

**Applying to College using**

 **Kent Choices**

***Useful tips on what to do, what will happen and when to ask for help***

**November 2024**

**Starting your Application**

1. Use Kent Choices. **Do not apply directly on the college websites**. TRS can help and support you if you use Kent Choices as the school also uses Kent Choices. This means the school can change your password if you forget it, help with your applications, see when your college interviews are to help remind you and generally assist with any queries from the colleges.

Also with Kent Choices you only need to fill in the information once to apply to more than one college, or more than one course.
2. If you forget your username or password the school can reset it for you. Simply email Bethan Liston on b.liston@trs.kent.sch.uk and ask her to do it for you.
3. Kent Choices will ask you for one parent contact information. This means your home address and telephone number, parent mobile number and parent email address. It will also want your personal mobile number although, it is hardly ever used by the colleges. Please have this information with you when you start your application as it won’t let you save your Personal Details section without it.
4. The colleges communicate mostly via email. Very rarely do they ring or send texts. This means that you MUST use an email address on Kent Choices that you use and check regularly. Some students use their mum/Dad’s emails as they know they check them more. If you don’t check your emails you could end up missing your interview.

**Work Experience**

1. There is a section to complete on work experience. This is important as this shows you have committed to doing something where you have had to turn up, on time and complete whatever task you have been given. Even if you think you haven’t had any work experience you might have something you can include. Baby-sitting is work experience, walking a neighbour’s dog, car washing or doing someone’s garden for them, helping out family with a job they’ve taken on e.g. Dad helps out at football and has asked you to help him. All of these demonstrate the skills the college is looking for in addition to conventional work experience.

Don’t forget working at Bulunga café if you have done it and include detail. Serving customers, making drinks using the Barista machine, tidying up, taking payments etc.

**Personal Statement**

1. When writing your personal statement, remember what the college tutor wants to know when they read it. They want to know that:
2. You are interested in their subject and are excited to study it. This means you will be motivated to study and work hard.
3. Did you go to an open day and speak to the tutors to find out more about the course before applying for it? This shows you did some research and are not making an uninformed choice (see note 10. below).
4. You will turn up to college on the days you are in. Evidence somehow that you are reliable and punctual, such as via a work experience placement.
5. You will complete the course; drop outs reflect badly on the course. Again, use something like a work experience placement or a hobby to evidence that you are trustworthy and committed.
6. You will try your hardest to get the best grade you can. Have you done something that you tried your hardest with and was proud of the results?
7. What you want to do after the course; what are your future plans? They want to see that studying this course is the right choice for your career plans.
8. Be honest if you don’t know your future plans. Say something like “I have chosen Health and Social Care because I really want to have a career helping people but I am not totally sure in what role this will be. I am hoping my time at college will help me with this decision”.

**Application Questions**

1. There is a section on health and you will be asked if you have any medical disability, learning difficulty or other health problem. This is to help the college determine whether you will need support from them and is not used as a reason to not offer you a place. It is best to be honest and tick the boxes you think apply.
2. You will be asked to preference your course choices and it goes to say that putting a course lower down your list will show the tutor that it’s probably a back-up plan, rather than a serious choice. This might affect whether you get an offer. Some colleges will offer a guidance interview first if you apply for too many courses across a range of subjects; this is to help you narrow down your applications. At least one college will not accept more than two applications.
3. You will also be asked to say why you are applying for the courses you have chosen. If you have included a full explanation in your personal statement, simply say something like “I have chosen Public Services because I want to become a Police Officer”.

**Open Days/Course choices**

1. All colleges offer Open Days for you to go along and see what the college is like and to talk to the tutors of the subject areas you are interested in. It is normally recommended that you attend **Open Days and they start in October/November**. You have to be careful with Open Days as they can be very busy and overwhelming and it is not a good example of what the college is like normally. Also, some departments do big presentations which throw a lot of information at you all at once which you can never remember. The last thing you want is to be put off college by an Open Day so if you think it will be too much please speak to or email Bethan Liston.
2. Some courses fill up quicker than others so it is always best to **get your applications in before Christmas** if you can. Construction/engineering/mechanics based courses are always very popular and so are A levels at college. Most college courses are hugely oversubscribed and are generally full by January with the college running on a waiting list after then.
3. When choosing a college course, all courses have entry requirements. These requirements decide which level course you can apply for so you need to know your predicted exam grades. You will normally use the grades you get from your mock exams. If you don’t have grades because you didn’t sit any mock exams at TRS then speak to or email Bethan Liston who will ask your teachers. As a general rule, these are the entry requirements for each course level:

**Entry Level 2** – No GCSEs

**Entry Level 3** – One GCSE at grade 1

**Level 1** - A minimum of four GCSEs at grade 2 or above, including English or maths.

**Level 2** – A minimum of four GCSEs at grade 3 or above, including English or maths at grade 3 or above.

**Level 3 and T/A Levels** – A minimum of 5 GCSEs grade 4 and above including English and Maths at grade 4. With A Levels they might want a grade 5 in the subject you have chosen or an affiliated subject. For example, Psychology A level might want Science grade 5.

If you think you might be between levels, it is generally better to apply for the higher level. This is particularly important between levels 2 and 3. Level 3 is a two year course and Level 2 a one year course. If you do Level 2 first, you will in effect be studying for three years to get to the same point as only studying the two year Level 3 course.

If you don’t get the GCSEs you need the college will normally offer you a place on the lower level course when you go along on enrolment day.

**The Interview Process**

1. Some colleges send out a pre-interview task. This could either be via a link to their website for you to do in advance of your interview or, it could be a task to be done and taken along to the interview. Some colleges insist the task is handwritten. However the task is to be done the college will generally tell you about it via an email, normally when they confirm the interview date.
2. Quite often the college asks you to bring along your predicted GCSE grades and your attendance record to interview. This is quite normal. If you get this request please speak to or email Bethan Liston who will produce a letter for you.

Sometimes the college will ask for a report from the school of your behaviour record and general attitude to learning. Again, this is nothing to worry about as it is simply a reference and you should speak to or email Bethan Liston who will send this over for you.
3. If you are applying for a creative course, such as Art, it is normal for you to be asked to bring a portfolio of your work along to interview. They will tell you in your interview email if you need to do this.
4. Sport and Public Services courses generally have an assessment day where you take part in physical activities along with other applicants for the course. You will be asked to take along clothing and shoes to change into for the physical activities.
5. All of the college contact will be recorded on your Kent Choices account under Messages. So, as well as checking your emails also check in on your Kent Choices account, especially if you’re waiting for something, such as your interview date.

You can message the college back on Kent Choices, for example if you can’t make an interview date and want to rearrange.
6. Don’t just not turn up for your interview or assessment day because you’re worried or anxious. This looks bad as it makes the college think you are unreliable. Instead speak to either Miss Bennett or Bethan Liston and tell them why you don’t think you can go. They will speak to college and try and make things easier for you and rearrange a special visit if that would be more suitable. Remember, if you’re worried get help, don’t just ignore it.
7. When you have your interview the college should tell you on the day if they are going to offer you a place. That offer will be ‘conditional’ whilst they wait to get your GCSE results. Some colleges might ask you to attend for a taster day first on courses such as hairdressing.

**Getting an Offer**

1. Occasionally the college will ask the school to confirm your attendance record and attitude to work at school before making an offer. Please remember this is a possibility.
2. Once you have your offer you might have to accept it within Kent Choices so check your messages. Not all colleges do this but check anyway otherwise you might lose your offer.
3. Once you have you offer and accepted it, nothing then happens until you get your exam results. On results day or immediately afterwards, go to the college with your results slip. This is called enrolment. The college will look at your results and confirm your place on the course.

If your results are not what you were expecting, good or bad, the college will move you onto the course that is right for the results you have.

If you want to change courses you can also talk to the college about it on enrolment day. They will check if they have spaces and see if a move is possible.
4. At this point you should be congratulating yourself. You certainly deserve it. Your new life starts here and you made it happen; well done and enjoy it.

***Good luck*** Bethan Liston: Bethan@trs.kent.sch.uk