

## STAYING ON FOR FIFTH YEAR - Advice to Pupils

*Please read this section carefully and discuss what it says with your parents.*

### **Your Education - what's the next step?**

You are facing a big decision about your future.

You are nearly at the end of your compulsory time in education and you have choices to make, choices which will have a major effect on the direction you take in life.

The alternatives are:

- 1 Leave school and look for work.\*
- 2 Leave school and apply to go on to college/training scheme.
- 3 Apply for a further, voluntary year at school.

\* If your sixteenth birthday falls after 30 September 2014, you must remain in full time education until Christmas 2014 and so the first option is not open to you.

### **How do you decide which is the right choice for you?**

Review what you are good at and what you enjoy doing, both in school and out of it.

Discuss with your parents.

Consult your teachers.

Read the Careers Advice (see page 6) and use all the facilities offered there.

**But most importantly, ask yourself honestly what you want and how hard you are prepared to work for it.**

While many pupils in this school decide they want to stay on, this is not always the best route to get you where you want to be as a young adult.

You may not feel you want to be a school pupil any longer.

College is not a "second best".

Colleges offer vocational and degree courses which train you for a particular job, like green keeping or child care, catering or beautician work. Colleges also offer courses which lead to university entrance, just as school courses can.

There are also numerous training schemes available which could see you earn a wage as you train for a profession. Speak to the school Careers Advisor for more information.

**So returning to school is optional. You choose to apply.**

**The school also has a choice: whether to accept you.**

### **Option 1 Leave school and look for work**

While this is an option, most employers today will enable you to have some further training after leaving school.

Read the Careers section which follows and if you have not already done so, request a Careers Interview immediately.

You should remember that the school will be asked to supply you with a reference giving an honest account of your likely performance at Standard Grade and your personal qualities. Some of the most important of these are attendance, punctuality, willingness to obey instructions and the ability to work co-operatively with other people.

### **Option 2 Leave school and go to college/training scheme**

Some college courses can be vocational, training you for a particular job, eg in green keeping or child care, catering or as a beautician.

Other college courses will offer you the opportunity to continue with qualifications which lead to higher level qualifications, including degree courses.

You should remember that the school will be asked to supply you with a reference giving an honest account of your likely performance at Standard Grade and your personal qualities.

Read the Careers section which follows and use the facilities it offers you to find out about courses and training opportunities.

### **Option 3 Apply for a Fifth Year at school**

#### **What would a Fifth Year at Madras College offer you?**

You would be following a full timetable made up of:

- **five** Higher (SQA certificate) courses you have chosen, attending each for five periods a week,
- two periods of PE,
- one period of Social Education,
- two periods of Activities.

Higher courses allow you to progress beyond National 4/5 in any subject.

Most subjects can be studied at three levels: Higher, National 4 and National 5. To find out what is involved in studying particular subjects, read the **Course Descriptions** starting on page 8.

#### **How do you know which level to choose?**

Your Senior Phase report will contain a prognostication from your class teachers. This is based on their professional judgement as to the best level of study for you in your S5.

NB The entry levels vary a little from department to department: look up the precise subject entries which you are interested in, which start on page 8.

Advanced Higher courses follow success at Higher and are for pupils in S6 only.

## What is different about Fifth Year?

### 1 Independent Study

Whatever levels of courses you take will be a step up in difficulty. To get anything out of Fifth Year courses, you will have to increase your work rate, especially your commitment to home study.

#### What are your present study habits?

Do you always complete set homework on time?

Can you discipline yourself to study when there is no set homework?

Do you enjoy any of the studying you do on your own?

Are you prepared to study for two/three hours most nights of the week, with at least one longer stint at the weekend?

**This would be your baseline for success on most Fifth Year timetables.** If you know you can't meet it, be realistic.

Choose a route for the next stage at which you can succeed.

### 2 Maturity of attitude and approach

As a Fifth Year pupil, you will need a more mature approach to school. You are now a volunteer. You have chosen to remain a member of the community which is Madras College.

You will find that your relationships with staff alter a little and that higher standards of manners and co-operation are taken for granted. Since all the pupils have chosen to be there, the classroom atmosphere is very purposeful but can also be more informal. You will come to realise your teachers are people who are there to share their expertise with you, to help you push your learning onwards rather than to discipline you.

**You have to be confident you can fit in with this new approach.**

You are also agreeing to arrive punctually and follow a complete school timetable every day; to wear full school uniform, including a blazer, and conform to the school security policy; to observe the no smoking and other behavioural codes.

It may be worth pointing out that as a college student, you would be entitled to more freedom in respect of some of these rules. Choose the way which suits the sort of young adult you want to become. Reread Option 2 if you are in doubt.

#### A few tips to help you sort out your plans

Think carefully and listen to all the advice you can get.

Read the Careers section carefully (page 6) and use the facilities offered.

Think about the courses/jobs you might want to do. What subjects and levels of qualification do they require?

NB Most university courses require a minimum of four Higher passes, usually at B or above. A few require five, but often these can be spread across two years. It is better to do really well at fewer Highers than to overload yourself. Many pupils plan over two years at this stage. If you are still vague about your plans, try to keep as broad a range of subjects going as possible.

Most pupils choose to continue with English at the next appropriate level, although this is not compulsory at Madras College.

### **3 So what are the good things about staying on at school?**

If you ask senior pupils, they usually start by saying it is the support and skill of their teachers. They say they appreciate the help they get from deadlines, regular homework with sanctions if it is not done.

You are still with most of the friends you have made as you came up the school and this makes you feel secure and out of class life is enjoyable. Equally, in a school as large as this, you will go on making new friends. Fifth and Sixth Year pupils tend to mix much more than other year groups and many classes will include both year groups.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities and sports are still available to you. While this will certainly be a year where you feel under academic pressure, you will also find opportunities offered because you are a senior member of the school community.

Weigh up these things against the greater independence and freedom to plan and pace your own study which college would offer you.

**So the question is not whether you want to go on with your education, but whether school is the place which will suit you best to do that.**

### **When you have handed in your Course Choice form, what next?**

You will have a discussion with your Guidance teacher. They will discuss your choices with you and work out the best plan for you.

It is very important to consult your parents.

The final decision from the school about who enters Fifth Year rests with the Rector, Mr McClure.

**We shall offer you what, in the professional view of all your teachers, is best for you, your education and your future.**