

September 2024

Ref: VC

Dear Parents/Carers,

As your child is making decisions about their next steps, I would like to remind you where information can be found about open days/evenings, apprenticeship opportunities and application deadlines during this process. We will be holding weekly assemblies this term, hosted by as many post-16 providers as possible, to encourage the students to consider a range of options next year, however it is now their responsibility to visit providers and complete their applications at home, with support from the school.

Open Events

Colleges will typically have several open days and evenings throughout the year, whereas sixth forms only have one open evening. We would strongly recommend attending as many open events as possible to get a feel for the places in person and to help your child to make the right decision for them.

The dates for open events are publicised on providers' websites. Many require pre-booking in advance and can fill up quickly.

Some of the upcoming events are:

- **Cirencester College** – Saturday 19th October, Saturday 15th March, Thursday 26th June.
Apprenticeship Evening and High Achievers Academy Evening TBA.
- **Stroud College & Berkeley Green UTC** – Saturday 12th October, Saturday 23rd November, Saturday 25th January, Thursday 1st May
- **Hartpury College** – Saturday 21st September (fully booked), Saturday 12th October, Saturday 16th November, Saturday 7th December
- **Gloucestershire College** – Saturday 9th November (Gloucester), Monday 11th November (Gloucester), Monday 18th November (Cheltenham), Monday 20th January (Gloucester), Wednesday 29th January (Cheltenham), Wednesday 26th February (Gloucester Apprenticeships), Monday 12th May (Gloucester)
- **Archway School** – Tuesday 12th November
- **Marling School** – Thursday 21st November
- **Stroud High School** – Wednesday 22nd January
- **Pate's Grammar School** – TBA

There are many other options students could consider, including both grammar and non-selective school sixth forms in Gloucester and Cheltenham, and specialist providers such as drama/music schools or military colleges. There are also scholarships available at sixth forms in the private sector, such as Westonbirt, Wycliffe or St Edward's. For information on open events or the application process for these providers, please check their websites for information.

If you are unable to attend an open event, many providers have virtual tours on their websites, or you can contact the provider directly to discuss if an alternative visit can be arranged.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are promoted via <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>, on college websites (Cirencester, Stroud and Gloucestershire Colleges all offer apprenticeships) or directly via employers. Vacancies are often advertised from spring onwards for school leavers. We would recommend that students still apply for a place at college/sixth form in case they are not able to get an apprenticeship for September, and if they do not secure an apprenticeship for the autumn term, they can still continue applying for apprenticeship vacancies after starting a post-16 course.

Apprenticeships are highly desirable and often have many applicants for a single position, so it is important students make their applications detailed, show their passion for the industry, and proofread. Mrs Farrow (our careers adviser) and I are more than happy to assist students with applications.

Application Deadlines

Applications open from late September/early October for most colleges. We recommend applications are completed before the end of February, unless the provider stipulates otherwise (for example, Hartpury College prefer applications by the end of December). Some colleges will close applications for high-demand courses if they receive a large number of applications so applying early is advised.

Sixth forms usually open their applications following their open evenings, and their application windows are only open for a short time of around 4-6 weeks. This is typically between the end of November and late January, and they do not accept late applications.

Students can apply for multiple options if they are unsure, then decide where to go, or which courses to take, after receiving their GCSE results. Please ensure you check the entry criteria for the courses your child is applying for, as this can vary by provider even if it is the same course. After applying, students will likely be offered an interview, and this may be face-to-face, virtual or telephone depending on the provider. We ask students to regularly check their voicemails and email accounts after applying, to ensure they don't miss communications from the providers they have applied to.

Taster Days

Students were offered taster days at Cirencester College or Stroud College last term, and we hope this was helpful with their decision making. We hope to offer an alternative taster day at Gloucestershire College for the few students affected by the cancellation of courses at Stroud College for their taster day, and we will let these students know as soon as we have further information.

Marling Sixth Form typically offer a Discovery Day for their applicants on a Saturday in February, this is a weekend taster day, with details provided at their open evening. Students who are interested in this taster day will need to have applied to Marling Sixth Form and book a place directly with Marling School.

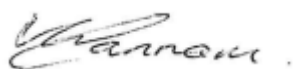
Support

Mrs Farrow, our careers adviser, has met many students in the summer term and will meet all Year 11 students at least twice throughout the year for individual careers guidance meetings. Details of these meetings are recorded on each student's Unifrog account where she may also send them web links to look at and support their decision making. Should students need further support beyond these meetings, help with applications, references, support for interviews or anything else relating to their next steps, they are welcome to ask me or Mrs Farrow, either via email or by dropping in to the careers office on Tuesdays at break or lunchtime.

Colleges and sixth forms are also able to provide support and advice to potential students. For example, students may disregard some options as they are concerned about travelling to a provider further afield. Most providers offer bus services, and these are often subsidised or there may be bursaries available. Please do contact providers to confirm what they can offer and to ask any questions.

I hope this information has helped, however if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Miss V Cannam
Careers Lead

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