BUCKS UTC

May Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers.

Reminder of Key Dates (May-July 2017)

Friday 26th May: College finishes for Half Term at 3.10pm.
W/C Monday 29th May: Half Term.
Monday 5th June: College resumes at the normal time.
W/C Monday 19th June: Year 10 (internal) Exams Week.
Thursday 29th June: Year 10 Growth Mindset Workshop with Martin van der Spoel.
Thursday 29th June: Induction Day for new 16+ students (for September 2017 entry).
Monday 3rd July: Induction Evening for new Year 10 students and parents (for September 2017 entry, 5-6.30pm).
Tuesday 4th & Wednesday 5th July: Induction Days for new Year 10 students (8.45am-3pm).
Friday 14th July: Thorpe Park visit.
Friday 21st July: College year ends at 1.10pm.

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We are fast approaching the "business end of the year" – this often repeated phrase in Heads' newsletters of this time of the academic year does resonate with ourselves. Allowing for the modular nature of our Sixth Form BTEC courses, nevertheless there is a "rounding off" of the different units of work which together with

the external examination season being underway for Year 11 means that many students have additional pressures at this time of the year – I trust that they know that all the staff are here both to "listen" and to help – I wish every student every success in the weeks ahead.

Additional Specialist Qualifications

One of the developing strengths of our UTC is the additional qualifications which our students can secure in their specialist area of study. I am indebted to Alan Bailey and Nick Han for their many conversations with our Sponsors which has enabled the College to offer a structured level of learning beyond just GCSEs and BTECs to our students, as the following illustrates:

Please click on either of the following to view our new post-16 curriculum offers:

Computing Curriculum Page
Construction Curriculum Page

The courses and qualifications outlined above are an important aspect of our students' progression and I hope that every student recognises and takes advantage of the opportunity to put themselves in an even stronger position in their specialist area.

16+ Work Placements

As indicated in the previous newsletter, **Sarah Newall** has been liaising with our Sponsors and local employers to broaden their participation in our students' learning and opportunities for 2017-18. An illustration of our evolving practice is the significant increase in the range of work placements available to our Sixth Form students with:

- Aquaforest
- Chiltern Rangers
- Cisco
- Framework Digital
- McAfee
- Network Rail
- Rackspace
- Taylor Wimpey

In addition, we are planning with our Sponsors and employer Partners how they can infuse more fully the Key Stage 4 curriculum – so, lots of work is going on to enhance all our students' learning.

For an updated summary of the various engagements with our employers and Sponsors in the current year, please click here.

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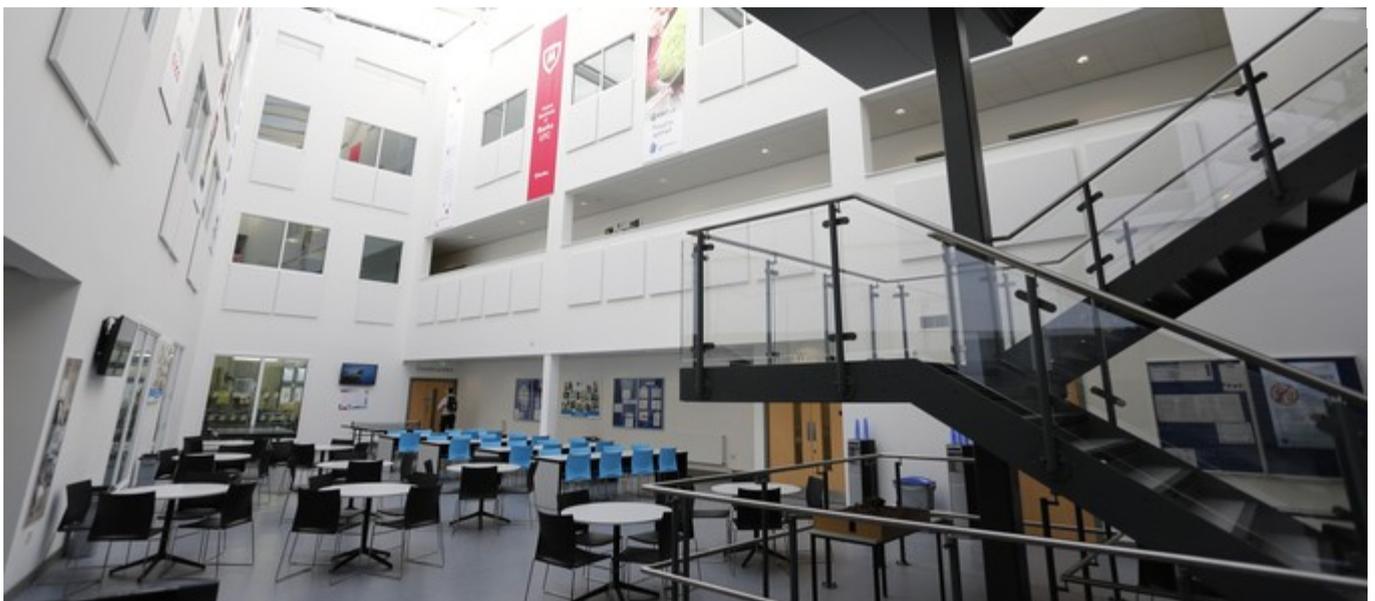*Employers and organisations involved in our curriculum lately, include the following:*

Staffing for September 2017

We have virtually completed our recruitment of new colleagues for September 2017 and our new teaching appointments include:

- **Mr J Dunkley** – to lead Science and the Key Stage 4 curriculum.
- **Mrs J Newman** – to lead English.
- **Mr J Conneely**– to teach Physics and Mathematics.

I am heartened by the addition of these new staff and equally, I am especially indebted to **Mark Thompson** who has led English during the last year and who will be leaving us shortly - his forty years of experience have been invaluable and I am truly appreciative of his goodwill to the UTC and wish him every joy in his "(re) retirement".

The College Day for 2017-18

We are in the midst of reviewing our practice(s) in the current year, rationalising what has worked well and where there are aspects we can improve. This monitoring and evaluating process will of course shape our Development Plan for 2017/18 and I welcome any feedback from parents on how and where we can further enhance the day-to-day work in the UTC.

I know that one slight tweak of our day-to-day practice will involve that old chestnut, namely "the times of the day". It might be helpful if I summarise our current thinking on this:

8.30am: Students on site.
8.40am: Student briefings/Assembly/Tutorial.
9-11am: Two, one-hour lessons.
11-11.15am: Break.
11.15am-1.15pm: Two, one-hour lessons.
1.15-2pm: Lunch.
2-4pm: Two, one-hour lessons on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday (College day ends at 4pm).
2-3pm: A single, one-hour lesson on Wednesday and Friday (College day ends at 3pm).

So, it is virtually the same arrangement as this year. These times are incorporated into the outlined calendar (below) for 2017-18.

Key Term Dates for 2017-18

Autumn Term 2017

Mon 4 & Tues 5 Sep: Staff Training Days, College is closed to students.

Wed 6 Sep: Term starts, Key Stage 4 students on site for 8.30am, 16+ for 10am.

Fri 20 Oct: College finishes for Half Term at 3pm.

W/C Mon 23 Oct: Half Term.

Mon 30 Oct: Staff Training Day, College is closed to students.

Tues 31 Oct: College resumes at the normal time.

Tues 19 Dec: College term ends at 1.15pm.

Wed 20 Dec - Tues 2 Jan: Christmas closure.

Spring Term 2018

Wed 3 Jan: Staff Training Day, College is closed to students.

Thurs 4 Jan: Term begins, students on site for 8.30am.

Fri 9 Feb: College finishes for Half Term at 3pm.

W/C Mon 12 Feb: Half Term.

Mon 19 Feb: Staff Training Day, College is closed to students.

Tues 20 Feb: College resumes at the normal time.

Thurs 29 March: College term ends at 1.15pm.

Fri 30 March – Fri 13 April: Easter closure.

Summer Term 2018

Mon 16 April: Term begins, students on site for 8.30am (Mon 7 May is a Bank Holiday).

Fri 25 May: College finishes for Half Term at 3pm.

W/C Mon 28 May: Half Term.

Mon 4 June: College resumes at the normal time.

Tues 24 July: College year ends at 1.15pm.

A fuller summary of events, and our assessment practices (including calendar) for 2017-18 will be published in the final Newsletter for the current year (which will be distributed on Friday 14th July).

Closing Words From the Principal

The staff have worked tremendously this year to support all our students and I am indebted to everyone for their good will, support and commitment. We know from our (internal) data that on a like-for-like comparison the performance of our Year 11 students should in many aspects exceed that of their predecessors – but we also know that there is a new assessment regime in place for GCSEs this summer, so like many, many schools we keep our fingers crossed on their behalf! Certainly at Sixth Form level we are confident of another year of excellent results in our specialist courses and of the successful progression of our students to both university, higher-level apprenticeships and into the workplace (as well as for Year 12 students continuing on to the Extended Diploma provision).

So, after a challenging year in 2015-16, the past year has been one of significant progress and we are all looking forward to welcoming our largest ever Year 10 intake in September – we are on the up!

Thank you one and all for your goodwill. I hope you take heart from the collective progress of the College.

A reminder that Key Dates for 2016-17 are available on our website.