



## Parent Update – December 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a long, but very productive Autumn term, with our new Year 10 and 12 cohorts settling in well to UTC Swindon life. No doubt everyone is looking forward to a well-earned break over the festive period and this is a good time to reflect on the start to this academic year, with students completing assignments and several subject assessments and both internal and external exams having been taken.

As the end of term approaches, please be aware that there is a slight change to the end of term, with lessons ending at the end of **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December**. On **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December**, we have **Year 10 and 11 Academic Review Day**, for which information and appointment sheets have been sent out previously and all students are expected to attend, with parents/carers if possible. Year 12 and 13 students are welcome to work in school or independently at home.

A staff training day has been scheduled for **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December**.

### Academic Progress

All students will receive an Autumn progress report on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December. Information about grades is included and the reports will indicate current levels of performance, a predicted grade for the end of Year 11/13, along with a measure for Attitude to Learning. Students/parents/carers will be able to discuss progress at the Academic Review Days as follows:

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December (8.30am-5pm) - Year 10/11**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (8.30am-12.50pm) - Year 12/13**

For parents/carers of Year 10 and 11 students, Tim Buebird (English Subject Leader), will be running two short workshops to help you support your child in GCSE English at 12.15pm and 4pm and I would encourage you, if at all possible, to attend.

Further details are included with this update.

### Learning Philosophy and our Core Values

As part of Activate Learning Education Trust, we endeavor to “transform lives through learning”, providing opportunities for students and staff to experience learning as a life-long process. The elements of Brain, Emotions and Motivation are key to a positive growth mindset which we strive to work within.

Our partner employers constantly tell us that they are looking for highly skilled, motivated and reliable workers and we aim to develop these qualities in our students.

It is important that all students arrive in good time, with the correct uniform and equipment to maximize their learning.

We continue to embed our core values so we all can develop personally as well as professionally.



### Careers Update

We are extremely proud of the fantastic destinations that our students achieve after their time at UTC Swindon and the range of opportunities and experiences gives a real advantage when it comes to

applying for apprenticeships and employment. We hosted our annual **Careers Day** at the end of November, which involved students working with employers in several skills and knowledge workshops. This was followed by the opportunity to talk to employers at the Careers Fair, where 30 companies and organisations set up information stands to provide information to students and parents/carers. We are grateful for the support that our partner employers give to the UTC programme and are confident that our 2020 graduates will be equally successful as their predecessors.



Further information to support your child in planning their future can be found by clicking the following link - <https://careerpilot.org.uk/>. We will also continue to provide individual guidance and opportunities for students to consider what next steps are best for them.

### **Enrichment at UTC Swindon**

**Kit Car Club** – Thursday evenings have seen the relaunch of the Tiger Sport car assembly club, with mainly Year 11 students, working on assembling and making two sports kit cars roadworthy. This involves a wide range of engineering skills and understanding, along with problem-solving and teamwork. We are extremely grateful to Paul Lane for inspiring the setting up of the club and for leading some highly motivated students in this excellent activity.

**Royal Navy Challenge** – Year 10 students have started preparation work for this year's national competition, with the finals being held in Gosport in March. Judging of entries will take place early next term and we are looking forward to repeating our success of the last two years.

### **Work Experience**

This is an important part in preparing our students for future employment and work readiness is an important quality that employers seek. With the current economic and political situation, it has been increasingly difficult to obtain placements and we would recommend that if you have links to STEM employers, that you try to secure an appropriate experience. Once you have obtained this information, please inform Hollie Danby, Assistant Principal ([hdanby@utcswindon.co.uk](mailto:hdanby@utcswindon.co.uk)), so that we can update records etc.

### **UTC Pipeline Programme**

This year's programme is now underway, with all of our 6<sup>th</sup> Form students working with one of our employer partners during this academic year, to develop a range of experiences and activities that will give them a real head start in securing high quality apprenticeships and employment within the STEM sector.

Read about how some of our Year 13 Cyber Security students are getting on during their placement with Wiltshire Police ([click here](#)).

A group of Year 10 students have also started working with Intel, which is, once more, proving to be popular and giving students an early introduction to the world of work in the STEM sector.



### **Recruitment 2020**

We have held two successful Open Days this term, which has allowed us to showcase what UTC Swindon has to offer and we are pleased with the recruitment of potential new students into both Year 10 and Year 12. As always, our students are the best ambassadors and the confidence with which they engage with visitors is wonderful, as well as being great preparation for future life.

## Supporting Charity

Children in Need – we were pleased to be able to support this wonderful charity at the end of last month by organizing a number of events and activities, capably led by 6<sup>th</sup> Form students. Thanks to Cherise Osolin (KS5 Co-ordinator) for overseeing the activities and for showing mercy on a particularly cold and wet lunchtime, to the two staff who had volunteered to be ‘sponged’ in stocks!

Christmas Jumper Day was held last week and Oli Kirby in Year 13 has been leading work to support Swindon’s Food Bank.

Thank you to all who have contributed to supporting these worthy causes.

## General Information

**Uniform:** We are proud of the high standards of business wear of students from UTC Swindon, which is regularly commented on by visitors and employers.

With the colder weather, a small number of students have replaced their suit jackets with coats/hoodies.

Whilst these are fine for travelling to and from college, they are not replacements for jackets. If it is

particularly cold, an appropriate jumper (not sweatshirt) is useful to wear underneath a jacket. I ask for your support in ensuring that your child is dressed as expected each day and has the necessary equipment in order to complete their studies, both in the classroom and workshop.

**Parent Pay:** This is now operating well and means that all transactions at UTC Swindon can be made online, without the need for cash. Should you need support in accessing your account, please contact Helen Curtis ([hcurtis@utcswindon.co.uk](mailto:hcurtis@utcswindon.co.uk)).

**Car Parking:** Please can I remind you that the courtyard at the front of UTC Swindon should not be used to drop off/pick up students unless they have specific access arrangements. The entrance is narrow and potentially hazardous with both UTC and public pedestrians and the bend on a busy bus route. There is plenty of short-term parking available in the local area. Thank you for your support in this matter.

## Key Dates

### December

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December

(8.30-5.00pm)

(6.00pm)

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December

Christmas lunch

Year 10 and 11 Academic Review

No lessons Year 12/13

End of term

Ex-Year 11/13 Presentation Evening

Staff Training day

### January 2020

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January (8.30am)

Start of term (all students)

w/c Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January

Year 12 Work Experience (until Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January)

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January

(8.30am-12.50pm)

Year 12 and 13 Academic Review

No lessons for Year 12/13

Normal lessons for Year 10/11

Year 12/13 lessons in the afternoon

**YOUR FOOD BANK NEEDS YOU**

HELP BRIGHTEN SOMEONE'S CHRISTMAS NOW BY DONATING:

- CHOCOLATES
- STUFFING MIX
- GRAVY GRANULES
- BREAD SAUCE
- BISCUITS
- SANDWICH PASTES
- CRACKERS
- CRISPS
- SWEETS
- CONDIMENTS
- MICROWAVE POPCORN
- MATCHMAKERS
- SELECTION BOXES

TRY YOUR CHANCES AT OUR RAFFLE

1 ITEM	= 1 TICKET
1 TICKET	= 40p
3 TICKETS	= £1.00
5 TICKETS	= £1.75

**13<sup>th</sup> December @ LRC**

SWINDON FOOD COLLECTIVE



## February

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February (8.30am)

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February (10am-1pm)

## March

w/c Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March

## April

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April

(12.30pm)

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April

(8.30pm)

KS5 Pipeline Day

Half-term holiday

Start of term (all students)

Open Day

Year 11 Pre Public Exams (until Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March)

KS5 Pipeline Day

Royal Navy Challenge Finals

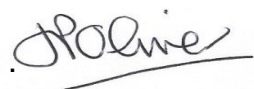
End of Spring Term

Start of term (all students)

Other dates, including holidays, are shown on our website ([www.utcswindon.co.uk](http://www.utcswindon.co.uk)).

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and every happiness in 2020.

With best wishes,



**Jon Oliver**

Principal



*"Transforming lives through learning."*

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## GCSE English Exams Overview

Dear parent/guardian,

I am writing to inform you of the opportunity to meet with myself and Jon to discuss the challenges of the GCSE English exams that your child will be taking next year. We are very proud of the progress of our Year 11 students in English, and would like the opportunity to share this success with you. We are also aware that English is a difficult subject to revise for, and wanted to share some examples of good practice, and highlight some of the difficulties that traditionally arise from these exams.

On Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December, we will be having our next Academic Review Day with Key Stage 4, and would like to invite you to meet with us for a half an hour English-focused session on this day. Your child will receive their Academic Review appointment form this week, and we have blocked off a morning and afternoon slot, depending on which time best suits your need. This will be an informal opportunity to meet with us, provide an overview of the papers and revision resources available, and answer any questions you may have. The times available will be either **12.15pm** or **4.00pm** – if you would like to attend either of these, please ensure that you do not have any clashes with any other staff bookings!

I look forward to seeing you, and hope that this opportunity provides an extra insight into some of the requirements of the GCSE English exams. I am happy to discuss any questions you may have, and can be reached through reception on the telephone number provided, or contacted directly via email at [tbuebird@utcswindon.co.uk](mailto:tbuebird@utcswindon.co.uk).

Yours sincerely,

**Tim Buebird**  
**Subject Lead for English**

Below is an overview of the English Language exam papers, taken from the current GCSE Specification:

## Assessments

All texts in the examination will be unseen.

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	+	Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	+	Non-examination Assessment: Spoken Language
<b>What's assessed</b> <b>Section A: Reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one literature fiction text</li> </ul> <b>Section B: Writing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>descriptive or narrative writing</li> </ul>		<b>What's assessed</b> <b>Section A: Reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text</li> </ul> <b>Section B: Writing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing to present a viewpoint</li> </ul>		<b>What's assessed</b> (AO7–AO9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presenting</li> <li>responding to questions and feedback</li> <li>use of standard English</li> </ul>
<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</li> <li>80 marks</li> <li>50 % of GCSE</li> </ul>		<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</li> <li>80 marks</li> <li>50 % of GCSE</li> </ul>		<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher set throughout course</li> <li>marked by teacher</li> <li>separate endorsement (0 % weighting of GCSE)</li> </ul>
<b>Questions</b> <b>Reading (40 marks) (25 %)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one single text</li> <li>1 short form question (1 x 4 marks)</li> <li>2 longer form questions (2 x 8 marks)</li> <li>1 extended question (1 x 20 marks)</li> </ul> <b>Writing (40 marks) (25 %)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy)</li> </ul>		<b>Questions</b> <b>Reading (40 marks) (25 %)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>two linked texts</li> <li>1 short form question (1 x 4 marks)</li> <li>2 longer form questions (1 x 8, 1 x 12 marks)</li> <li>1 extended question (1 x 16 marks)</li> </ul> <b>Writing (40 marks) (25 %)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy)</li> </ul>		

Language Paper 1	Language Paper 2
<b>Section A</b> <b>Question 1 (4marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pick key points</li> </ul> <b>Question 2 (8marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writer's use of language</li> </ul> <b>Question 3 (8marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writer's use of <b>structure</b></li> </ul> <b>Question 4 (20 marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being critical/ Critical Analysis</li> </ul> <b>Section B</b> <b>Question 5 (40 marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing a creative response to an image/prompt</li> </ul>	<b>Section A</b> <b>Question 1 (4 marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>True/False statements</li> </ul> <b>Question 2 (8marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarise differences</li> </ul> <b>Question 3 (12 marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Features of language</li> </ul> <b>Question 4 (16 marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare attitudes</li> </ul> <b>Section B</b> <b>Question 5 (40 Marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing a newspaper article in order to persuade</li> </ul>

And here is a more student-friendly-version of the questions that we have been using in class, to break down the papers into the skills needed for each questions.