

# Waddesdon Sixth Form



## Parent/Carer Guide to Post 18 Applications 2023/2024

June 2023

Dear Year 12 Parents/Carers,

We have put together resources in this booklet which we know that families have found very useful in the past to support with exploring post 18 options and applications.

We know that students are in different situations; some students have a firm view of what they want to do after Year 13, others are weighing up options, and a number still aren't yet sure of their goals, which is perfectly normal.

We understand that students can find the prospect of their post 18 options exciting as well as daunting and thus support and encouragement from school and home is vital in helping students to make informed and realistic decisions about their futures.

Students have recently heard presentations in school about university, degree/higher apprenticeships and gap years. All students have access to personal Unifrog accounts, an excellent careers platform to support them with research, up-to-date labour market information, and writing Personal Statements among other things. We have posted further resources on ClassCharts to enable them to complete guided research into their preferred options. This term, we will be delivering sessions on Personal Statements and Student Finance as well as workshops on registering for UCAS, Oxbridge and CV writing for apprenticeships.

Mrs Bridges, our Careers Advisor, is available for careers appointments during Study Periods throughout Sixth Form, in her office at the back of the school library.

We hope you find this booklet useful in guiding you through the post 18 options and applications process as a family as well as the support available at Waddesdon.

If you have any further questions or require more information, please do not hesitate to contact us at school.

Yours sincerely,

Ms McIver  
Head of Sixth Form

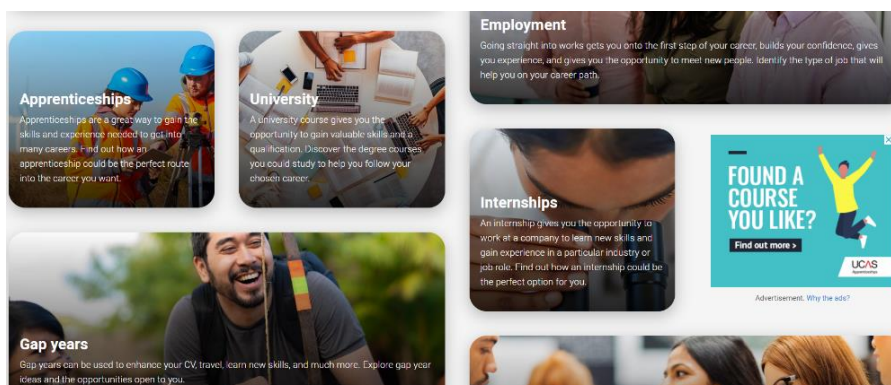
Mrs McKenzie  
Head of Year 12

Miss Hay  
Student Support Officer

## Possible Post 18 Pathways with A level or Equivalent Qualifications

Once students have completed their A levels, there are several main pathways open to them:

- 1) **University/College** -  
pages 4 & 5
- 2) Degree or Higher  
**Apprenticeship** -  
page 6
- 3) **Employment** - page 7
- 4) **Gap Year** - page 8



A well written **Personal Statement** is vital for successful post 18 applications, be it to use to apply to university or to form the basis of a letter of application. There is advice for how to support at home with this on pages 9 to 11.

There are some excellent websites from which students can do their initial research to find out what pathways are open to whatever career or direction they have in mind:

<https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

unifrog

If students aren't sure what they want to do yet, completing an online assessment of their interests and skills can be a useful starting point, which then generates some careers ideas. The school subscribes to 'Unifrog', which can be accessed here:

<https://www.unifrog.org/>

If students have a particular career in mind, sometimes university is the only route for entry, for example, medicine. However, for some careers, for example, in business, students may want to apply to university to read for a business degree and apply to a degree/higher apprenticeship or School Leaver Programme in a company to earn while they learn. For other careers, for example, accountancy or engineering, again, it might be appropriate to apply to read for a university degree, as well as applying for a higher or degree apprenticeship.

If students are unsure about what they want to do in the future, it is advisable for students to take a Gap Year to think through their options and gain some work experience. This is becoming a more common option now, with the rise in university tuition fees. If a student is thinking about going straight into employment, they should check what opportunities there are for training and progression within the company.

## 1) University/College

Most students will decide to continue their education by applying to university (higher education) or college (further education), choosing courses stemming from their interests or for qualifications required for a particular career path. Students complete their applications through the UCAS system, where they enter their personal, academic and course details as well as their Personal Statement. The school also completes an academic reference for each student, outlining their suitability for higher/further education. To apply for UK Performing Arts Conservatoires, students complete their applications through UCAS Conservatoires. For certain college courses, for example, Foundation Art, students need to apply to the individual institutions. Students also need to apply to Student Finance England to ensure they have sufficient funds for starting their courses the following September.



For an introductory explanation about the benefits of university, please watch this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwdWeghXjTc>

For advice on how to choose a degree course, please watch this:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/how-choose-right-undergraduate-course-you>

### Research:

The best place to start researching universities and their entry requirements is by completing a Course Search on the UCAS website: <https://digital.ucas.com/search>. The entire of the application process is explained here and there is a good section for parents at [www.ucas.com/parents](http://www.ucas.com/parents)

You can then go to individual university websites for further information about the course, the university, teaching, accommodation and so on. It is a good idea to go on open days once your son/daughter has narrowed down their choices: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/coronavirus-covid-19/attend-virtual-open-day>. A full list of university open days can be found at: [www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com)

Students can apply to a maximum of 5 degree courses. We would recommend they select 3 based on their predicted grades (including perhaps one aspiration choice) and 2 which are a grade/2 grades lower as insurance choices.

Certain courses also require students to sit admissions tests which can be organised through the school's exam office: [www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests)

If students are interested in applying to Oxbridge, the following is a useful starting point: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/videos>

### Student Finance:

Students also need to research Student Finance, university tuition fees and loans to ensure they are aware of the financial implications of going to university. Lots of information and the Student Finance application form can be found at: <https://www.ucas.com/student-finance-england/student-finance-guidance-parents-and-partners>. There are also lots of bursaries and scholarships available at: <http://www.thescholarshipclub.org.uk/>



We highly recommend the resources from Martin Lewis found here: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-england-plan-5/>



## UCAS Application Stages and Deadlines

**Summer Term:** building on presentations from experts in Extension Studies earlier in the year, students will complete research, undertake super-curricular activities and start drafting their Personal Statements. Explanation of Predicted Grades delivered in assembly.

**Before the summer holidays 2023:** first draft of Personal Statement handed in and registration for UCAS

**September-October 2023:**

- Confirmation of final predicted grades in each subject
- Registration for Admissions Tests if needed

**September to December 2023:** one to one support at school for the re-drafting and refining of Personal Statements; Admissions Tests if needed; interview workshops

**15<sup>th</sup> October 2023:** UCAS deadline for Oxbridge, Vet, Medicine and Dentistry courses as well as some Music Conservatoire courses

**Mid December 2023:** internal school deadline for the sending off UCAS applications

**25<sup>th</sup> January 2024:** Official UCAS deadline for most courses

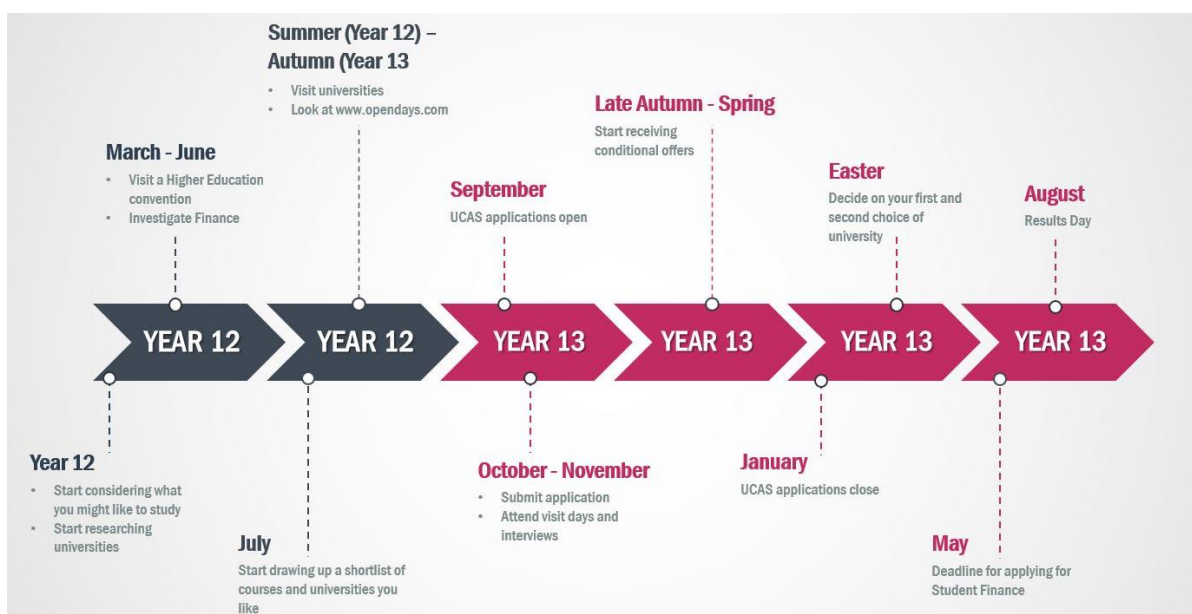
**February 2024:** Applying for Student Finance presentation in assembly

**From sending off the application to April 2024:** Students receive offers and rejections through UCAS Track. Students may be invited to interview – assembly and one-to-one school support is available

**By the beginning of May 2024:** Students need to decide on their Firm and Insurance Offers and input their decision onto UCAS Track; students may also start applying for accommodation

**Mid May 2024:** Deadline for Student Finance, if students want their fees/loans/grants for the start of their courses in the Autumn

**August 2024:** A level Results and confirmation of places through UCAS Hub Track account. UCAS Clearing (if a student does better than expected or misses the grades for their offers so does not hold a university place)



## 2) Higher or Degree Apprenticeships

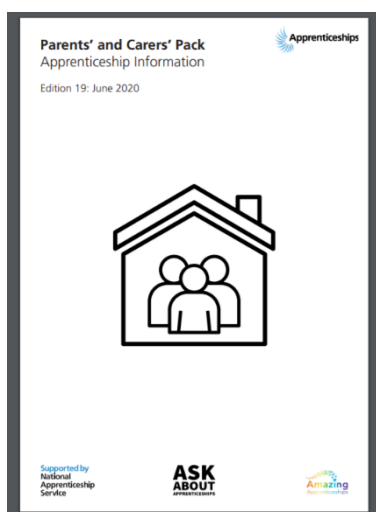
Students can also apply for employment-based training and qualifications. Many businesses now offer degree or higher apprenticeships where apprentices are taken on as employees, earning a wage and working alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills. During this time, apprentices receive training to work towards nationally recognised qualifications, usually on a day release basis at a local college or university; employers pay for apprentices to complete Foundation or Undergraduate Degrees.

Please watch this introduction from top recruiters delivered by the Financial Times:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDnb9wWhPqE>



Students can apply for apprenticeships by registering online with the government's apprenticeship website. Well-known companies, such as BMW, Nielsen and the National Grid, give full details of their apprenticeships on their websites and many local companies also have openings which they advertise in the local press. Students can also take the initiative and approach employers with their CVs. With A level qualifications, students should apply for Higher or Degree Apprenticeships over Advanced Apprenticeships which normally require GCSEs for entry.



The main apprenticeships website is: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>. Students can search and apply there.

There are useful parents' sections at:

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/parents/> or  
<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/parents/their-career>.



Full details about these opportunities are available on individual company websites. Some examples are included below:

KPMG:

<https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/school-leavers>

Deloitte: <http://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/careers/school-leavers.html>

Civil Service: <https://www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/apprenticeships/>

# VACANCY SNAPSHOT

Click on the logos below to see a snapshot of apprenticeship vacancies coming up soon

**SORT EMPLOYERS**

Employer Name











### 3) Employment

Entering straight into employment is another option for students. Students can research employment opportunities by looking at local companies or large organisations that have several locations around the country. The following list shows the different sectors that offer employment straight after A levels:

- Banking, insurance and financial services
- Large retailers and supermarkets
- Health, scientific and technical careers
- Careers in the emergency and uniformed services
- Creative and media
- Information technology
- Construction and the built environment
- Engineering
- Public sector
- Hospitality, travel and leisure
- Care

Before embarking on a job finding mission, students need to think about the skills and knowledge that they can gain from this route. Do they offer training to match their skill set and are there opportunities to become promoted and/or work in other departments?

Is the student currently working somewhere part-time and now has the opportunity to work full-time? Students can speak to their Manager to find out what the possibilities are to become a full-time, permanent member of staff.

Students can also research company websites, local and national newspapers and general employment websites to find the vacancies that are available. An idea of the local labour market will also help to identify the main companies in the area.

Finally, students must not be shy! As a family, if you have contacts with a company, the student can be pro-active and approach the company directly.

Explore for <https://uk.indeed.com/> general employment opportunities and local labour market information. Also explore: <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors>

Companies looking for A level students often attend recruitment fairs in local areas. Local newspapers and company websites will provide the information regarding these events. Any opportunities we are sent as a school will be advertised in assembly.

Some good websites for writing a CV can be found at: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections> or <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/cv-templates-and-tips/>. Interview technique tips can be found at: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice>.

The Barclays Life Skills Hub has some excellent resources for students and families: <https://barclayslifeskills.com/families/>

I am at sixth form and I want...

- I want to build my confidence and be more assertive
- I want to choose my next step
- I want to develop my skills for work
- I want to gain experience and build my network
- I want to get to grips with money and my payslip
- I want to use my online presence to get ahead
- I want to prepare for an interview
- I want to succeed in the workplace
- I want help applying for jobs
- I want an insight into how the world of work is changing

Listening and problem solving can be essential in the workplace. Our campaign shows how these skills can be vital in various situations. See more information on how you can master other key skills with LifeSkills.

#### 4) GAP Year

Some students decide to take a GAP Year to give themselves an opportunity to develop their experiences before continuing their education or entering employment and to give themselves more time to consider their future.

If a student decides to take a GAP Year before university, there are two options:

- 1) Deferred entry: the UCAS application is completed during Year 13 for a start after the GAP Year
- 2) A UCAS application completed after the student has their A level results during the GAP Year with support from school. Students need to phone school to make an appointment.

Most students carefully plan their GAP Year to make the most of it, completing a mixture of work experience, voluntary work, employment and foreign projects/travel to broaden their horizons. Some students complete 'A Year in Industry' to give them paid experience of the workplace before they return to their studies. What is most important is that students plan their year carefully as well as consider their budgeting to get the most from it.

To begin planning their GAP Years, there is useful information here:

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/gap-year/gap-years-ideas-and-things-think-about>

Other useful websites include:

[www.yearoutgroup.org](http://www.yearoutgroup.org)

<https://www.gvi.co.uk/>

Camp America: <https://www.campamerica.co.uk/>

International Citizenship Service (like NCS and very cost effective):

<http://www.volunteerics.org/>

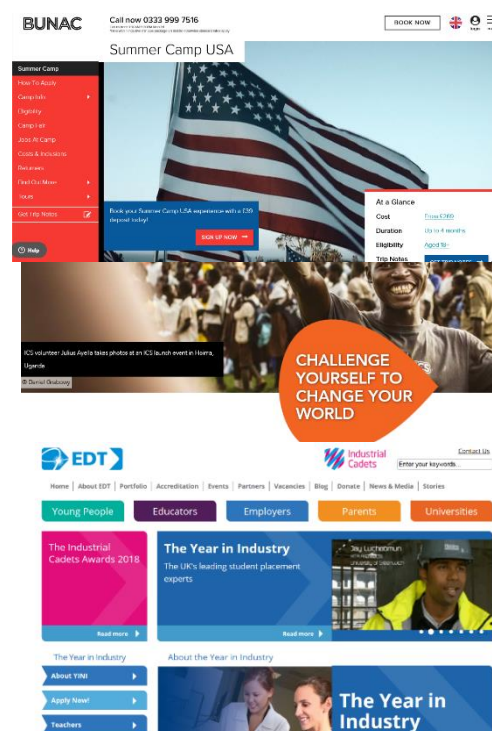
Volunteering opportunities: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/gap-year-travel/gap-year-100-companydirectoryvolunteering/>

Year in Industry: [www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry](http://www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry)

Ski season: <https://www.oysterworldwide.com/projects/ski-season/>

Working abroad: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/gap-year-travel/gap-year-100-companydirectoryworkingabroad/>

Project Trust: <https://projecttrust.org.uk/>



As you will see, there are a lot of Gap Year companies; we recommend using long standing organisations and completing careful research into the company before signing up.

**Please note: All information in this booklet was correct at time of printing. Entry requirements and information about post 18 options changes frequently. Although we recommend the websites above, we cannot guarantee every aspect of their content is accurate.**



## Supporting with a Personal Statement at home

Students can find writing their Personal Statements difficult because they do not like writing about themselves and their skills and talents. They also tend to write about all the things they have done without making their experiences relevant to the course they are applying for. Key is ensuring at least 70-80% of the Personal Statement demonstrates a keen interest for the course/role they are applying for and the remaining 20-30% focuses on their extra-curricular activities and other interests.

**If your son/daughter is having trouble getting started, brainstorming answers to the following questions can begin to generate ideas:**

- Why are you enthusiastic about the course/role/job you are applying for?
- What triggered your interest? What is the background to your interest?
- Have you completed any relevant work/voluntary experience in the area and what did you learn from it?
- What particular interests have you from your A level studies and how have these helped you to decide on your course?
- What evidence of wider reading, learning or experience beyond the syllabus can you produce?
- What super/extra-curricular activities are you involved in?
- How else do you contribute to your school/local community?
- What other achievements/successes have you had?
- What skills have all of these helped you to develop?

**Key to reinforce with your son/daughter is:**

- ENTHUSIASM for the course/role/job!
- Don't just tell – SHOW/DEMONSTRATE/GIVE EXAMPLES
- Keep to the word limit (4000 characters including spaces) and do not plagiarise

**Outline structure:**

<b>'Hook' – engaging introduction about why you want to do the course/apprenticeship/role/job</b>
<b>Demonstration of keen interest for the course/role/job (70%)</b>  (how A levels link in, work/voluntary experience, wider reading/learning, trips/visits, super-curricular activities)
<b>Other extra-curricular activities and skills (30%)</b>  (other interests/hobbies/achievements/part-time job/responsibilities)
<b>Concluding comment</b>

**For more information, see lots of examples on Unifrog or :**

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement>

## EXAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENT: MEDICINE

Imagine having a conversation with someone whilst they operate on your brain. This is what I watched, transfixed, on a documentary when I was eleven years old. Throughout the procedure, the patient was asked questions to ensure his communication was not damaged, giving the surgeon the boldness to proceed without removing vital components of the brain. With a passion for science, medicine was always a natural choice for me, but it was this experience which confirmed in me an ambition to also become a neurosurgeon. Last year my closest friend developed idiopathic epilepsy. Frightened and concerned I sought to understand how this could suddenly happen. Whilst on a work experience, I visited the Clinical Neurophysiology department at the John Radcliffe Hospital and observed several EEGs. I was amazed by how each patient was so entirely different, a puzzle to be solved using extensive knowledge gained from a lifetime of learning. I know I can be the one responsible for making these life-saving decisions.

Spending time in a GP's surgery gave me the opportunity to ask questions of the doctors and to witness the routine of the more familiar face of our health care system. I was intrigued by the different way in which each doctor communicated with their patients. Those with a good sense of humour, used appropriately, seem to connect and empathise well. Being involved with an ambulance service for several days also gave me an insight into the need for urgency and quick decision-making. A week on a geriatrics ward in local hospital taught me some unglamorous realities of healthcare. Whilst aiding nurses in giving bed baths and helping patients to use the toilet, I was struck by the vulnerability of the very elderly and how it is our duty to protect their dignity as they become more dependent on others. This is increasingly important as the ageing population grows.

Since starting Sixth Form, I have volunteered at my local community hospital, once a week. After a tiring day at school, I am sometimes reluctant to go, but without exception I always leave with a sense of achievement, and it continues to be as fulfilling as the first day. Unable to do much more than make cups of tea, it is still uplifting to simply provide company to an elderly patient who may be feeling lonely or depressed. It is difficult to know how much help I am, but I have learnt the importance of commitment and the significance of dedicating my time to each patient separately, seeing each person as an individual, not just a hospital bed.

I play the oboe and the piano and have taken part in various orchestras including the County Youth Orchestra. Both instruments require a high level of manual dexterity. Tours across Europe have heightened my attraction towards travelling and experiencing different cultures. As well as enjoying music the experiences have improved my ability to work in a team both as a leader, for example taking the role of section principal, and follower. I also teach piano to young children which is rewarding yet has taught me the importance of patience and communication. At school I have participated in dramatic productions, student council and am a prefect at Sixth Form. My study of art enables me to express my creativity and has developed my research skills. I particularly enjoy photography, and find printing my photos in the darkroom helps me unwind from my busy life, as does using a treadmill.

The neurosurgeon who first inspired me so much was Henry Marsh. Though one of the most highly commended surgeons in the country, he spends his time attempting to improve the medical system in Ukraine. Henry does not charge patients for consultations; he goes out of his way to help people in need. As a Christian and with my determination, stamina and ability to take on what seems an impossible challenge, I hope to become an altruistic doctor like him, as in his words: "What are we if we don't try to help others? We are nothing - nothing at all."

## EXAMPLE PERSONAL STATEMENT: ENGLISH

"Literature is a luxury; fiction is a necessity." I heard this quotation, attributed to GK Chesterton, at 16 whilst volunteering in Ghana. English, to me, is more than just a subject, it is a passion. I firmly believe it can make a difference to people; telling stories matters. It fascinates me to see the way narrative affects people and societies. Searching works of literature and attempting to understand what evoked the emotions behind the text, and seeing the links between these and the cultural and political undercurrents of the time, greatly appeals to my inquisitive nature.

I study English, Biology and French at A-level and each of these has widened my knowledge of literature, linguistics and the world in general. French has enabled me to discover some of the origins of English and also the different colloquialisms used. Biology has widened my knowledge of Latin, which I studied at GCSE, and has given me the scientific methodology to develop a logical approach to problem solving. However, my A-level studies of English Literature have been the most absorbing. My favourite part of the course has been Love Through the Ages, as I have been able to challenge myself to read around the texts. For example, it has allowed me to read "Wide Sargasso Sea", a novel I discovered after reading "Jane Eyre". I was intrigued to see how the character of Mr Rochester was subtly different in the two novels, possibly reflecting the time in which they were written. This is an aspect of literature I love, finding novels to enjoy which stem from others. At Degree Level, I am looking forward to being able to widen my knowledge of different types of literature. As an eclectic reader I enjoy the classics, my favourite being "The Great Gatsby", as well as more recent works; I am currently reading "A Spot of Bother" by Mark Haddon. I aim to read more novels from what is known by F Scott Fitzgerald as "The Jazz Age".

Volunteering is important to me, my dedication stemming from my time in Ghana. The children there were so unbelievably thankful to receive books that we in the UK take for granted. It made me realise just how important the written word is. I have volunteered for Christian Aid, Open Doors, campaigning, collecting money, and working as a barista. Through this work I have experienced new challenges and developed my organisational and time management skills. My favourite voluntary work has been with the Greenbelt Festival, working in the backstage area looking after artists like Billy Bragg and Beverley Knight. From this I have learnt professionalism and reliability and been privileged to meet people who are passionate about their work. Like them, I would like to make a difference in the world through my work and intend emulate this quality by working hard and having a mission in life. After reading for an English degree, I am considering studying Law or International Development in order to "be the change I want to see."

I believe I am a well-rounded individual and work part time at Boots the Chemists, as well as taking singing lessons from an inspirational teacher. When I sing I find relaxation despite the technicalities of the songs; I am currently studying for my Grade 7 exam. I take part in a number of theatre groups and have played lead roles in both school and amateur dramatics productions. I have learnt that beauty and art in music, like literature, can make a difference in the world. I have travelled independently and enjoy the challenge of this as well as holidays with my family.

I am very much looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that studying at university will give me; it is, for me, a time to indulge my love for English and give myself time to develop and grow in a subject I am passionate about.

### Overview of Support in School

YEAR 12	
Autumn Term	Introduction to post-18 pathways, labour market information and initial advice Introduction to Unifrog
Spring Term	University Presentation – benefits of a university education and advice for choosing your degree course
	Presentation about Degree Apprenticeships – benefits of a degree apprenticeship, the opportunities available and how to apply
	Gap Year presentation – advantages of taking a Gap Year and an introduction to the many opportunities on offer
	Opportunities advertised daily in form time/assembly (virtual and in person)
	Guided independent research through recommended websites
	Waddesdon CE School Careers Fair
May half term	Super-Curricular MOOC Challenge
Summer Term	Presentation on Personal Statements, with time to start drafting Presentation on Student Finance Workshop to register for UCAS and start applications (no decisions need to be made about courses or universities at this point) Oxbridge workshop Workshop on CV writing for apprenticeship and employment applications Work Experience
End of Year 12	Students submit first draft of Personal Statement via Unifrog
YEAR 13	
Beginning of September	Feedback on personal statement from the Sixth Form Team via Unifrog
September to October	Confirmation of predicted grades
September to November	One to one support with personal statements (drafting and redrafting)
October to December	One to one support with checking of application forms and submission to UCAS
December	Presentation on how to make the best impression at interview with one-to-one support as necessary
January to April	Workshops on Higher and Degree Apprenticeships and Gap Years with one-to-one support on advice and applications; Gap Year workshop
February	Student Finance Presentation in assembly Waddesdon CE School Careers Fair
April	Assembly on Firm and Insurance choices with advice on Adjustment and Clearing Assemblies on living independently and financial wellbeing.

**Mrs Bridges, our Careers Advisor, is available for careers appointments during Study Periods throughout Sixth Form, in her office at the back of the school library.**