



Parent Update – December 2017

Dear parents/carers,

As the Autumn term ends and with a well-earned Christmas break for students and staff taking us into 2018, I would like to update you on several aspects of life at UTC Swindon.

Changes to the working day

When students return to college on **Wednesday 3rd January**, we will have changed our end of day timings by reducing lunchtime and afternoon breaks. There has been no change to lesson allocations, although the earlier finish will allow for opportunities for targeted academic and pastoral intervention. Students will also be able to work independently in college until 5.45pm as previously. The new end of day timings are as follows:

Mondays 3.20pm

Tuesdays-Thursdays 4.30pm

Fridays 3.40pm

Supporting Learning

Our students have access to on-line resources that can be used to extend their learning, including **GCSEpod** (<https://www.gcsepod.com/>) and **Kerboodle** (<https://www.kerboodle.com/users/login>). These are excellent ways to reinforce current understanding or for revision, in addition to completing assignments that staff have set.



Year 12 Work Experience

All Year 12 students will be participating in two-week placements starting on **8th January 2018**, which allow them to gain essential understanding of the world of work with a range of employer partners. We are grateful for the commitment of our partners in providing stimulating and engaging experiences that can lead to future career progression.

Year 11 Exams

Students in Year 11 sat exam papers in their GCSE subjects towards the end of last term and were presented with their results and had individual tutorials with senior staff, as they will in August. These are an important indicator of students' current knowledge of subjects up to this point as well as the success of revision strategies and organisation. With the reformed GCSE specifications requiring extended coverage of subject content, and all exams being sat at the end of Year 11, it is essential that students maintain understanding of work covered across both Years 10 and 11.

College closure arrangements

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that students are able to attend college, there may be occasions when there is no alternative but to close the college, as when snow and potentially hazardous travel conditions affected Swindon and the surrounding areas in the last week of term. Such decisions are made after consultation with several services and we will endeavour to inform you at the earliest opportunity, via the UTC Swindon website (www.utcswindon.co.uk), social media

(email and Facebook) and Swindon Borough Council.

Bike security

We have, unfortunately, had three bicycles stolen from the courtyard at the front of the college in recent weeks. It is not possible to lock the external gates during the college day as regular access is required and therefore it is important that students lock their bikes as securely as possible using a robust lock. We are working with the Police to maximise both security of bikes as well as safety for students. Of the bikes that were stolen, one was unlocked and the other two had thin padlocks that were cut using pliers. Guidance on selecting the most appropriate bike lock can be confusing and guides such as <http://thebestbikelock.com/> can help.

Students who bring their bikes (and other equipment) to college do so at their own risk and whilst we will try to make them as secure as possible, students are expected to take responsibility for their possessions.

Royal Navy Challenge

We are delighted to have two teams that have qualified to attend the finals of this national competition, Exercise Clean Sweep, in March 2018. Competition kits have arrived and the two teams will be working on their plans in preparation for the final phase, which includes an overnight stay aboard HMS Bristol in Portsmouth Harbour.



Key Dates

Monday 3rd January
Monday 8th – Friday 19th January
Tues 23rd January

Wednesday 7th February

Monday 12th – Friday 16th February

Monday 5th – Friday 9th March
Tuesday 6th March
Wednesday 28th March
Thursday 29th March

Monday 16th April

January

Start of Spring term (8.30am)
Year 12 Work Experience
Year 11-13 Academic Review (1.30-6.30pm)
Lessons end at 12.50pm

February

Safer Internet Day – Parent e-Safety presentation (5.30-6.30pm)
Half-term holiday

March

Year 11 Mock Exams
JobFest (Steam)
End of term (students)
Staff Training Day

April

Start of Summer Term (8.30am)

With all good wishes for 2018,

Jon Oliver

Principal

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