DIVERSE MINDS
LEARNING & LEISURE CIC

A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS | SCOTLAND

Starting college

You can arrive with questions. Helping you settle in is part of the college team's job.

Start where you need to

Before I start 3 - 4

My first day 5

If something feels difficult 6 - 8

Use one page at a time. Skip anything. There are optional planning sheets in a separate pack.

YOU ARE JOINING OTHER NEW STARTERS

You can take your time

Colleges welcome new students every year. You can want a fresh start and still feel nervous.

Tutors can help with the first steps

Induction is there to help you meet your tutors and classmates and find your way around. Tell staff if introductions feel difficult. You can ask for a quieter way to join in.

Others may want a friend too

You may not know anyone in your class yet. Other new students can be in the same position, and some will feel nervous too. A simple hello can be a start.

There is a mix of ages

Colleges welcome school-leavers and adults returning to learning. You can arrange for a parent, carer or trusted person to join a visit. Having support is okay.

Some people already know someone. Others will be starting fresh. You do not have to make friends on the first day.

BEFORE I START | EXPLORE

Get to know the place

Choose a few things to discover with someone you trust. Tick them, take a photo where allowed or just look around.

- [ ] Find reception and ask where to get help.
- [ ] Find the entrance for my course.
- [ ] See the toilets and a place to get water.
- [ ] Ask about an agreed place for a break.
- [ ] Try lunch or a drink in the cafe, if visitors can.

Make it an ordinary outing

If there is a public hair salon, beauty salon or nail bar, you could book a treatment you want. Check access, bookings, age rules and costs. A free visit is an option too.

You can visit briefly, ask for photos or arrange a quieter tour. Agree how long to stay and who comes with you.

BEFORE I START | ASK

Tell someone what helps you

Ask for student support or learning support. You can contact them while applying or before your first day.

Choose an example, or use your own words

- [ ] Written steps help me follow instructions.
- [ ] I need help finding rooms or using the timetable.
- [ ] Busy spaces make it hard for me to stay.

A message you can send

Hello, I am starting ____. I would like help with ____. Could we speak before I start? Please tell me who to contact and what information you need.

Also ask who can help with:

Course and funding forms and deadlines, costs, equipment, logins and induction. Ask what is confirmed and what still needs checking.

Agree what staff will do, who is responsible and how you will check it happened. You can ask someone you trust to help.

MY FIRST DAY

Know the next few steps

You do not need to know the whole college. Check these details for your own course.

- [ ] I know when and where to arrive.
- [ ] I know where timetable changes will appear.
- [ ] I have checked what I actually need to bring.
- [ ] I have a plan for travel, food and getting home.
- [ ] I know a person or staffed place to ask for help.

Plan the end of the day too

You might want food, quiet time, a familiar activity or a check-in with someone you trust. Agree what suits you. You can talk about the day when you are ready.

If a detail is missing, ask the college. There is a longer first-day planning sheet in the optional pack.

IF SOMETHING FEELS DIFFICULT

Things that can happen

You can use these words, show this page or send a message.

I have gone to the wrong room

Check the latest timetable or ask reception or a member of staff.
You could say: I am trying to find _____. Could you help me get there?

I am sitting alone at lunch

You can choose a quiet break, ask about a club or try a small conversation.
You could say: Is this seat free? Or ask a tutor to help you meet someone.

I do not understand the task

Ask for the first step, an example or written instructions.
You could say: Could you show me what to do first and where to find the deadline?

You can ask again. Needing something explained does not mean you have done anything wrong.

IF SOMETHING FEELS DIFFICULT

Get help with what is in the way

Ask for a specific next step. Someone you trust can help you make contact.

My login or online timetable will not work

Ask the college's IT help team or student support.
You could say: I cannot access ____. Please help me get the information another way while this is fixed.

I am struggling to get there or stay

Tell your tutor or student support. Explain what is hard, such as travel, noise or the workload. Ask what can change and how to report lateness or absence.

I asked, but help has not happened

Follow up with the person you contacted, or another appropriate member of staff.
You could say: We agreed ____. It has not happened yet. Who can help, and when?

If the course is not feeling right, ask for a review with staff or a careers adviser. Get advice before changing enrolment or funding arrangements.

KEEP THIS PAGE HANDY

When I need help

Show a line, copy a message or use your own words. You can also save the separate phone card.

I need help finding my next class.

I am overwhelmed. Can you stay nearby?

I cannot explain yet. Can I write or point?

Someone is making me feel unsafe.

Add the contacts you want to keep

My college contact

Where I can go

A second person I can ask

If you feel unsafe, tell a safe member of staff or another trusted person. If they do not act, tell someone else. Call 999 for immediate danger. Extra support: childline.org.uk.