

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) - Information for Parents.

What is RPA?

Around 92% of 16 and 17 year olds already choose to continue in education or training. The Government is increasing the age at which all young people are required to do so. If your son or daughter is in **Year 11 in September 2012, they will have to continue in education or training until at least the end of the school year in which they turn 17**. If they are currently in **Year 10 or below, they will have to continue until at least their 18th birthday**.

RPA is not about raising the school leaving age. Young people will have a range of options for how they can participate, which could be through:

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

Why are you changing things?

We want to give all young people the opportunity to develop 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 achieving qualifications at this age can help to boost a young person's prospects for life – for instance, young people with 2 or more A-Levels earn around 14% more than those without.

What does this mean for me?

The legal requirement to participate will be on your son or daughter. This is because we know that, at 16, young people are starting to make – and take responsibility for – the decisions that affect their future.

However, we also know that your children will look to you for advice and support as they make these decisions and you will want to do all you can to support them to make the right decision for them as they choose between their education and training options.

We know that making choices about education and training can be a challenge, so, from September 2012, we have placed a new duty on schools to secure access to independent careers guidance for pupils in school years 9-11, which must:

- Be presented in an impartial manner;
- Include information on the full range of post-16 education or training options, including Apprenticeships; and
- Promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.

This will make sure that your child will receive support to help them make informed choices.

Where can I find out more?

More information on RPA is available at:

<http://education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/rpa>

The National Careers Service website makes it easy for both adults and young people to access information and advice about education, training and work. The website is at:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>. Young people and parents can speak to an appropriately qualified adviser by contacting the helpline which is available from 8.00am to 10pm, seven days a week on **0800 100 900**, or for text messages on **07766 413 219**.