



Student Mentors: Keeping Your House and Belongings Safe

Unoccupied houses can be prime targets for burglars, as it's easy to get in and out without being discovered. However, there is no need to panic. There are plenty things you can do to make it look like you're home, even if you're not.

Invest in a light timer such as [these](#) from Wilko, or [these](#) from Homebase. You can set it so a lamp switches on in the evening and makes it look like you're home. This is much more effective than just leaving a light on for a week, and saves you wasting money on electricity you're not using.

Make sure you **take all your valuables with you** when you go back! If you can't, make sure to **register your valuables**. Head over to **Immobilise** to add your belongings to the **UK's National Property Register**. You'll normally have to note down the **make, model and serial number** of any electronics (eg. laptops/phones) or submit photos of things like jewellery.

This register is **used by the Police** to track down the owners of stolen goods – so if they recover your stolen laptop and you've logged it on the register, they'll be able to return it to you.

To save money and energy, it's a good idea to **turn off the boiler** if you're not going to be there for a while, especially during the summer. Whilst over the winter you'll need to leave it on to prevent the pipes freezing - over the summer this won't be an issue due to the warmer temperatures.

Make sure all of the appliances, such as TVs and radios, are **switched off at the wall**. Not only will this reduce your electricity bill, it also means the house will be safer as there is **less risk of a power surge**.

If you're not taking all of your belongings home with you, **move everything out of sight**. If someone were to look through the window, it means you won't be left vulnerable if your things are on display.

Don't broadcast on social media that you are leaving your property empty. Make sure your Twitter and Facebook account have the necessary privacy settings. You'd be surprised who might see your "going home" tweet and how easily it could be worked out where you live and how long your property will be empty.

Most importantly of all, make sure you **check, double check, and then check again, that everything is locked up** before you leave.

Stay safe, and look after yourselves.