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Starting College

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Advice sheet for students

Starting college is exciting but you may also be worried because it is a new experience.

It may help if you work out what you are going to do before you start. Lots of students tell us that the most difficult times for them in college is when they are not in 'lessons' or have unstructured time.

So we have put together some tips that you may find helpful.

Remember to use your Action Plan/Check List to help you to know:

- **Where to go**
- **Who can help**
- **What you will need**

Students have told us that what has helped them is:

- Having information that can help them plan and know what they are meant to do.
- Having time before and after 'lessons' to discuss what has happened that day and any concerns or worries they might have with the work or the lesson.
- Having time to process information and being able to ask if they are not sure. It will help if you know who to ask if you are not sure about something.
- The college being flexible around break times so that they can go to the canteen or take breaks at quieter times. If this is worrying you, speak to your Tutor or Mentor.
- Having a '**safe space**' to:
 - Chill out
 - Eat lunch
 - Go to if it is too noisy or bright
 - Go to when they are not in 'lessons'. This will help students to know exactly what they are going to do all day.
 - Meet up with other students around common interests.
 - Work on their own.

Appendix 1 – Student Action Plan /Check List

Student action plan /check list for college

Moving from school to college can be daunting, however in this guide you will find information and questions to help you get prepared for college. The action plan/check list is split into 3 sections; 'Before starting college', 'During college' and 'After college'. Answer the questions and fill in the activities, when you get to college. Make sure the staff have gone through this action plan/check list with you to make sure you get all the help you need.

This action plan/check list can go with the other paperwork you might have to take to college, or you might get from college.

Before starting college

What course to pick?

Choosing a course can be difficult, however, things that you should consider include;

What do you enjoy doing? *Answer in the box*

Tick the box if the answer is 'yes'

Is there a course which includes this?

Tick the box if the answer is 'yes'

Have you got the right qualifications to get onto the course?.....

What job would you like to do in the future? *Answer in the box*

Tick the box if the answer is 'yes'

Does the course you want to do help you towards doing the job you would like to do?.....

If you have ticked each of the boxes, the course you're looking at is probably right for you.

What college to pick?

Sometimes there might be more than one college that does the course you want to do, it's worth going to visit each of the colleges you might go to.

Try considering the following questions when deciding which college to go to;

How far are you happy to travel? It might be easier for some people to keep travel time short and so choose the college closest to their home, however you may feel comfortable with travelling further.

Tick the box for the travel time you're comfortable with

I don't want to travel very far, between 1-20 minutes
between home and the college

I don't mind travelling a little bit, between 21-40 minutes
between home and college

I don't mind travelling for longer, 40 minutes or longer
between home and college

Circle your answer to this question

Do you like the college building?

You will be spending a lot of time in the college building , so try and pick the college you are most comfortable in YES or NO

Circle your answer to this question

Do you like the lecturers?

If you get a chance to meet the lecturers in open days, it's worth choosing a college where you get along with the lecturers YES or NO

Circle your answer to this question

Can the college support services meet the needs of your condition?

We all need help sometimes, so it is worth considering whether you like the student support services YES or NO

Try to find a college that is within the travel time you prefer, and that you can answer yes to the questions.

How do I prepare for college?

Once you've found a course and picked a college it's time to start preparing for the start of term.

Have you got all of your kit? *Tick the box when you have the items*

Laptop	
Pens, pencils, rubbers, ruler, sharpener.	
Pencil case	
Bag	
Any textbooks suggested by the college	

If you aren't sure what you need to get before starting college, contact the person handling your admission and ask what you need to bring.

Sometimes you might need to do some reading relevant to your course before the start of term.

Tick the box if the answer is yes

Have you asked the college if you need to do any reading to prepare for your course?

If there is reading you need to do before starting college, have you done the reading??

Getting used to the college building can be difficult, but you can ask if you can visit the college more than once before term if that would help you.

Circle your answer to this question

Would you like to visit the college building before the start of term? YES or NO

Circle your answer to this question

Do you know how to arrange visiting the training provider and/or workplace before you start? YES or NO

If the answer is NO, ring or email the college and ask how you can arrange this.

Circle your answer to this question

Have you visited the college and feel comfortable with the building? YES or NO

Make sure you know how you are going to get to and from college.

Circle your answer to this question

Which of these are you getting to college by :

- College bus
- Car
- Public transport (trains or buses for example)
- Special transport

Answer in the box

What time do you have to leave in the morning?

How long will it take to get to college?

What time do you leave college in the afternoon?

How long will it take to get home?

Planning your new routine

It can be helpful to know what your routine will be when you're in training/work before you start. To prepare for the new routine you will be following during training/work, you might want to start following a similar routine for a few weeks before you start.

Fill in this general routine timetable to help you plan the structure of your day. This timetable doesn't include your lessons only the basic daily routine.

Activity	Time
Wake up	
Leave the house	
Start travelling to college	
College starts	
Lunchtime	
College ends	
Start travelling home	
Arrive home	
Go to sleep	