

Going on to college is an exciting time. It can feel like a big decision, so it is important to try and visit any colleges that you are interested in. Here are some tips to help you prepare for visiting colleges.

Most young people with SEN will go to a local further education or sixth form college to continue with their education after year 11. Information about local colleges is published on the Local Offer.

If you decide that you want to go to college, it is important that you discuss this with your parents or carers so that they can support you in your decision and plans. It would also be a good idea to discuss it with your teacher or careers advisor at school.

Start by making a list of which colleges you are interested in and looking at their website so you can see which subjects and qualifications they offer. Most colleges hold 'Open Days' each year for students to go and visit.

Checklist – Before you visit

- Work out how you will get to the college to visit e.g. parents/carers, bus, train, taxi, car.
- Make a list of what support you will need at college. You can ask a parent, carer, or TA for help with this.
- Think about what you want to know about the college or the course and make a list of questions to ask.

Open Days

Open days are special events when a college is open for students and their parents to visit and look around. As part of the open day, you will be given a guided tour of the facilities, which will help you decide whether the college will be right for you. The dates of open days will be published on the college website and will tell you how to book. If you cannot make a college open day, then you can contact them to arrange another time to visit.

Checklist – During the visit

- Try to spend enough time at the college to help you make a decision.
- Ask the person showing you around any questions you have.
- Find out how most students travel to the college.
- Ask to meet learning support staff to discuss any questions you have about the support you will need.
- Find out whether the college has any specialist equipment you will need.

After the visit, you won't have to make a decision straight away, and you may want to visit other colleges before you decide where you would like to go. It might help to make a list after each visit, so you won't forget anything and can compare the different colleges that you visit. It is a good idea to discuss your thoughts about the college with your parents, carers, or tutor/TA. Don't be afraid to talk about anything you are not happy with or don't understand.

Checklist – After the visit

- Think about the college atmosphere. Does the college feel welcoming, do you think you would be happy there?
- Was the course what you expected it to be?
- Do you think the college can give you the support you need?
- Is there anything you did not like, or did not understand?
- Make a list of Colleges and Courses that you want to apply for.

Once you find a college and course that you like, you may want to look at our ['Applying to College Factsheet'](#).

You can contact MK SENDIAS:

- By completing a [referral form](#)
- Via our [website](#) for lots of useful information and factsheets
- To discuss your concerns by **phone** on 01908 254518
- By [email](#), briefly outlining your concerns
- On [Facebook](#)