



WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

Update on Weekend Activities

As a full-boarding school, Winchester offers its pupils more time and opportunity to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Just as importantly, spending time together through the extended day and weekends creates important opportunities for friendship – which might be through structured activities, informal and spontaneous games and recreation, or the simple pleasures of spending time together ‘doing nothing’ (which, in itself, can contribute powerfully to a sense of community and belonging).

Teenagers like hobbies and being active and sleep and food and autonomy in how they spend their time. They also benefit from some light-touch guidance from adults which might get them out of their rooms, off their mobile phones and into something which, they quickly find, is more fun. How do we do that here?

Saturdays are typically very busy with a structured day, and Sundays are mostly free – offering plenty of options to make the most of what we have to offer, whilst also allowing pupils to make their own choices and have some down-time if they need it.

There is a wide array of optional activities on Sunday overseen by staff, of which pupils can take advantage with their friends. For instance, on any given Sunday, the Sports Centre is open from 9:30am for squash, fives and use of the gym. The Music School and Moberly Library open at 11:00am – which pupils use not just for individual music practice or study, but also for their own band or ensemble rehearsals and for play readings and book clubs or group study.

After lunch, both Art School and Mill are open and staffed, so they can pursue their own projects. If they don't have their own ideas, specific projects are planned – for instance, this term, pupils have been able to develop and practise silver-smithing techniques through the design and creation of a pendant, make their own desk tidy or pen holder, and learn about bike maintenance.

If they are still itching for entertainment on Sunday evening, we have the weekly Game Soc (which focuses on multi-player, immersive games) and Role Soc (for games built around group improv). VI Book also have access to their common room between 2:00-5:00pm.

Alongside these regular offerings, all sorts of things are initiated by the pupils themselves (which we greatly encourage) or instigated by their dons and Housemasters. Up to house, they have games rooms, Yards (always in high demand), music rooms; they can have a movie night, watch sport on Sky, read on the sofa in the library, play table-tennis... And we haven't mentioned that they are free to use our extensive grounds (whether a croquet lawn or football pitch or cricket nets) or our beautiful 250-acre estate, as well as going up town when and where Housemasters allow. Every week, all these options are advertised to pupils, who are given freedom to choose and, sometimes, a gentle nudge by their Housemaster.

Overall, our approach is framed by the essential elements which, as we know from both experience and research, underpin well-being: autonomy, competence and relatedness. We want our young people to have a real say in how they spend their time, although we are not embarrassed to push them away from bad choices (such as spending all day on their phones). We want them to have the opportunity try new things and build new skills, to use their initiative and follow their leadership instincts, to collaborate and play together and develop interpersonal skills – and thus build their

confidence. We want them to have extended periods of unstructured time simply to be with their peers – sometimes bickering as families do, more often actively playing together or, in the best sense, wasting time together. But ultimately, we want them having fun and creating shared memories which encourage growth and maturity, and feed enduring bonds of friendship.

Headmaster