Interactive

To make moving around this guide easier, the contents and chapter headings are interactive. Simply click on a heading to be taken to the chapter or page you would like to read.

This guide does not need to be read sequentially – browse what interests you most.

Contents

*I'm interactive!
Click me if you want to
jump ahead to a particular
chapter*



Introduction

As a parent, you're hard-wired to want your child to be happy and successful. Part of this is helping them make choices that have the best possible influence on their future. What's best for one child can be totally different from what's best for another, but here's a fact: when it comes to making a positive impression, it's personality and character that make them stand out from the crowd.

It doesn't matter if they're applying for a job, an apprenticeship, a college or university place, training or an internship – the bottom line is always the same: they're more likely to get the interview if their application stands out from others and they'll get the place if they are likeable and impress their interviewer.

Don't misunderstand us. We're not saying qualifications aren't important – they are. If your child has the ability and opportunity, they should do the very best they can in any academic qualifications they take. We're not suggesting they should make their applications whacky either. Standing out for the wrong reasons is no short cut to success. So what are we saying? It's personality that differentiates one person from another. Positive, proactive, committed, resilient individuals make good students and great employees – they're quick to learn, quick to forgive and pleasant to be around. And that makes them attractive.

So, introvert or extrovert, how can your child demonstrate that they are worth the investment and that they'll return that investment and more to the organisation that takes them on? Well, you might be surprised to know that, depending on their natural preferences, there are plenty of things they can do which will help.

And they all have one common theme: preparation, preparation, preparation! Nothing beats preparation to improve confidence. Preparation will enable your child to cope with challenges more quickly and effectively, because they will already have solutions at hand. They will have more information to furnish applications and provide better responses during interviews. They will feel more comfortable and this will show.

Preparation falls into two categories: preparation for specific things (an interview for a job, being accepted on a course); and preparation for life (being resilient, understanding compassion and empathy, being able to communicate well, having diverse interests and healthy hobbies).

Read on and find out how your child can master preparation to ensure they stand out from the crowd.



Things to do at home



“ Taking a three week online course in ‘caring for the old and vulnerable’ gave me lots to write about in my application to study social care at college. ”

Research

Your child will probably have their own goals and ambitions, but they might need your help in working out the steps to help them achieve these goals. At the moment there are limits on how much they can get out and about, so here's some ideas on things they can do from home.

The easiest place to start is with research. Whatever it is they want to do, they should go online and find out more about it and, if possible and better still, speak to people who are already doing it (or have done it).

This can cover a whole range of options, such as:

- further education courses (for sixth form or after sixth form);
- jobs (whether as a future career, to narrow down apprenticeship options, or as a way of deciding which courses will be most useful to them in the future);
- educational establishments (they might want to investigate colleges or an alternative school for sixth form studies; different universities; where to study during apprenticeships).

There are three benefits to this approach:

1. Anything which involves investing their free time in something they say they're interested in, proves they are interested – otherwise they'd be doing something else;
2. It will give them things to discuss at interview that are different from what others are saying. Only they will have done their specific research, so they can explain how they went about it, what they learnt and which bits interested them most;
3. Reality is often different from theory – we can like the idea of something, but when we start doing it, we're not as keen as we thought we were. If your child starts researching something and gets bored along the way, chances are this is not for them, and they can change tack and pursue something they do enjoy instead.

Once they know what they want to do and have some ideas of what knowledge they'll need, they can start to investigate different ways to find that information – some suggestions follow next.

LUCK IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
PREPARATION MEETS
OPPORTUNITY

LUCIUS SENECA



Reading and audio

Reading is a brilliant opportunity for your child to find out more about their curriculum subjects, favourite areas of interest, idols, topics they enjoy that are not covered at school and pretty much anything else on the planet – including fiction. If your child isn't a great reader, no matter – they can listen to audio books instead.

Read outside of set texts

With young adults of a similar age group, there's a tendency for the curriculum literature to be quoted over and over in applications and interviews, often covering very similar themes. Get your child to stand out by being able to quote something outside their set texts. But here's the important thing. They must be able to discuss it and say how it has had an impact on them. There is little point in mentioning they have read something if they have nothing to say about it. Your child is looking to demonstrate that they can read something, digest it, summarize it, establish an opinion and express themselves. These are all transferable skills that are vital in the workplace and very useful in further study. It doesn't matter whether your child concludes

Useful links

[Kings College Academic reading lists](#)

[Amazon.co.uk 100 books to read](#)

[Book Trust Books for teens](#)

[Waterstones](#)

that they liked the book or not – it's how they say it that matters.

Self development

There are plenty of books written for teens with guidance and tips on how they can prepare for life ahead, specifically from a teenage perspective. These cover all manner of topics from how to think positively, how to work effectively, how to develop good habits, how to cope with teenage issues, how to choose a career path. Exploring some of these will help them cope with the challenges they are facing and prepare them for the future, as well as demonstrate to potential interviewers their passion and commitment to constantly improve.

Are they a people person?

See whether they are interested in biographical literature. If they read about their favourite idol, they might be able to talk about someone they really like and admire and still sound substantive, because they are not focusing on mainstream information - they may have discovered something unique outside of social media sources.

Thinking beyond the obvious

If their goal is to study a specific subject or business area, then they must read around this prior to applications and interviews. They should research what's available online, and then focus on one or two books that they can read to develop their knowledge in their particular areas of interest – whether it relates to the subject itself, or people who are known experts in the subject. For example, if your child wants to read business studies, there are millions of business areas to research and this could feel overwhelming; so why not select either a type of business or business expert and find out how they became an expert and inspiration.

For example:

- how One and Only (established in 2002) became one of the premier, highest rated resorts in some of the world's most beautiful places;
- why VHS outsold Betamax, even though Betamax had a superior quality product;
- how Zoom started as a day-dream to solve the problem of a long-distance relationship.

This approach should enable them to spend their time doing something they enjoy, and be able to connect it to a goal they have set themselves for the future.



TED talks

An absolute blessing if your child has a short attention span. Most Ted Talks are around 15 minutes long, covering diverse subject ranges from science to business to global issues and feature some of the most eloquent, thought leaders of our times. It's a great place for your child to develop their interests without a huge time commitment.

Podcasts

Not every teenager loves to read, so podcasts are a fabulous way to discover interesting themes and topics. The length of podcasts vary significantly, some are short (say 15-20 minutes) others are feature length episodes; some are so long they are split into series; others are broadcast regularly as complete episodes with an overarching theme linking them together. Podcasts are a relatively new media and very popular with teenagers.

Be aware

It's a good idea for your child to be able to demonstrate some general

knowledge. They should keep an eye on the news to be aware of headline stories. During interviews, news topics can often be "elevator talk" – i.e. something that is mentioned when someone meets them at reception to take them to the interview room. It may not be part of the interview, but it can have an influence. Not knowing anything about world events suggests a lack of interest, which may not be true, but does not reflect well.

If they're not sure about news articles or are struggling to get a balanced view, they could try reading opinion articles to see what other people are saying so they can develop their own thoughts having read two different sides of an argument.

In the workplace

If they are visiting a company to ask if they can volunteer, intern, shadow, or indeed work, they should definitely research information about the company beforehand. This should include the brand overall, where they're located, how many people are employed, their specialism and the latest about them in the news.

Useful links

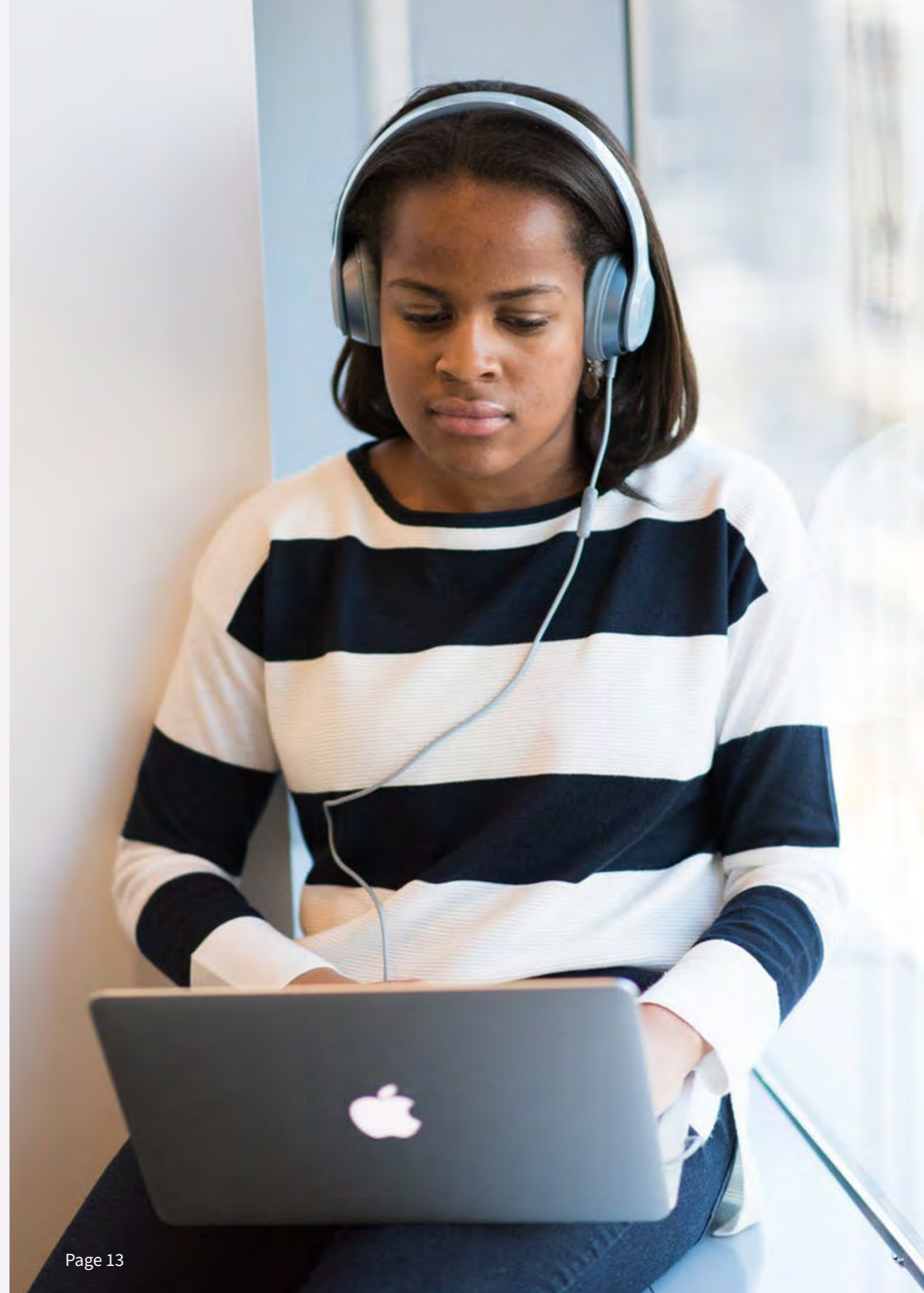
TED
talks

Audio
books

The
Economist

BBC
news

The
Week



Developing a skill or hobby

Keep an open mind

What's great about this is that it could cover anything and be exclusively focused on something your child enjoys, but that's completely outside the mainstream. The point here is: does your child have a passion for anything? It may seem a strange passion, it may not be a passion a future employer shares, or it could be something totally conventional.

Typical hobbies might include reading, football, gaming, vlogging but less usual hobbies might include stand up comedy, candle making, puppetry, pet sitting, stone skipping or rapping. Does their hobby result in them meeting and communicating with new people (whether online or in person?), learning a new skill, competing in teams, getting creative or being extremely time efficient? These are all excellent transferable skills that are central to helping your child stand out from others.

Of course, it's not always true, but it is rather nice if your child's hobby takes them offline for a little bit too!

Learn a language

If your child has an aptitude for languages, learning a second (or third) language has many cognitive benefits, such as better memory, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, improved concentration, enhanced listening skills and the ability to multitask. It demonstrates commitment and an ability to balance personal academic study with school lessons.

Learning a new language can be challenging and is not suitable for everyone. It can require a significant time investment over a long period of time, so they shouldn't do this if it will impact on their primary qualifications. However, if it's something they find easy and enjoy, it could prove extremely beneficial – even if it's only learning a few conversational phrases for holidays.

Useful links

[Duolingo](#)

[BBC Languages](#)



The Power of Music

Music has a fantastic ability to transport us instantly – uplifting tracks, or those that remind us of good times, can improve mood within seconds, so if your child loves music, it's something to encourage.

And all the better if they enjoy playing a musical instrument. This involves activating both the mind and body, usually takes time and patience to master, expands creativity, benefits the brain and is something that can be shared with others.

Lots of education facilities have their own bands and orchestras, so naturally they are interested in students that might want to participate while they study – it won't be a deciding factor in offering a place, but it could tip the balance between two similar candidates.

Playing an instrument

Playing music is fun and it's also a great way to train the brain. Learning, or developing an ability, to play a musical instrument means thinking how to use fingers, hands, arms and even legs (think drummers and pianists) to create the right notes; follow (or remember) the music to play the tune; listen to others that are playing; focus on timing and rhythm – all at the same time!

It's great for social connections - everyone loves live music at family events; even with Covid-19 restrictions, many bands and orchestras have been able to play together online; and it can even be a source of income. However, it does require a lot of dedication and time to practise – so this must be something your teen really wants to do for themselves (rather than something you really want them to do).

Useful link

TED talk

Singing

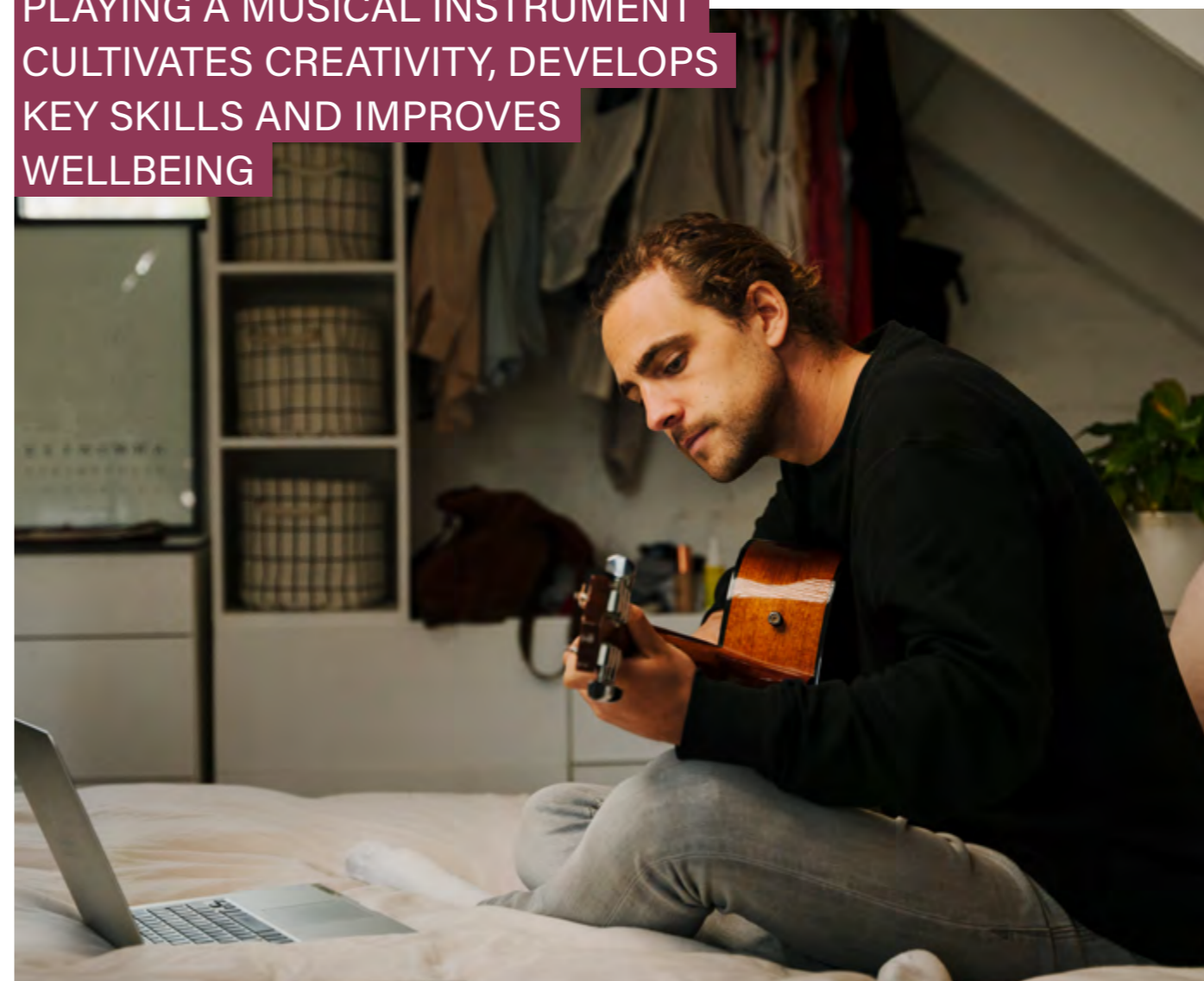
As well as increasing lung capacity and improving posture, singing is another skill that's great for health. Whether solo, in a band or with a choir, singing can improve mood, increase mental alertness and help memory (remembering all those lyrics). Anyone can sing – though a few lessons might benefit the less tuneful!

Music exam qualifications

Admissions staff, colleges and interviewers often look favourably on students with practical music exam qualifications, as they indicate self-discipline, motivation and organisational skills.

UCAS tariff points are awarded to students attaining LCM Advanced Level music qualifications (grades 6, 7 and 8), in both practical and theory subjects.

PLAYING A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT CULTIVATES CREATIVITY, DEVELOPS KEY SKILLS AND IMPROVES WELLBEING



Taking a course or entering a competition

If there's something that really interests them, why not take an online course? Choosing to study outside of the school curriculum, and taking assessments / exams to prove knowledge, is very impressive. It shows initiative, commitment, and an ability to follow through – all desirable qualities whether the next stage is further education or finding a job.

This doesn't have to require massive commitment; some courses and modules are very short – others are longer. What's on offer is vast, and lots of the courses are free, although there is usually a small fee to receive a certificate.

Options include:

- how to succeed in writing applications (*9 hours over three weeks*);
- exploring global health, ethics and safety (*6 hours over three weeks*);
- preparing for university (*18 hours over six weeks*);
- learning online (*4 hours over two weeks*);
- what makes an effective presentation (*6 hours over two weeks*);
- resilience (*7-10 hours no time limit*);
- research skills (*7-10 hours no time limit*);
- CV writing (*7-10 hours no time limit*);
- interview skills (*7-10 hours no time limit*);
- critical thinking (*7-10 hours no time limit*); and
- A variety of subject-specific courses too.

Useful links

Future Learn

Harvard EdX

MOOC

*I am interactive:
Click me and I'll take
you to their website*



Competitions

There are lots of competitions online: writing fiction, creating fashion, submitting essays, creative; maths as well as many relating to curriculum activities. Some may require a little effort others may require lots. Working to a specification, creating something that meets that specification and working to a deadline (in this case a competition close date) illustrates terrific transferable skills.

It's great to include on CVs, and if they win or are acknowledged as a good entry, it can be a great confidence booster.

However, win or no win, entering a competition demonstrates initiative, intellectual curiosity, drive, research skills, preparation and organisation, which should be the primary focus when including them in applications or talking about them in interviews.

ENTERING A COMPETITION DEMONSTRATES INITIATIVE, DRIVE AND INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY



Summary

Your child may need to try many different things to discover what truly interests them, but once they have, it stops being about quantity and switches to quality. They will not be expected to know masses of information, they will need to show that their interest extends beyond what's offered at school and be able to talk about it.

Good sources of information are:

- The internet – great for research
- Courses
- Books – whether online, hardcopy or audio
- Ted talks
- Podcasts
- Newspapers
- Competitions
- Private or group tutoring



Things to do outside the home



“

I didn't enjoy my experience working in a bank. I'm glad I discovered this early as it gave me the time to explore and research other options.

”

Work experience

Some experience at work is crucial. It provides your child with first-hand experience of what it's like to work (which is very different from school or college); dealing with colleagues and the public; working to deadlines and how it feels to do things "for real".

If they're lucky, they might get placed within an industry that is related to their course or ultimate job goal. If this is the case, it can help your child discover more about the industry and may help them realise whether it is or isn't for them. A lesson much better learned sooner than later! Work experience is also great to demonstrate passion for a subject where qualifications in sixth form aren't usually offered such as architecture, medicine, law, accountancy and so on.

How to find work experience

- Do you have any contacts, through your own work, friends or family that could help and take on your child?
- Your child can speak to the careers team at school. They have excellent connections with local and national employers.
- They can contact employers directly and ask;

Useful links

Pearson Education

Student Ladder

Virtual work experience

- Get them to apply for a job (Saturdays, evenings, holidays) – it may not be their aspirational job, but it's work experience and they'll learn a lot from it (as well as earning some money).

Some work experience is better than no work experience

If your child is struggling to find a suitable one or two week work placement, try looking at taking a different approach. Perhaps asking employers if you could visit for a day, support on a particular project or assist in a particular thing might help them say yes.

Virtual work experience

Some employers are offering virtual placements to give young people an insight into what it's like to work in an industry or job role while at home given the current social distancing restrictions. This will give your child chance to discover more about the job, view pre-recorded videos on what it's like to work with the organisation, go on virtual tours and possibly take part in some live Q&A sessions.

Most virtual work experiences range from half a day to one week, although some are longer.

Virtual work placements are open to everyone and location is not a limiting factor. This opens many possibilities for your child to explore new jobs and industries in areas that may not have been possible under face to face arrangements. The majority of virtual work experience placements are free and working from home will also mean your child will not incur any travel related costs.

Transferable skills

It's not always easy working from home and taking part in virtual work experience placements will help your child develop those soft skills that all employers are seeking, such as organisation, time-management and self-motivation.

For a list of companies and businesses currently offering virtual work experience placements, [click here](#).



Observe or shadow

If your child is struggling to get some sort of work experience, why not approach companies and see if they can observe or shadow. Opportunities to do this are limited at the moment, but may open up once social distancing restrictions lift. Shadowing is watching someone else in a role and seeing what they do. It's hit and miss as to how well the person they're watching explains the job along the way, but it does give them the opportunity of shadowing someone higher up in the organisation, whereas if they were doing work themselves, they'd have to start at the bottom. Some ideas include:

- Spending the day with a personal assistant to see what that job involves;
- Visiting a film or television studio for an application to study media or film;
- Shadowing a doctor at the hospital for an application to study medicine.

Even if your child can't get an official observation, shadowing or volunteering opportunity, they can still get relevant experience by exploring opportunities available for free to the general public. Some ideas include:

- Watching a debate in Parliament for an application to study politics;
- Attending local magistrates court trials

Useful links

Gov.UK

Do-it
search engine

for an application to study law;

- Visiting an exhibition, public talk or museum to demonstrate interest in a particular subject.

Another approach during these times when opportunities are limited, is to arrange a video call for 30 minutes or so to discuss the most significant factors in the role, what's involved on a day-to-day basis and the personal qualities that are important to the job. This isn't using too much of a busy professional's time, but shows initiative and can provide useful insight into different roles.

Volunteer

Volunteering is a fantastic way to get work experience (albeit unpaid), give something back to the community and try out new things. It could also be the start of a lifelong way of living that provides a great feeling of fulfilment and is proven to be a contributor to personal contentment. Some ideas include:

- Local farm, zoo, veterinary practice or animal shelter;
- Hospital, care home or hospice;
- Local council or MP office;
- Homeless shelter or a food bank;
- Library or museum;
- Local, national or international charities or political organisations.



Personal growth

Don't make the mistake of thinking that in order for your child to stand out they need to do lots of things that are related to the subjects they want to study or their chosen future profession. This is a common mistake and can result in parents pressurizing their children to stop doing things they enjoy (so they focus on study) which can lead to them missing out on establishing good lifelong hobbies or developing friendships that are not connected to academics.

Balance is key

Balance is key. Adults who are able to combine being active, having fun and working usually achieve more because they use their time effectively when focusing on any one area and moving between areas gives their mind time to refresh as they concentrate on something else.

Join a society, club or group

Sometimes it's easier to learn new things and discover new interests in a group.

Jointly sharing a new experience and then talking about it together is very powerful.

Schools are fantastic at offering opportunities for students to learn new things outside the academic curriculum, and it's great if your child takes part in some of them because it can introduce them to life-long hobbies that are good for their physical and mental wellbeing, as well as giving them ways to meet new people with similar interests throughout their life, no matter where they're based in the world later on. Some clubs may be connected either to their subject interests or future aspirations, some may have no connection at all – they're all beneficial.

Clubs cover anything (and more), from specialist art, board games, debating, drama, enterprise group, fashion, Model United Nations, quizzing, sports or stretch and challenge. Joining a club is a great way to show passion for a subject and commitment (if they attend over a regular period of time).

Start a society, club or group

Your child may have an interest in something that isn't catered for via the school. If there is a local club they can join to enjoy this hobby, that's fantastic and it will give them something to discuss that most of their peers haven't experienced. If there isn't a club, setting one up shows initiative, organisational

ability and good communication skills – as well as creating an outlet for your child to express their passion. Get your child to speak with a relevant member of staff at their school about starting a group or club in their school, or alternatively you might want to help them set one up outside of school by providing a space in your house at weekends or after school.

JOINING A CLUB IS A GREAT WAY TO SHOW PASSION FOR A SUBJECT AND COMMITMENT



Leadership roles:

We've called this leadership roles, but maybe we should have renamed it roles with responsibility. Leadership skills are prized in many organizations because, in the most part, managers are made due to their competence in the job, not their ability to manage people. Where companies can employ people that have developed a talent for leadership, it saves them challenges when they're looking to make internal promotions later on. Equally employers are looking for employees who are willing and able to step up and take on more responsibility.

Many clubs or groups have roles for their members. This might be club president, sports captain, accountant, social rep and so on. Do encourage your child to apply or volunteer for these roles as this can demonstrate many key skills that are highly valued – and can rarely be demonstrated in school experience.

In addition, taking on these roles will help your child with their personal self-development. If these roles do not exist, your child could always set one up for themselves, such as volunteering to run a particular project or a fundraising programme for their club.



Suggested clubs:

SPORTS

- Athletics and track
- Badminton
- Ballet
- Biking
- Basketball
- Cricket
- Cross country running
- Fencing
- Football
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Martial arts
- Parkour
- Rowing
- Rugby
- Sailing
- Skiing
- Squash
- Strength and conditioning
- Swimming
- Tennis

SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- Art
- Business / Enterprise
- Design Technology
- Drama
- English / Creative writing
- Geography
- History
- ICT / Computing
- Language
- Maths
- Media studies
- Music
- Science - Biology, Chemistry or Physics

HOBBIES / INTERESTS

- Animé
- Baking
- Chess
- Choir
- Circus skills
- Coding
- Comedy
- Cookery
- Dance - ballroom, breakdance, hip-hop
- Debating
- Fashion
- Film
- Gardening
- Journalism / school newspaper or magazine
- Orchestra
- Origami
- Photography
- Podcasts
- Poetry
- Politics / MUN
- Public speaking
- Radio
- School council
- Sculpture
- Sewing
- Sign language
- Sound recording
- Yoga
- Young Enterprise

Achievements and awards

There are lots of activities that your child can take part in through school that offer awards recognizing achievements. Some schools directly provide opportunities to participate whilst others provide referrals to take part via community lead programmes. Awards can be for academic, creative or sporting achievements. If your child is interested, options include:

Sporting achievements

Playing for a school or local club, captaining a team, taking part in a sporting competition or going on a sports tour can all provide an opportunity for your child to showcase skills and character traits they have acquired during their school years. Make

sure your child doesn't focus solely on their victories and the level at which they are playing, although this can be an important point to make, but also the skills they developed whilst committing themselves to regular training over a significant period of time

Performing arts

Playing a musical instrument or performing on a stage shows commitment and dedication to perfecting a skill (including learning lines). Playing in the school orchestra, organising a charity event or performing in a school play are all worthy and credible experiences to mention. Don't forget, most academic establishments have their own orchestras and theatres!



Being active

Being active is vital for both physical and mental wellbeing. It increases strength, stamina and fitness; is great for face to face contact and can often improve happiness and social connections. Even if your child isn't sporty, they should do some activity that involves movement – cycling, dancing (even around their bedroom!), martial arts, skateboarding, walking and yoga are good options. Including being active as part of a regular routine is something that your child can continue long into adulthood and will set them on a very positive path to good health and wellbeing. This doesn't mean forcing your child to do something they loathe and don't enjoy, it means helping them explore which options suit them best.

Take up a team sport

At the moment, outdoor sports are possible so long as the organisation adheres to Government guidelines. Anything that involves being part of

a team demonstrates the ability to work together towards a common goal, co-operate with others and communicate well – all desirable attributes in the working world (and at home too!). Winning is great, but team sports can also teach teens about learning to lose, whilst still having a strong, positive feeling of camaraderie. Basketball, cricket, football, hockey, ice-hockey, netball, rugby, softball and volleyball are some possibilities.

Going solo

If your child likes to carve their own path, then there are sports which may be done alongside others, but are predominately a solo experience. Archery, canoeing, climbing, cycling, horseback riding, paddle boarding, surfing or swimming might appeal to them. These still demonstrate commitment, endurance, striving for goals, self-discipline and passion, as well as keeping your teen fit.



Duke of Edinburgh (DofE)

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a youth achievement award which focuses on community. It improves physical health, develops skills including resilience, determination, team work, and independence. It's highly regarded and participants are well respected.

Anyone aged between 14 and 24 years old can take part in a DofE programme and there are three levels which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's award.

There are four sections to complete at Bronze and Silver level and five sections at Gold:

1. Helping the community or environment through voluntary work;

2. Becoming fitter through physical exercise;
3. Developing a new skill;
4. Planning, training for and completing an expedition;
5. Working as part of a team on a residential activity (Gold only).

DofE is a big time commitment and will usually take at least six months to achieve a Bronze award, twelve months to achieve a Silver award and eighteen months to achieve a Gold award.

All young people who achieve a Gold Award will be invited to a Gold Award Presentation, attended by a Member of The Royal Family and usually located in St James's Palace, London.

Useful link

Duke of Edinburgh

Duke of Edinburgh Parent FAQ

*I am interactive:
Click me and I'll take you to the DofE website*

Summary

Practical experience is valuable and, knowingly or unknowingly, often results in the development of lots of additional skills. There's no need for your child to try and do everything, but they should do some form of

work experience plus at least one other interest – music, DofE, sports, theatre or any hobby that they can talk about in depth and with passion.





Visit **The Parents' Guide to** website for more support and resources:

Parent Guides

Our range of interactive guides provide you with easy to follow advice, hyperlinks to reliable sources and the most up-to-date information.

Support articles

Browse through our collection of online articles covering a range of topics from supporting your child with their revision to helping them apply to university through UCAS.

Parent Q&A

Almost every parent has questions about their child's education. Read through answers to commonly asked questions or ask your own.

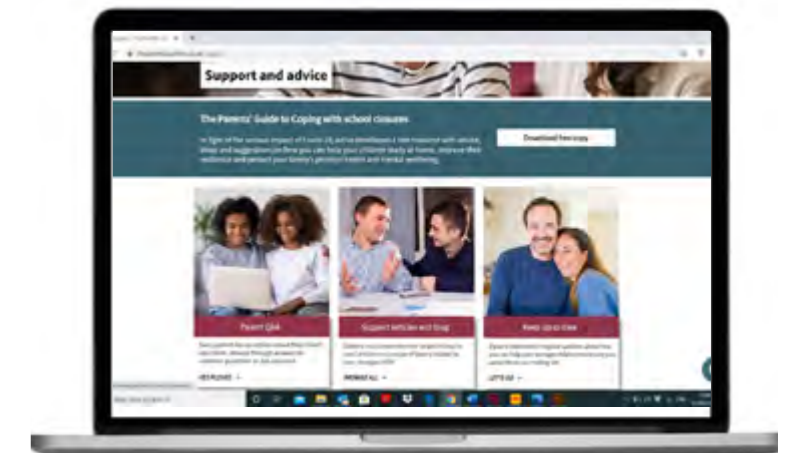
Blog

Our blog provides reliable and timely advice and support to changes taking place across UK schools and colleges.

Parent newsletter

Sign up to our parent newsletter and receive free support, advice and resources on how you can help your teenage children straight to your inbox.

All our resources are ready for immediate download



www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/parents

Final Words

Standing out from the crowd means your child has some interests and experiences which have impacted them uniquely; either by making them think differently or benefiting them in some way (or both). It is very important that they can articulate WHY these experiences have had an impact, not just WHAT they have done. For example, if your child loves knitting that's great, but if that's all they can tell an interviewer it doesn't really mean anything. If they can say, I love knitting, it really relaxes me and I love that I can make unique scarves, hats and jumpers for a fraction of what they cost in the shops – and they make fantastic, very personal presents for birthday and Christmas – it says a lot about the personality of your child.

You can help your child get into the habit of explaining the WHY as well as the WHAT by regularly asking them about it.

It's important that, as a parent, you are able to encourage your child to strike a balance

between focusing on academic studies and creating some meaningful pastimes. Your teen should not spend all their time on school work nor should they spend all their time on hobbies. Academic results can indicate aptitude and application, but how a person spends their spare time speaks to their personality and what genuinely interest them.

Hobbies can provide a route to developing skills that can't be as easily developed in academics, finding out new things they enjoy (or don't enjoy!) and discovering areas of interest that they may not otherwise come across. However, it doesn't mean they have to try everything – don't exhaust them by insisting they try one new thing after another, but keep an eye that they are regularly expanding their horizons. This will provide them with personal experiences and a range of areas for discussion during interviews as well as helping them discover more about themselves.

Find out what's new

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