

TO GAP OR NOT TO GAP?

So, now think: do you want a gap year or not? For some of you this will be an easy decision but for others it will be a difficult decision and some of you will change your minds during U.V1. You need to consider:

- What do the departments and universities in which you are interested think about applicants taking a gap year? Some subjects such as Maths and Engineering may not be as sympathetic to the idea, the exception perhaps being for “A Year in Industry”. Check with the universities, as there is variation even within universities and between colleges and subjects.
- How keen are you to have a break in your studies? Consider this carefully – most students who take a year out do take up their offer of a university place but how easy will it be for you to return to learning? This is something you need to think about long and hard.
- Are you going to apply for a deferred place – (i.e. for 2013 rather than 2012) or are you going to wait and apply post “A” level (after you have your grades)? This needs careful thought and discussion with your family.
- What are you going to do with your year out? There are some amazing gap opportunities but they do need careful planning and some have early application deadlines because of their popularity. It is important when applying for deferred entry to make sure that you can give a reasonable outline of your plans in your personal statement. Vague references to “travel” are not helpful to your cause when applying for a competitive course.
- Check the many booklets we have in the 6th form careers area for the best Gap organisations.
- **The new increased “fee” tariffs may well have a bearing on your decision as to whether to take a gap year or not and it appears that far fewer students will be taking a gap year due to the huge increase in fees. This is again something you need to discuss as a family.**

There is no right or wrong as to whether a gap year is a good thing or not. It has to be an individual decision made after careful and considered thought and discussion with your family.