



## UTC Reading – Parent Update September 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian,

### 1. Welcome and Update

Welcome to and welcome back to all parents and guardians of UTC Reading students for what promises to be a fantastic 2019-2020 for all.

I am really pleased to say that the UTC has grown in student numbers once again this year and whilst there are still some students due to join us we currently have just under 500 students studying at the UTC in our 7<sup>th</sup> year of operation. This is a fantastic achievement.

We had some excellent results in the summer break for our outgoing Year 11 and Year 13 students who have gone on to some amazing destinations that will set them onto a successful path into their future career.

We also had the largest number of students achieving professional qualifications in one year than we have ever had before. These qualifications won't be found on school league tables, but they are proving to be incredibly valuable to our students, not only to build their skills but in helping them secure great destinations.

Every day, there is something that I leave the UTC feeling proud of: Our student destinations and the progress they make from their starting point with us always stands out.

Every summer, where we can, we try and invest in the facility to ensure that it remains a high-quality professional UTC to work and study in. This summer we have created a new multi-use classroom, improved the CAD suite, created a more appropriate electronics lab, improved the working spaces in two of our engineering classrooms/workshops, created a careers hub, improved the car park facilities, changed all of the dining room furniture to allow more students to take their lunch together, along with a number of cosmetic upgrades. There are still some works that were not completed in the summer which will not affect day to day operation, but we will aim to complete these over weekends and evening and if needed, the October Half term.

This first update will contain a lot of information to help you plan your year with us. Teaching and Learning is a team effort between the student, teacher and parents/guardians and communication between all parties is a key component to the students becoming successful. Whilst you will receive a link to these updates once per month, please look out for our newsletters and other parent communications from other staff members to ensure you stay up to date. Likewise, please ensure you communicate with your child's team leader as a first point of contact if you have any queries or concerns about their learning. For all general enquires please direct these towards reception.

We look forward to working with you over the coming year and updating you on the progress of your child.

## 2. UTC Reading Vision

Our vision for this year and beyond is “Transforming Lives Through Learning” and we will deliver this vision through a coordinated approach that is embedded within our learning philosophy. This vision and learning philosophy are shared amongst all of the schools and UTC’s in the Activate Learning Education Trust (ALET).

We are absolutely determined to ensure that every child that attends our UTC, completes their time with us having had the opportunity to transform their own life now and for the future. I am confident that I have a team of staff who will work tirelessly to ensure that our students get the very best opportunity. We will also work with you to ensure that you have all the information you need to support your child at home. This is an incredibly exciting time for the young people in our school. Research suggests that they will do 17 different jobs over their working life, half which have not yet been created. Our job is to prepare them for the working world that faces them, and we are confident that we can do just that.

You can find out more about the ALET Vision, mission and Values by clicking [here](#). You can find out more about our Learning Philosophy, Brain, Emotion and Motivation [here](#).

## 3. UTC Reading Priorities 2019-2020

This year we have four key priorities that as an organisation we will be working toward and I will be reporting on progress towards these priorities in these updates.



## 4. Timetable

All students across Year 10 to Year 13 now have a fully functional timetable which shows all their timetable lessons, breaks, lunches, independent times and enrichment.

All lessons across all year groups are either 60 minutes or 90 minute and all students have a 30-minute morning break and 30-minute lunch break. Students are expected to attend all their scheduled lessons in the rooms allocated at the appropriate time.

Year 10 and Year 11 students have two, 30-minute team times, Monday 08.30 and Friday 08.30 each week. Year 12 have one, 30-minute session on Friday at 08.30am, Year 13 have one, 30-minute session on Monday at 08.30.

During the breaks and lunches and before the first lesson at 08.30, students can purchase food from the dining room with cash, card, id badges providing they have an allocated parent pay account and apple pay. Year 10 and Year 11 are required to stay on site during break and lunch. Year 12 and Year 13 are allowed off site for break and lunch.

The timings of each day are as follows:

- Monday 08.30-16.00
- Tuesday 08.30-16.30
- Wednesday 08.30-16.30
- Thursday 08.30-16.30
- Friday 08.30-16.00

On Thursday and Friday at 15.30 we run enrichment sessions that are available for all students these are compulsory for Year 10 and Year 11 and optional for Year 12 and Year 13. There are some resit English and Maths classes that take place during enrichment for Year 12 and Year 13 that are compulsory for those students identified as needing to take a re-sit in these subjects.

Year 12 students do not have any scheduled lessons on a Monday and Year 13 students do not have any scheduled lessons on a Friday. This is still a UTC Reading day, but we are giving the students a degree of flexibility to do one of the following three things during this time:

- Gain meaningful work experience relevant to desired future career
- Use the opportunity to work from home on A Level or BTEC work to enhance learning
- Attend the UTC in normal business dress at a time of their choosing to work independently in the ILZ or to meet with teachers or peers for support.

All Year 12 and Year 13 students are to attend for the full four days scheduled on their timetable arriving to start lessons or ILZ at 08.30 and are expected to be on site until 16.00, Monday and Friday and 15.30 on Wednesday and Thursday unless they are completing an enrichment and 16.30 on Tuesday. Breaks and lunches can also be taken off site.

If Year 12 and Year 13 students have no lessons scheduled in the final period of the day on any of the 5 days (i.e. ILZ time), they are permitted to leave 10 minutes early to help aid transport from the UTC and also reduce the loading at the front door at the end of the day. For the avoidance of any doubt the times for each day are as follows:

- Monday 08.30 – 16.00. If no lessons scheduled in the final period, Year 13 students can leave at 15.50
- Tuesday 08.30 – 16.30. If no lessons scheduled in the final period, Year 12 and Year 13 students can leave at 16.20
- Wednesday 08.30-16.30. If no lessons scheduled in the final period before enrichment and not signed up to an enrichment, Year 12 and Year 13 students can leave at 15.20
- Wednesday 08.30-16.30. If no lessons scheduled in the final period before enrichment and not signed up to an enrichment, Year 12 and Year 13 students can leave at 15.20
- Friday 08.30 – 16.00. If no lessons scheduled in the final period, Year 12 students can leave at 15.50

## **5. Curriculum**

The curriculum for all year groups has some minor variations. To help with your understanding of the courses we run in each group, please see the curriculum summaries at the end of the document where you will find the following:

- Appendix A shows the Year 10 Curriculum
- Appendix B Shows the Year 11 Curriculum
- Appendix C Shows the Year 12 Curriculum
- Appendix D shows the Year 13 Curriculum

## **6. Staff**

In appendix E at the end of the document you will find a list of staff, their roles and the departments they work in.

In addition to this in appendix F you will find a copy of the leadership group structure for the UTC.

## **7. Dates for your diaries**

UTC Reading is a busy school and we run several events over the course of the academic year. We will use these parent updates to ensure that you have plenty of warning of when they are coming but below are the key events for the coming term.

Information about other events and trips will be shared over the coming weeks.

- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September – UTC closing early at 15.30 to all students to allow preparation for open evening.
- Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September – Students need to arrive by 10.30 ready to start lessons. The remaining part of the day will continue as per normal.
- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October – Futures/Careers Day for Year 12 and Year 13 following by Careers fair open to the public 17.30 -19.30.
- Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October – UTC Closed to all students on this day apart from those supporting the World Class Schools Assessment day.
- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October – Army Careers Carousel for Year 10 and Year 11.
- Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October – Year 10 Parents Evening – 17.30 – 20.00
- Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October – Year 12 Parents Evening – 17.30-20.00
- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October – Year 10/11 Experience Day 1 and Year 12/13 Pipeline Programme Day 1.
- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October – Half term 1 finish 16.00
- Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October – Staff training day – UTC closed to students.
- Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November – October Half term
- Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November – First day of Half term 2
- Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November – Year 11 and Year 13 Pre-Public Examination Week.
- Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November – UTC closing early at 15.30 to all students to allow preparation for open evening.
- Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November – Student need to arrive by 10.30 ready to start lessons. The remaining part of the day will continue as per normal.
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November – Year 11 Parents Evening 17.30-20.00.

- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November – UTC closing early at 15.30 to allow preparation for open evening.
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November – Students need to arrive by 10.30 ready to start lessons. The remaining part of the day will continue as per normal.
- Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December - Year 10/11 Experience Day 2 and Year 12/13 Pipeline Programme Day 2.
- Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December – Year 13 Parents Evening 17.30-20.00.
- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December – Year 11 and 13 Graduation events for Summer 2019 leavers
- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December – UTCR has got talent and Christmas Event
- Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December – Last day of Term 1, Half term 2
- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December – Staff Training day
- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 – Christmas Holiday – UTC Closed
- Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January – Staff Training day
- Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – First day of Term 2, Half term 3

## **8. Communication**

As mentioned earlier in the update, communication between learner, parent and teacher is critical in providing the right level of support during your time at UTC Reading. As you have seen, there are several opportunities for you to come to the UTC and discuss your child's progress with teachers and team leaders. Communication outside of these events will generally be in the form of phone calls and emails. Where required, face to face meetings will be organised.

You will receive a parent update once per month in a similar format to this one.

In addition to these updates above you will receive smaller email requests, updates and information from the administration team, Directors and teachers in different formats via email so please check your emails regularly for these and ensure that we always have the most up to date email address for you.

You will also be able to access our Management Information System (MIS), to check your child's attendance, punctuality, behaviour and academic progress. This system is called Progresso and you will shortly receive an email from Progresso to the email address that you have shared with us giving you a unique login which will allow you to access this information for your child.

If at any time you feel you need to make enquiries regarding your child's progress, curriculum or any concerns that you may have, your first point of contact is always your child's team leader.

To improve communication further we will be migrating over an App called Parent Mail. Many parents will be familiar with this as it is used in lots of schools. We had hoped this would be ready for day 1 of this term but we are waiting for the software company to fix a glitch with the system and then we will do a full launch of this which I am confident will aid communication between home and the UTC.

## **9. Attendance and Punctuality**

All students are required to be here at the UTC ready to start lessons at 8.30 every day but we do appreciate, at times, illness will prevent them from being well enough to attend. If this is the case, please contact reception on 0118 938 1020 (any time after 7.00am) or [enquiries@utcreading.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@utcreading.org.uk).

When talking to our industry partners they regularly comment that punctuality is one of the key attributes that is at the top of the list for future employees. We do appreciate that the traffic in and around Reading can be very difficult to navigate at rush hour, nevertheless, it is imperative that students arrive at the UTC on time as lessons begin at 8.30. We are aware that at these peak times, the buses get very congested in Reading and students may need to re-plan their journey so that they arrive at the UTC on time. We are open from 07.00 so students can arrive early and get themselves ready for the day, with breakfast available from 07.30 from the dining room. To make you aware, we are in continuous conversation with Reading Buses to influence their schedule at key times. If you are delayed and if students have a smart phone, we do ask that contact is made with reception (email or phone) to let them know about the delay.

If students are late on a regular basis they will be expected to make this time up, usually at the end of the day. For KS4 students, this will be communicated to parents in advance. For post 16, students this will be arranged directly with them.

### **10. Dress Code**

As a reminder, UTC Reading operates a business dress code for all students and staff. This dress code is expected at all times unless informed otherwise.

For further details, you can find the UTC Reading Dress code [here](#).

I have also noticed that a number of students are wearing trainers like Nike Airforce 1's and similar. These are often sold in the shoes sections of sports shops. To be clear, these do not meet the requirement of our dress code and should not be worn to the UTC.

### **11. Parent Pay and Lunches**

Students are able to bring a packed lunch or purchase food from the Dining Room (or off site if Post 16). Students can pay via cash or using ParentPay. This is a portal so that you will be able to allocate funding to your child's ID card. If you have not received your parent pay details, please contact [enquiries@utcreading.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@utcreading.org.uk) and we will be able to deal with any issues.

If you are eligible to apply for Free School Meals, please click [here](#) to download the form and return to school reception.

### **12. Bursary Forms – Year 12 and Year 13 only**

Bursary funding is available to students in Post 16 who may require some financial assistance to be able to fully participate at the UTC. These forms are available on our website, please click [here](#) or via reception.

### **13. UTC Pipeline Programme**

The UTC Pipeline Programme provides every student in Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and Year 13) with a meaningful experience of work with an employer. It enables local employers to interact with and train the 'Talent Pipeline' of the future. The Pipeline Programme consists of four days, during which students get to know a local employer, learn technical skills relating to the business of that company and get feedback on their performance. Students can express a preference as to which employer they would like to be allocated to, and we do our best to take this preference into account. The Pipeline Programme enables the employer to learn students' strengths and weaknesses and is an invaluable opportunity for students to gain experience of the world of work. The Pipeline Programme dates for

this year are 24<sup>th</sup> October, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 30<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> March. Parents will be sent confirmation of students' allocation and the details of each Pipeline Programme day in the week preceding each date.

#### **14. Parental Support**

As with any secondary school, parental support is invaluable to UTC Reading. UTC Reading provides students with more exposure to employers and workplaces than your average secondary school, but we are always striving to do more. If any parents feel they or the companies they work for could help support employer engagement at the college, be it through offering work experience placements, coming into college to hold workshops, attending career fairs, giving talks to students or in any other way then please get in touch with UTC Reading's Events Lead, Amy Sutcliffe ([amy.sutcliffe@utcreading.org.uk](mailto:amy.sutcliffe@utcreading.org.uk)) to discuss this further.

#### **15. Careers Twitter**

As part of the exciting developments in the careers provision at UTC Reading, we now have a UTC Reading Careers Twitter account. Designed with UTC Reading students and parents in mind, we will be sharing Work Experience Opportunities, Apprenticeships as they go live and useful hints and tips for all things UCAS. Going forward, we will be reducing the number of emails to students and therefore this will be the central place for information regarding their own and your child's future career opportunities. Please follow us at @UTCRCareers to see regular updates and opportunities you do not want your children to miss out on! Please note, if you do not have Twitter, you can also access this information on the front page of the UTC Reading website.

#### **16. Year 10 Access Arrangements**

At UTC Reading we value the opportunities of the students and believe in making sure that no pupil is disadvantaged due to reasons beyond their control. It is the policy of the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) to make exams accessible to all students and as such, put into place exam access arrangements. An access arrangement that may be put in place for a student has no bearing on intellectual ability, but allows students to access an assessment and prevent the student's application of knowledge of a subject being hindered by a special educational need without giving an advantage over peers.

To this end, we screen every pupil with a test called Lucid Exact when they start in Year 10. Lucid exact is a software which provides insight into a variation of literacy skills and is used as a start point for assessing students for exam access arrangements. In this way, we develop a picture of need that highlights any possible areas for support.

Once the Lucid Exact assessment is complete, the results are combined with teacher observations and any evidence of Special Education Needs (e.g. school reports from previous schools, educational psychologist assessments, NHS diagnosis etc.). Based on the information we have; we will make a decision as to whether it is necessary to refer your child to our designated specialist assessor in order to gather particular evidence for presentation to JCQ.

This process of assessment takes some time and we will be starting the Lucid exact assessment with Year 10's early in the Autumn term. Specialist assessor meetings will then take place in the Spring term. The specialist assessor meetings can take up to 2 hours per student and as such these may continue until December the following year.

To aid in this process, if you have any information about any previously agreed access arrangements or Special Education Needs, then please send a copy to [SEND@utcreading.org.uk](mailto:SEND@utcreading.org.uk).

### 17. Year 12 Access arrangements

At UTC Reading we value the opportunities of the students and believe in making sure that no pupil is disadvantaged due to reasons beyond their control. It is the policy of the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) to make exams accessible to all students and as such, put into place exam access arrangements. Access arrangements that may be put in place for a student has no bearing on intellectual ability but allows students to access an assessment and prevent the student's application of knowledge of a subject being hindered by a special educational need without giving an advantage over peers.

We are aware that many of our new starters will have had access arrangements in place for their GCSE exams. If this is the case, please can you obtain a copy of evidence of these arrangements from your previous school and bring to your enrolment interview. Evidence can consist of;

- Form 8
- JCQ confirmation
- Assessors report
- Email from Examinations officer / SENCo with signature.

Providing this evidence allows us to build a history of need for our own applications to JCQ. Although we cannot guarantee the access arrangements used in GCSE will be suitable for A-level or BTEC, the evidence can be significantly helpful in deciphering what needs a student may have. **Failing to provide this information may impact the designation of access arrangements in Year 12 and Year 13, especially retake examinations.**

Please scan and send any information to [SEND@utcreading.org.uk](mailto:SEND@utcreading.org.uk) or bring a copy into college FAO Georgina Craven.

### 18. Laptop opportunity

If any parent would still like to order a laptop for their child, we are putting in an order this week for Fujitsu A357 laptops (i5 processor with 8 GB RAM). Unfortunately, we do not have a choice of laptops. But the laptop will still be covered by 2 years' accidental damage and theft insurance and 2 year warranty. The cost will be £684.48 which will be 24 payments of £28.50 payable through Go Cardless. If parents are interested, then please email [jax.snipp@utcreading.org.uk](mailto:jax.snipp@utcreading.org.uk) to set up the direct debit.

Kind regards



**Jonathan Nicholls**  
**Principal**

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