

# Raising the Participation Age

## Information for Parents/Guardians

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) is coming into effect from summer 2013. If your child is currently in Year 11 or below this will affect them.



### What is RPA?

**The Government is raising the age at which young people are legally required to participate in education or training. Young people currently in Year 11 will have to continue in education or training until at least the end of the school year in which they turn 17 (and of course they are then able to continue beyond that if they want to).**

Those currently in Year 10 or below, will be required to continue until at least their 18th birthday.

This does not necessarily mean they will have to stay on at school after Year 11, and they will still be able to work full-time, if they choose to. They will have a choice about how they want to participate post-16, which could be through:

- Full-time education, such as school or college;
- Work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship; or
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

### Why make this change?

The Government wants to give all young people the opportunity to develop the skills they need for adult life and to achieve their full potential.

Participating in learning for longer means they are more likely to get the skills and qualifications that will open doors to future employment, help them make the most of their potential, and earn more over their lifetime.

Evidence shows that not being in education, employment or training at age 16-18 means young people are more likely to be unemployed, earn less, have a criminal record and suffer from poor health and depression over their lifetime.

Most young people already continue their learning when they leave school. RPA will mean that all young people are given the opportunity, provision and support they need to learn and participate after age 16.

## What does this mean for you?

The legal requirement to participate will remain with the young person. This is because at the age of 16, young people should be starting to make – and take responsibility for – the decisions that affect their future.

However, it is also known that young people look to their parents and guardians for advice and support as they make these decisions. This guide aims to provide you with the information required to assist you in supporting your child to make the right decision for them as they choose between their education and training options.

Making choices about education and training can be a challenge, so each young person will receive support to help them choose well. The careers information they will receive includes options information from school, in addition to information and advice via the young people's careers helpline and online resources. Young people will receive careers advice and guidance from many people including their subject teachers, careers co-ordinators or careers advisers. This will help them to think through their ideas and weigh up the pros and cons of different options.

## RPA Mythbuster

### **You're raising the school leaving age but school isn't right for everyone...**

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) is not the same as raising the school leaving age – that will stay the same. Young people will be able to choose the post-16 option that is best for them, and will still be able to leave school after Year 11 if they wish to, providing their chosen option leads to an accredited qualification and meets the minimum number of training hours required.

### **Can young people still work full time?**

Young people will still be able to work full time, volunteer on a full-time basis or set up their own business if they want to. Working full time is one of the ways to participate, however young people will be required to undertake part-time training which leads to an accredited qualification alongside this.

### **Will young people be forced to stay on in school or college along with other students who do not really want to be in education?**

RPA will not mean a large increase in numbers - the vast majority of young people already continue in some form of education post-16. The Government are not raising the school leaving age, so young people won't be forced to stay in school or college. Young people will be free to choose the option that is right for them – and their local authority is responsible for making sure they have the offer of a place in education or training that is appropriate for them.

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### **Need Additional Information?**

Should you require more information, please contact your local school or college.

Alternatively, the following sources are available:

#### **Young People's Careers Helpline**

The young people's careers helpline is available from 8.00am to 10pm, seven days a week,

Telephone **0800 100 900**

Or for text messages on **0776 641 3219**

Information Websites:

**[www.rpainfo.org.uk](http://www.rpainfo.org.uk)**

**[www.education.gov.uk/16to19/participation/rpa](http://www.education.gov.uk/16to19/participation/rpa)**

**[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/OptionsAt16/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/OptionsAt16/index.htm)**

**[www.14-19.info](http://www.14-19.info)**

**[www.teeninfoincs.co.uk](http://www.teeninfoincs.co.uk)**



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