THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO
T Level Courses

2025-2026

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THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

T Level Courses

2025 - 2026

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Introduction

T Levels are a sixth form qualification introduced in 2020. T Levels were developed with employers and businesses to prepare students for working life. T Levels suit teens that like learning through real life situations.

One T Level is equivalent to three A levels and the course lasts for two years. T Levels involve a mix of classroom learning (about 80% of the course time) and practical experience (about 20% of the course time) including a 45 day on-the-job placement in a genuine business.

Afterwards, students may go on to university, alternative higher education, another job, an apprenticeship or they may be offered an opportunity with the company where they were placed.

T Levels are a vocational alternative to A levels (because they focus on industry) and include practical study as well as classroom learning. They differ from apprenticeships because the study and working time is reversed.
T Level courses were developed with businesses and offer an industry placement.

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- ***Live calls** with us so you can ask questions*

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Qualification/Educational Routes

	Academic route		Vocational route	Applied / work route
Level 8	**Doctorate (PhD)**			**NVQ 8**
Level 7	**Masters degree (MA)**			**Degree apprenticeship / NVQ 5, 6, 7**
Level 6	**Bachelors degree** BA or BSc			
Level 5	**Foundation degree** FdA or FdSc		**Higher National Diploma (HND)**	
Level 4			**Higher National Certificate (HNC)**	**Higher apprenticeship / NVQ 4**
Level 3	**A levels** Grades A-E	**International Baccalaureate**	**BTEC (extended) diploma BTEC certificate**	**Advanced apprenticeship / NVQ 3**
Level 2	**GCSE** Grades 4- 9 (C, B, A or A*)		**BTEC first diploma**	**Intermediate apprenticeship / NVQ 2**
Level 1	**GCSE** Grades 1- 3 (D,E,F or G)		**Foundation diploma / entry level qualifications**	**Traineeship / NVQ 1**

T Levels

Levels of Education

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are 8 qualification levels (1 - 8) plus an entry level qualification for those just starting. Generally, the higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is.

With so many different qualifications, it can be hard to know what they mean and where they might lead to next. To help you understand, we've created a summary of what the levels mean highlighting academic, vocational and work-based routes to higher education.

What Subject Choices are There?

Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care

- Agriculture, Land Management and Production
- Animal care and Management

Business, Administration and Construction

- Management and Administration
- Building Services Engineering for Construction
- Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction

Creative and Design

- Craft and Design
- Media, Broadcast and Production

Digital

- Digital Business Services
- Digital Production, Design and Development
- Digital Support Services

Education and Early Years

- Education and Early Years

Engineering and Manufacturing

- Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing
- Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing
- Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control

Health and Science

- Health
- Healthcare Science
- Science

Legal, Finance, Accounting, Sales and Marketing

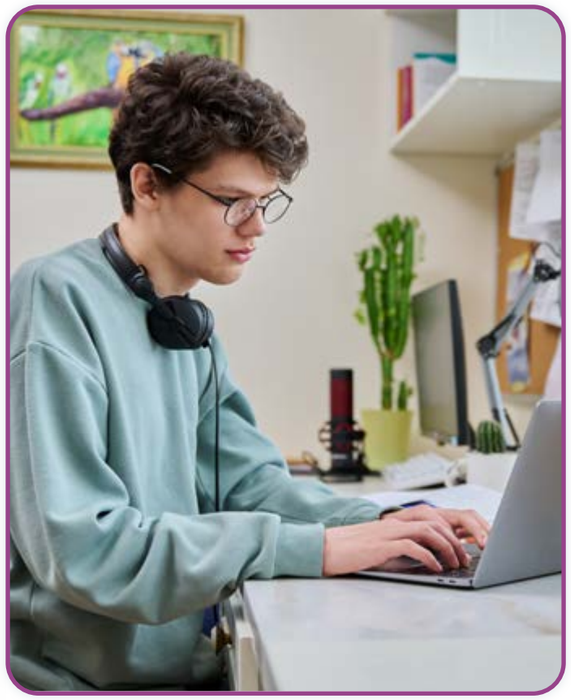
- Accounting
- Finance
- Legal Services
- Sales, Marketing and Procurement

What's Involved?

Passing a T Level will demonstrate the following:

- an approved technical qualification specific to the chosen industry area with compulsory elements and, in some cases, optional specialisms;
- an **industry placement** in their chosen industry area (equivalent to at least 45 days, usually offered as a single day over a period of weeks or a concentrated block, but may be another combination);
- a minimum standard in English and maths (if this had not already been achieved before starting the T Level).

Students receive a nationally recognised grade and a breakdown of their achievements on the course, including how they did on their work placement. If they don't pass all elements of their T Level, they'll receive a T Level statement of achievement outlining what has been completed.



Discover more

- Intro to T Levels
- Alternative options

What can they do after?

T Levels offer a broad range of further opportunities after sixth form, including:

- university;
- alternative further education;
- apprenticeships;
- jobs from related industries;
- job from their placements.

This means that students with a T Level qualification can go on to study for a degree, a related higher level apprenticeship, take a different course or go straight into a job.

Alternatively, they can go on to a higher level education or work in a non-related field if, during the course of study, they didn't enjoy their industry specialism and want to take a different path.

University and UCAS[1]

To help T Level students progress into higher education, UCAS tariff points are allocated to the overall T Level grade.

T Level grades offer the following UCAS points (noted with A level equivalents).

UCAS TARIFF POINTS	T LEVEL GRADE	A LEVEL EQUIVALENT
168	Distinction*	AAA*
144	Distinction	AAA
120	Merit	BBB
96	Pass - *grade C or above on the core*	CCC
72	Pass - *grade D or E on the core)*	DDD

1 *Not all universities accept T Levels for entry, so it is important to check the course and university entry requirements if your teen has a specific university they'd like to attend after sixth form.*

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- Actions you can take at home
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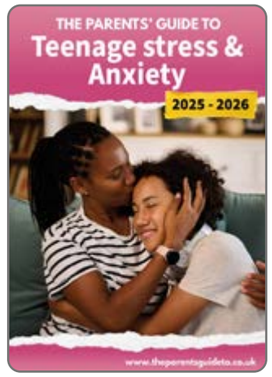

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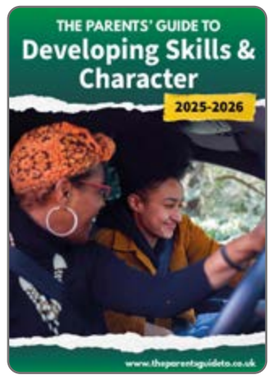
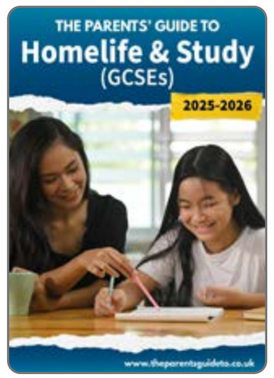
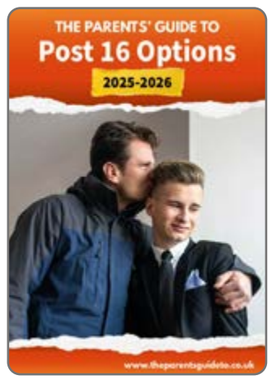
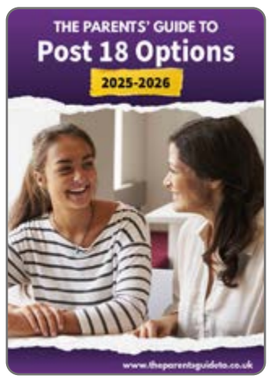


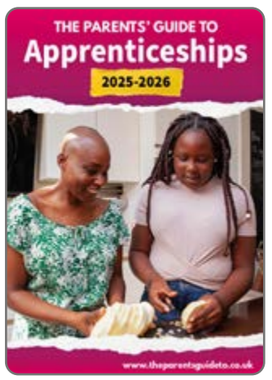


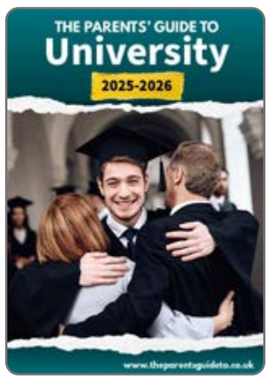
Each guide is designed with YOU in mind, offering clear, practical steps you can take at home.

Next steps:









Qualifications Needed

Individual courses need to be checked, but generally students need 5 GCSEs (graded 9-4) including English and maths.

What if my teen doesn't have the right qualifications?

For teens that don't have the necessary skills to go straight to T Level, they can take the T Level Transition Programme – a one year course after GCSE to prepare them for the subject they would like to study.

The programme introduces knowledge and skills in the student's chosen subject area and includes work experience to provide a better understanding of the workplace.

The course also provides wider preparation and support for progression onto a T Level.

For students who have not yet passed their Level 2 in English and maths, the course includes guided study to help them achieve this level.

Like T Levels, the programme is being introduced in phases and is currently available in selected education and training providers, with plans for wider rollout over the next few years.

Click here for more information on T Level Transition Programme providers

Discover more

- T Levels (Gov)
- Dept for Education

The Industry Placement

A fantastic element of T Levels is the 45 day industry placement – a real job in a genuine business. Sometimes this is offered in one block (45 consecutive days), sometimes as one day each week, or it can be other combinations that suit the company.

This first-hand work experience is hugely beneficial to students, enabling them to get a feel for what it's like in the world of work and whether they like the industry sector they've chosen – it's not too late to make a change post-18 if they don't! The placement can result in some students being offered jobs after they've completed their T Level and for those going on to higher education after sixth-form, their work experience will be impressive on their personal statement or other education application.

Getting all important transferable skills

Businesses really value transferable skills (sometimes called soft skills) because they are essential to running a business well. Soft skills are developed through practical experience (such as in hobbies and sports) or in the workplace. Examples include Communication (being able to express complex ideas simply), Leadership (motivating and inspiring others to take action) and Teamwork (collaborating with others to achieve joint objectives).

Transferable skills are not industry specific and have equal worth in different job types, which means students that develop a strong set of transferable skills have more opportunities to switch between different sectors to find the roles and industry that suits them best – giving them more options to find a job they are good at and enjoy.

Discover more

- Intro to T Levels
- Alternative options

Why do businesses offer industry placements to students with no experience?

Businesses sign up to offer industry placements matched to where their expertise aligns with the T Levels available. This gives businesses an opportunity to:

- discover new talent
- take on apprentices or employees who they know personally through the placement
- avoid costs of recruiting through agencies
- get new ideas from young people
- get extra help in their business

Payment

Businesses aren't legally obliged to pay students during their industry placement, although some may choose to do so.

Are They Right for my Teen?

It could be easy to discount T Levels as a credible sixth form choice because they're new and haven't been tried and tested. However, their recent development with input from businesses means they are tailored to meet existing industry needs much more directly than other generic qualifications and this is likely to appeal to future employers.

Advantages of taking T Levels

T Levels broaden the study choices for 16 years olds. They can offer a clear path to employment although, should your teen start the course and realise that industry or specialism it is not for them, there are still plenty of options for them to continue higher education or get work in a different industry once the T Level is complete. They are ideal for students who enjoy learning through practical experience and real-life situations.

Where can my teen study T Levels?

T Levels are currently only available in England. There are around 400 providers. Not all providers offer every T Levels available.

Many providers are colleges because of the technical nature of the studies and extra equipment needed. It's worth remembering that whilst colleges are specialists in providing education tailored to sixth formers, students do need to be comfortable with independent study to benefit from what's on offer.

What's available near you?

Click here to find what T Levels are available near you. You'll need to enter your postcode

EXPLORE NOW

Other Routes to Consider

Don’t worry! If T Levels don’t seem right for your teen, there are lots of other options so they’re bound to find something that takes them on the right pathway, suits their study style and that they find interesting.

A levels/AS levels/ International Baccalaureate

An in-depth study of specialist subjects over two years with an examination at the end to test knowledge. Learning mostly takes place in the classroom.

BTEC Nationals

Study takes place over a two year period and is a combination of both practical and theory. Knowledge is tested through course work and a final examination (comprising 40% of the total grade).

Other technical qualifications

Other qualifications available include Cambridge Technicals, City and Guilds, National Vocational Qualifications and Tech Bac (similar to the International Baccalaureate).

They are vocational driven courses – i.e. centred around jobs and are well suited to students who know what type of job they want to do when they leave education or who prefer a more practical working style but still want to include classroom learning in their education.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs in the workplace which include learning elements (that might take place at university, college or an education provider). Apprenticeships were developed to help address the skills shortage in UK businesses. Sixteen year olds can start an apprenticeship at Level 2.

Find out more

If you’re interested in finding out more about all the options your teen has after 16, which qualifications might suit them better and why choosing where to study could make a big difference, it’s all in ***The Parents’ Guide to Post 16 options.***

The Parents' Guide to Post 16 Options

Includes information on:

- What qualifications are on offer
- Which qualifications are better suited to different types of learners;
- Where they can study – the pros and cons
- Considerations in making the right choices
- GCSE results day – what to do if they don’t get the results they need.

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The Parents' Guide to Apprenticeships

Includes information on:

- Types of apprenticeship – the qualifications needed at each entry stage
- The pros and cons – why apprenticeships are ideal for some teens but not for others
- Degree apprenticeships
- How to research an apprenticeship
- Top ten apprenticeship providers
- The application process

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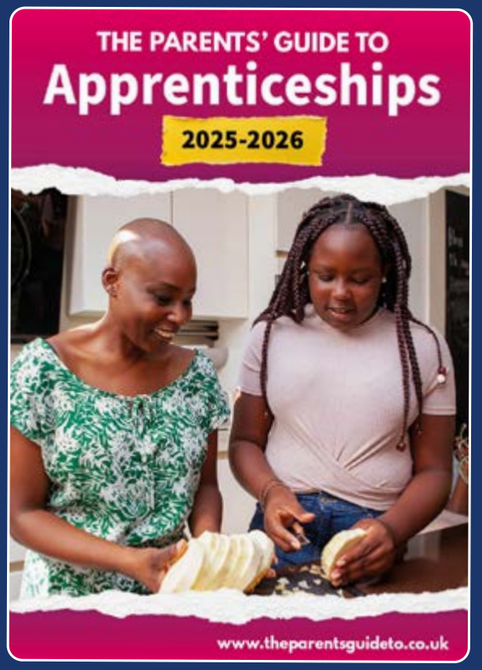

Career Pathways

Options after GCSE:

Full time study

A levels
(level 3)

T Levels
(level 3)

BTECs
(levels 1,2,3)

Other technical qualifications
(levels 1,2,3)

Exam retakes

Work and study

Apprenticeships
(levels 2,3)

Supported internships

Traineeships

Options after sixth form:

Full time study

University
(levels 4,5,6,7)

Higher technical skill courses
(levels 4,5)

Work and study

Apprenticeships
(levels 3,4,5,6,7)

School leaver programmes / Internships / Traineeships

Work

Employment

Start a business

Other

Gap Year

Exam retakes

Options after Higher education:

Full time study

Postgraduate study e.g. Masters degree or PHD
(levels 7.8)

Work / work and study

Graduate jobs or paid employment

Apprenticeships
(levels 6,7)

Internships / work experience

Non-paid employment / volunteering

Start a business

Other

Gap Year / travel

Exploring the options:

T Levels are one option at sixth form and this table shows other alternatives and what could come next.

There are many ways your teen can get to the career they'd like and they can choose the path that plays to their strengths.

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Final Words

T Levels are an exciting option in sixth form education that provide a recognised qualification tailored to industry needs and skills. It's a great choice for students that want to learn practical skills relevant to certain jobs, regardless of whether they want to go on to study for a degree, take alternative further education or go straight into the workplace after sixth form.

T Levels are a good choice for students that aren't interested in theory but want to learn what they'll need to know in the workplace and want to understand what businesses need to address to be successful. Getting 45 days' first-hand experience in a real job will give them an advantage in whatever they chose to do after sixth-form, whether that's continuing with higher education or entering the world or work.

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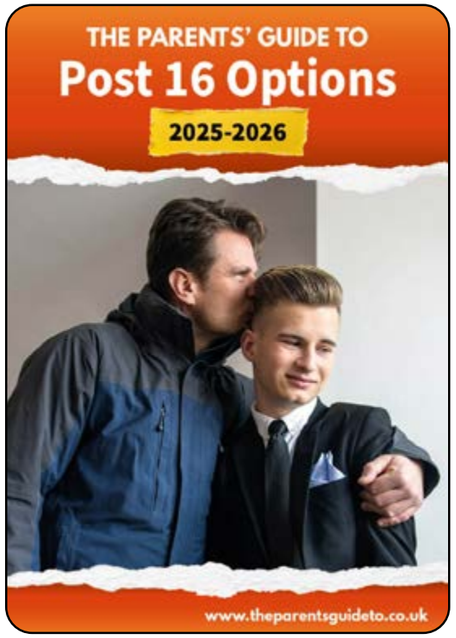

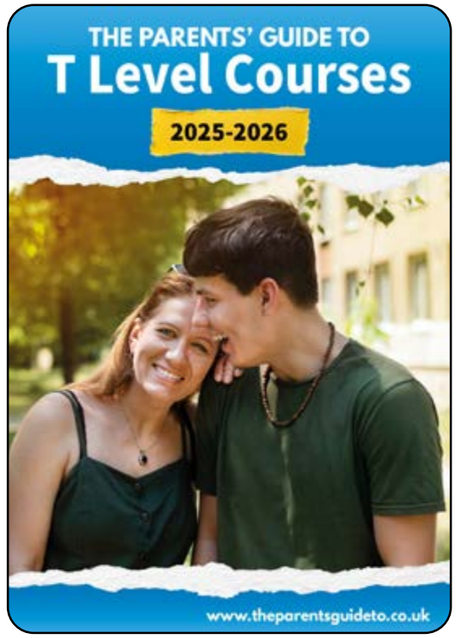

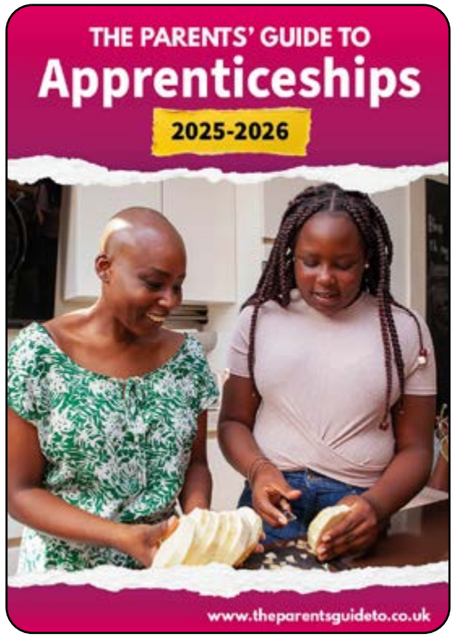

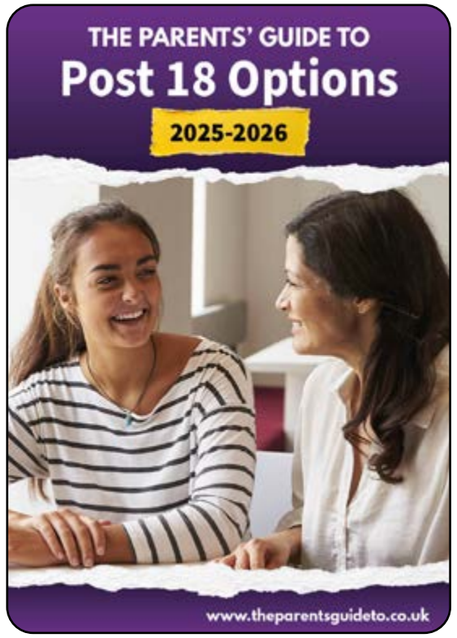

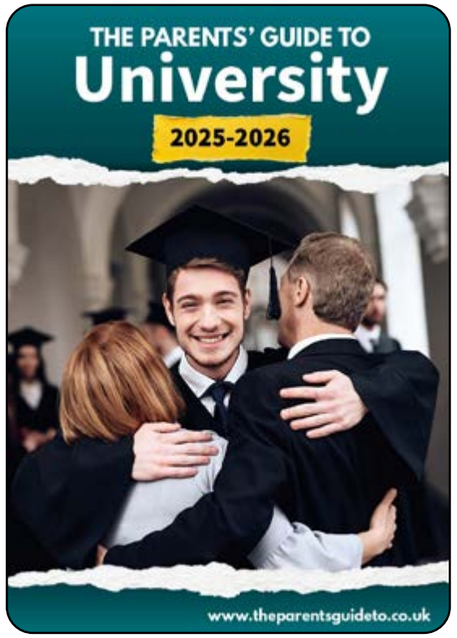

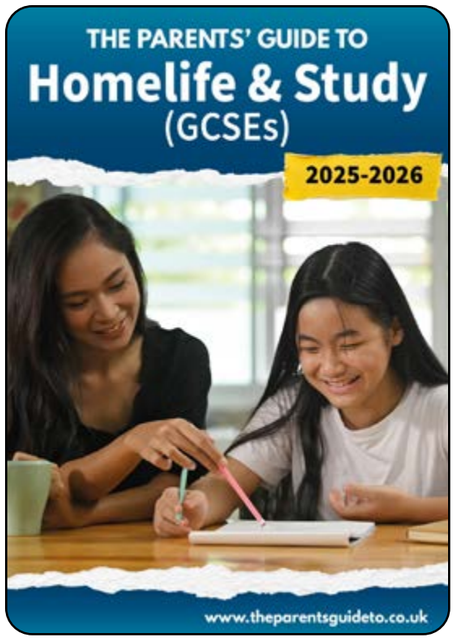

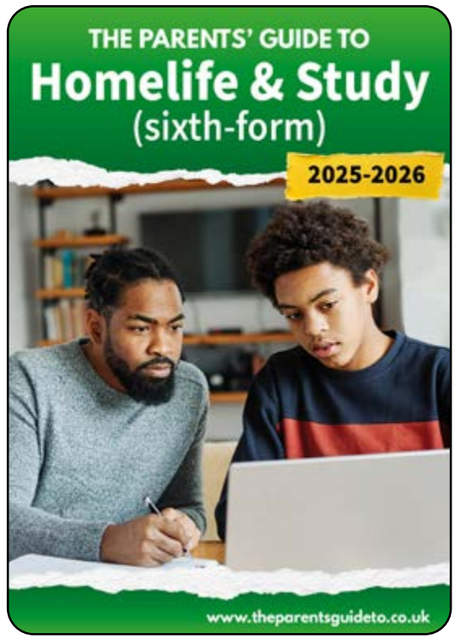

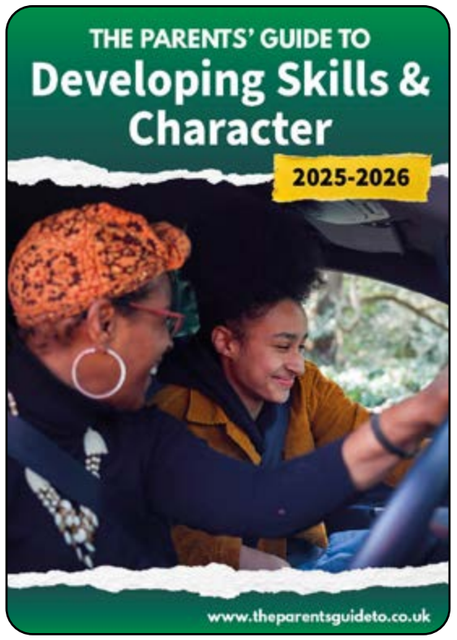

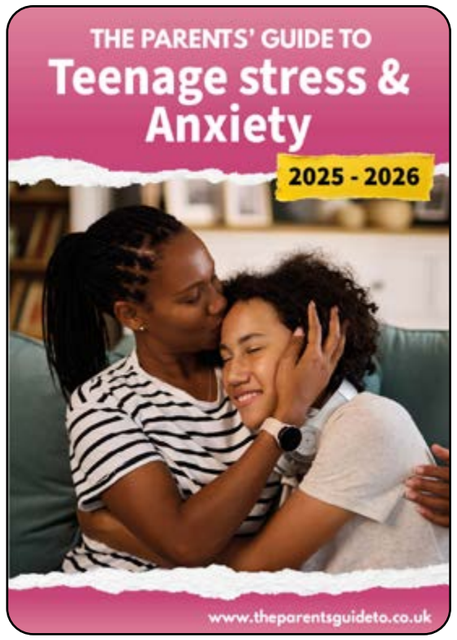

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