



What Next?

Post-16 Options 2025-26



The White Hills Park Trust
Better Together



All students in Year 10 have received this document to support them with making plans for after their GCSEs. They will also receive information about where they will get careers support and how they can help themselves, links to college websites where information about open evenings and a guide to questions they might want to ask at open evenings.

In September, Year 11 students will continue to use a platform called Unifrog so that we are aware of their current post-16 thinking. This information is held centrally which is used to record any careers related interventions and conversations so that we have a central 'picture' of each student.

At Alderman White, we also buy in support from a specialist company, Ideas4Careers, to provide professional careers guidance for our Year 11 students. This year we have Abbie Chambers, who is vastly experienced in this field and is qualified to Level 7 in careers guidance, with us. Abbie will be in school for sixteen days during the year which means she will be able to work with about three quarters of the year group. We will use our knowledge of the students, supplemented by the information from Unifrog, to assess their clarity and progress with their post-16 plans and to prioritise students for meetings with Abbie.

Following the meeting, Abbie produces an Action Plan which is accessible on the Student Portal and MyChildAtSchool (MCAS). This can be printed on request. This is a working document for the student to help them progress their preparations for post-16 and is followed up with support from their tutor. For those students in need of additional support to make a successful post-16 transition, there will be additional meetings with Abbie.

In September we will be encouraging students to start attending college open evenings to help them make their post-16 plans. We will send out updated information on local open events throughout the year.

We always advise students hoping to secure an apprenticeship to apply for a college place(s). Apprenticeships come up all year long and don't follow the normal school/college academic calendar. If they start college in September 2025, they can continue applying for apprenticeships and leave when they secure one. When the participation age was raised this meant that young people must be in education or training until they are 18 so they will need to attend college until they secure an apprenticeship.

Please encourage your son/daughter to check their school email and Google Classroom regularly. We send out whole year group careers information as well as specific information to individual students. The information from Unifrog is used to target information to individual students.

Key People

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It is really important to talk to people about what you are thinking for post-16. There are many people around you who want to offer you the best support and advice possible and who have a range of expertise. In the first instance, always speak with your parents/carers and your form tutor.



Curriculum Leader for Personal Development

Mr Moore will be leading the Personal Development curriculum from September 2025 as well as supporting Year 11 with post-16 preparations. If you want a careers appointment then Mr Moore will oversee this process.



Progress Leader

Mr Allsopp will continue to work with the whole year group on their academic and personal progress. As well as your tutor, Mr Allsopp is someone who can support you with any queries you have related to post-16.



Assistant Headteacher - Achievement

Mr Young leads on Year 11 achievement and supports all students with their transition into post-16. Mr Young will work with Mr Moore and Mr Allsopp to plan support and intervention to individual students as well as looking for opportunities for students to access.

Post-16 Education

What are my options?

There are 3 main pathways to consider.

- **Academic route** – A Levels can be taken at a school sixth form (e.g. Bramcote College sixth Form), a stand-alone sixth form college (e.g. Bilborough College) or a further education college (e.g. Nottingham College)
- **Vocational Route** – Vocational courses are available at levels 1, 2 and 3. Vocationals offer more practically assessed elements. Most vocationals are available at all three levels, but T Levels are only at level 3, the same as A levels and are more technical-based, including an element of work experience.
- **Apprenticeships/Traineeships** – Intermediate (level 2) and Advanced (level 3) are options after GCSEs. They come up all year round and so might not start in September

Things to consider

There are lots of things to think about when you leave school. To help you choose what to do next, you might need to think about:

- What career you want to do in the future – some jobs need you to choose certain routes to get into them.
- Your predicted grades and what course types and levels will accept me.
- Whether you want to carry on learning in an academic way or in a more work-related/practical way
- What environment will suit you? Do you prefer a school setting like a 6th form which has more structure and support, a college setting which is more relaxed and with the onus is on you to succeed, or a work environment where you can start earning money.

Qualifications Table

It can be a little confusing at first, as all qualifications are given a Level, and depending on what you are applying for – there might be a different qualifying Level. Use the table below to help you understand the different Levels and some examples of qualifications. All students will be between Higher Education Level 1 & 3.

Level	Entry Requirements†	Apprenticeships	Academic	BTEC	T Levels	CACHE	NVQ & VRQ	Access to HE	HNC & HND	Degrees
8			Discretionary							Doctorate
7			Postgraduate							Masters
6		Deputy	Ordinary							
5							Level 5			
4	Varies by subject, qualification type and provider/university.	Higher	Leadership Award				Level 4		HNC	Foundation Degree (BA, BSc)
3	Min. five GCSEs at grade 4/C or above, including maths and English.	Advanced	A Levels A2 AS	Extended Diploma Subsidiary Diploma	T Levels	Diploma	Level 3	Diploma		
2	Min. five GCSEs at grade 3/D or above, including maths and English.	Intermediate	GCSE 9 (A*) – 4 (C)	Certificate / Diploma		Diploma	Level 2			
1	Min. two GCSEs at grade 2/E or above.	Traineeship	GCSE 3 (D) – 1 (G)	Certificate / Diploma		Diploma	Level 1			
E	Interview and reference required.	Supported Internship		Award / Certificate		Certificate				

† Entry requirements vary by subject and qualification type. The entry requirements published are meant as a guide only – see subject information for further details.

In some cases, you may be asked to complete a literacy and/or numeracy assessment to ensure the course is at the appropriate level for you.

Entry Requirements

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What do I need to get in?

Key points:

- To gain entry to Level 1 post-16 courses, you're likely to need 3-5 GCSEs at grades 1 - 3 including English and Maths
- To gain entry to Level 2 post-16 courses, you're likely to need 4-5 GCSEs at grade 3 or above including English and Maths
- To gain entry to Level 3 post-16 courses (including A levels), you're likely to need 4-5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above including English and Maths
- Most core A Levels will require a grade 7 at GCSE for the correlating subject.
- Vocational qualifications like BTEC and VCERT match up with GCSEs as follows: L1 = GCSE grades 1-3 (Pass - Distinction) L2 = GCSE grades 4.5-8.5 (Pass - Distinction)
- Most colleges, sixth forms and apprenticeships accept BTEC-type qualifications, as do 95% of universities, including the Russell Group and Oxford!

Do your research!

No matter what you read online, it is important to check all information carefully. Although the Department for Education have stated that a Grade 4 is considered the official 'Pass Mark' for students going onto Level 3 qualifications, not all colleges or universities may agree with this. For example, Kings College London and UCL both now ask for a Grade 5 at GCSE in English and Maths as part of their entry requirements, but Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool (all Russell Group universities) still consider Grade 4 the equivalent to a C.

Useful references:

Which University – How important are my GCSEs?

<https://university.which.co.uk/advice/gcse-choices-university/how-important-are-my-gcse-grades>

University Comparison: <https://universitycompare.com/courses/degrees>

Ofqual

<https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2018/03/02/gcse-9-to-1-grades-a-brief-guide-for-parents/>

Applying for Post-16 Courses

Timeline 2025–26

Oct 25

Application windows start to open and Open Events scheduled.

General closing dates for applications to some sixth forms and colleges, but it is advisable to apply before Christmas.

Jan 26

Mar 26

Students typically start receiving offers from sixth forms and colleges. Students accept or reject offers.

Students apply for Post-16 options that they might not have been able to apply for until now, such as some apprenticeship opportunities or courses with training providers.

Mar – Sept 26

Aug 26

Students receive qualification results and confirm offers with colleges/providers. Providers will send out details of enrolment which is often the same day as collecting results.

Students start new courses

Sept 26

Applying for Post-16 Courses

How to Apply

Sixth Form and College Websites – Most colleges have online application forms on their websites. You will need to register for an account. We recommend using an email address you use regularly. This could be your school email address. Some emails from college providers can go to the SPAM folder so always check there just in case. By logging into your college account, you will be able to see the progress of your application.

Find an apprenticeship – The government's apprenticeship portal, which allows students to create an account and search and apply for apprenticeships in their area.

PLEASE NOTE: Apprenticeship and Traineeship applications run throughout the academic year and students must be 16 and have finished full-time education before being eligible to start. Apprenticeships have a much more detailed and competitive application and recruitment process than sixth form or college and will require students to find their own placements if taken via colleges.

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch?searchMode=Category>

Useful Links:

<https://www.ucas.com/further-education>



Sixth Form Colleges

Sixth form colleges typically focus on A-Level (Advanced Level) qualifications – two-year courses that end in an overall examination and a grade from A*-E, with a similar structure to GCSEs but looking at the subject in a lot more depth. Students can study:

Traditional A-Levels – Subjects like Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English Literature, English Language, Mathematics, Geography, History, Languages, Religious Education, Music, Art

Alternative A-Levels – Subjects like Photography, Law, Sociology, Psychology, Business Studies, Film Studies, Media Studies, Economics, Politics, Sports Science

BTEC L3 Diplomas – Some sixth form colleges offer BTEC qualifications that can be taken alongside A-Levels. These are usually made up of several separate modules and include practical assessments and coursework, as well as exams. Subjects can include Health and Social Care, Applied Science, Travel and Tourism and Engineering. They may be offered as a single or double option. It would be different to taking a full BTEC at college where you would only study that one subject but covering eighteen modules rather than six or twelve.

Students studying A-Levels usually select three subjects that they wish to study at sixth form. Sixth forms also offer something called the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), an independent project that can provide students with UCAS points to put towards university.

Entry Requirements – Most sixth form colleges usually ask students to have five GCSEs at Grade 4 or above but make sure that you do your research, as some ask for Grade 5s as a minimum and may require Grade 6 or 7 for specific subjects to demonstrate their deeper understanding of that subject.

Further Education Options

Further education (sometimes referred to as FE) colleges are for students aged 16 and over so you could study alongside people of all ages. Further education colleges often offer you a much wider choice of courses at all different levels, including A levels and vocational qualifications. It is worth exploring the different courses they offer.

Traditional A-Levels: For A levels at an FE college, you would study three subjects as you would in a sixth form.

BTEC L3 Extended Diplomas: The BTEC Extended Diplomas offered by FE colleges are made up of more units than the ones offered by sixth forms. They are equal to three A levels. For example, you could choose to take Engineering Level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma and you would spend all your time focussed on engineering modules as opposed to an Engineering A Level, which you would combine with two other subjects. These qualifications offer an alternative route into university, but it is important to check that they are accepted for the degree/university you are interested in, and what grades they will require.

T Levels: T Levels are a relatively new general vocational qualification being offered this September at some colleges. Over the next few years more subjects will be rolled out from more providers. They are aimed at those who have an idea of the industry they would like to go into. In some ways they are like the reversal of an apprenticeship – 80% of the course will be spent at college and 20% (at least 45 days) at an industry placement. The idea is that the industry placement forms a significant part of the course and gives a meaningful experience. It may be in a block or one day a week.

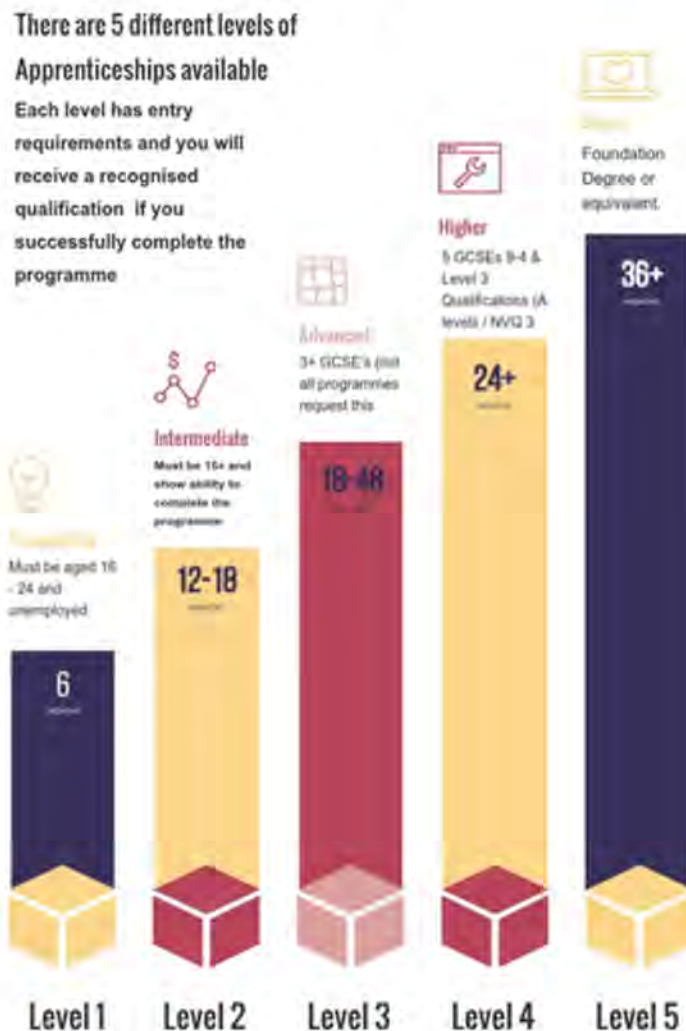
The closest colleges to Alderman White that offer T Levels are Nottingham College, NUSA and Derby College. You can search for T Levels closest to where you live using the link: <https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/students/find>.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Apprenticeships

A real job with training so you can earn while you learn and get recognised qualifications as you go. They take between 1 and 4 years to complete. Your employer provides your on-the-job training and pays your wages. You will work alongside them and learn from some of the best in the business. Your learning provider can be a college, training organisation or university, and they look after the rest of your training. You can complete this off-the-job training on day release (attending one day a week) or over a succession of days in a short period (block-release).

Apprenticeships can now be undertaken in a variety of industries, including Engineering, Graphic Design, Software Development, Hair and Beauty and Catering (and can be started as soon as an individual turns 16 and has left full-time education).



Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Traineeships

Opportunity for students aged 16–24 who do not have the relevant qualifications, experience, or skills to start an apprenticeship but are interested in progressing on to one in the future.

Traineeships involve a programme of up to six months of study, including a work placement, qualifications in Maths and English and support with finding a job or apprenticeship once the course is completed. Students are not paid for taking part but can apply for a 16–19 Bursary Fund to help with costs.

You can [find a traineeship](#) on GOV.UK.

Useful Links:

<http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/>

<https://www.tlevels.gov.uk>

[Get The Jump](#)

[Become an apprentice](#)

[Higher and degree apprenticeships](#)



Final Decisions

Deciding where to go after Year 11 can be tricky, particularly while you are busy revising for your final GCSE exams, so it is important to consider the following factors that might can help with decision making.

Where can this option take me in the future?

If you are thinking about a destination after post-16, such as university or higher/degree apprenticeships, it is important to know whether the qualifications you are taking from 16-18 can help you to progress on to these pathways.

Use websites such as:

- Which University <https://university.which.co.uk/>
- Success at School <https://successatschool.org/>
- UCAS <https://www.ucas.com/>

to find out whether the course you want to do after Year 11 will allow you to progress on to what you want to do afterwards. Speak with staff at the sixth form, college, or apprenticeship you are applying to get further details!

Be Prepared:

Learn more about the options available after Year 11, including sixth form, college, apprenticeships, and university – <https://careerpilot.org.uk/>

Read about how your subjects link to different careers – <https://futurefinder.yourlife.org.uk>

Improve your employability skills and start recording your experiences in a CV – www.barclayslifeskills.com

Six things you need to know before making A Level choices – <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/six-things-you-need-to-know-before-making-your-a-level-choices>

If you want to speak to a careers advisor you can also visit the [National Careers Service](#).

What to ask?

When attending an open evening or interview, it's important to ask lots of questions. Here are some suggested questions to ask.

College/6th form

- What support is there if I have problems or am struggling to keep up?
- If I am offered a place, but do not get the grades, do you offer alternative courses I can drop down to?
- What are your interviews like and when/how do you hold them?
- How can I get more information about a course I am interested in?
- Does the course include any relevant work experience?
- How is the course taught?
- On average how many students are in a class?
- How many teachers will I be taught by?
- What skills/qualifications do I need to get on the course?
- How will I be assessed?
- Do I need any special equipment or clothing?
- What do people who have finished the course go on to do?

Apprenticeships

- When do you start/stop recruiting?
- Do I have to take any tests?
- How is the training organized? – block/day release, at college or specialist centre?
- What percentage of apprentices get jobs at the end of their apprenticeships?
- These are my skills and qualities; do you think this would be a good job for me? What else would you suggest?
- How many apprentices do you take on and how many people apply?
- Do you help me find a work placement or do I have to do that on my own (if this is a training provider, not an employer)?
- What grades do I need to get in my GCSEs?

Unifrog

In keeping with our commitment to provide students with outstanding careers guidance and tailored support when choosing their next step after school, we are now using Unifrog; an award-winning, online careers platform. All students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 have access to this excellent website.

The Unifrog platform is designed to support learners in making the most informed decisions about their futures and has a range of tools that are suitable for all year groups. Each student has their own personal account that provides a wide range of information related to their interests and aspirations. Key features of the platform include:

- Exploring Pathways – personality quizzes, career and subject profiles, MOOCs and webinars
- Recording – self-reflection about extracurricular activities and key employability skills
- Opportunities – search tools showing live vacancies/courses/placements for apprenticeships, universities (in the UK and abroad), FE, virtual work experience and much more
- Applications – tools to help students build applications for a range of pathways (e.g., CVs, Personal Statements, Common App Essays)

All students have their own login and have been using Unifrog in their Citizenship lessons this year. Students will continue to use Unifrog next year to support their post-16 careers guidance and research. We would encourage you to use the platform with your child so you can support them through the process of deciding their next step. For more information, go to www.unifrog.org or contact Mr Moore – Elliott.moore@whptrust.org.



Is Post-16 full time?

a qualification, usually A Levels or Vocational Courses, taken at a sixth form, college or with a training provider, total at least 540 hours of learning time per year, or around 18 hours per week. This is classed as full time however you will notice you have more free time compared to GCSE. You may have a morning or afternoon where you can do some private study for example.

Can I wear what I like?

It can vary depending on the setting. Some 6th forms request formal dress but not a rigid uniform like school. Most colleges allow students to wear their own clothes.

What flexibility do I get?

At post-16, you are generally treated more like an adult learning than a child, therefore often you have freedom to come and go as you please providing you stick to the timetable and sign in/out accordingly.

Can I get financial support?

Education and training in the UK is free for young people until they turn 19. In addition, there is a 16-19 Bursary Fund to help students from low-income families pay for things like transport, food, and stationery, which can be accessed at any sixth form, college, or training provider you attend after Year 11 - www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

Many organisations also have their own financial support for students, so check first!

Do I get exam access arrangements?

Any exam access arrangements you receive in your GCSE exams will be given at post-16. The post-16 provider will often be in touch with the school to get these sent over once you are enrolled. If you did not receive access arrangements in your GCSEs but you feel you might qualify, then you can be tested for them at your post-16 provider.