



Specialising in English and The Arts

Our ref: SCR / JBN

March 2013

Dear Parent / Guardian

I write to consult with you regarding a change to the college day from 1 June 2013. Currently, all students have a very long lunchtime; I would like to reduce the lunchtime to thirty minutes. This will still give students enough time to have their lunch as we will still operate the split lunchtimes. The college will then finish at 3.10pm each day rather than 3.30pm. There will be no change to the length of lessons or PD time each day. Our after school Learning Zone will run from 3.10pm until 4.30pm from Monday to Thursday. If you have any responses regarding this proposal you can email me on enquiries@unity-college.com or in writing by Friday 19 April 2013.

The college closes for the end of term holiday at 3.30pm on Thursday 28 March 2013 for the Easter break and re-opens on Monday 15 April 2013 at 8.45am.

The college will be closed for the May Bank holiday on Monday 6 May 2013. College will close after Friday 24 May and there is a staff training day on Monday 3 June 2013. When students return to college after the Whitsun break on Tuesday 4 June 2013, they will move up into their next year groups. Therefore the current year 7 will become year 8; year 8 will become year 9 and so on. This will mean that your son / daughter will have a new timetable and may have new teachers. Year 8 have recently selected their option preferences for their GCSE studies. We will be writing to parents shortly to inform you of which subjects your child has been allocated.

Year 11 will continue with their current timetable until Friday 24 May 2013. After the Spring Bank break revision sessions will be available for year 11 students prior to their examinations. When we return after the Easter break year 11 will therefore only have 29 days left in their normal lessons. Further information about your child's GCSE timetable can be found on the college website. Your child should now be preparing for their GCSE examinations and revising each evening and over the weekend. A reminder that the Learning Zone is open after school, Monday to Thursday and it is open every day before college from 8am to 8.40am which can further support your child's revision schedule. Between now and your child's final examination it is critical that they are focussed on their revision and preparing for their examinations. There are a number of revision clubs running to further support your child between now and the GCSE examinations. As a parent if you are concerned about your child being very stressed about the GCSE examinations do not hesitate to contact your child's House Leader for support.

Year 11 will be expected to be in full uniform between now and their final examination. They are also expected to be in their full uniform for their GCSE examinations. After their final GCSE examination if any year 11 child would like to donate any part of their uniform to the college it would be much appreciated.

I write to reinforce to your child that all students are to stay on site throughout the college day unless they are going to Burnley College as part of their curriculum. We have had a few incidents with students leaving the college



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site during lunch time. **If your child is caught off site I will consider a fixed term exclusion for not following college rules.**

Students' uniforms are checked daily as the students arrive into college. If students are not in their full uniform after the Easter break they will be sent straight home to get their uniform and this will continue from now onwards if your child arrives without the correct uniform. Please ensure that your child is in the correct full uniform every day. It is expected that students will be in full uniform including a blazer. It is essential that all students are in full uniform at all times creating a "dressed for business" atmosphere throughout the college. If there are any financial difficulties at home preventing your child being in full uniform can you please contact your child's House Leader at college. Outdoor coats and hoodies should not be worn in college; these should be removed on arrival to college and put in student lockers/bags until the end of the day.

A reminder that jewellery at Unity College is not permitted except for a watch. **We do not allow any piercings. Hair styles and colour must also conform to a "dressed for business" ethos with no unnatural hair colours or extreme hair styles.** For those students who wish to wear makeup this should be minimal and subtle, otherwise students will be asked to remove it. Students must wear all black shoes or trainers - no coloured logos to be visible.

There is always ongoing publicity in the national newspapers about drugs and weapons being used by students in and outside of school. **If a student is caught selling drugs to anyone at Unity College that student will be permanently excluded immediately.**

I also want to ensure that Unity College is a safe environment for students and staff. Following the guidance from the Department for Education and Skills on "Screening and searching of pupils for weapons" there will be spot checks by myself and Mrs Hodgson, Deputy Headteacher, using hand held metal detectors. This measure is a precaution and it is not meant to alarm parents or students, it is intended to ensure that we do not have knives in college and that we continue to have a safe learning environment at Unity College. **If a child is caught in possession of any knife (including a penknife) at Unity College I will not hesitate to permanently exclude them from Unity College.**

Unity College is a smoke free college. We have a clear policy that is available to read on our website. If your child is caught smoking on the college site I will not hesitate to inform law enforcement officers and encourage them to issue an immediate £50 fine to the child. We will also follow the sanctions set out in the policy with any child caught smoking on the college premises. Electronic cigarettes are also not allowed. **Lighters and matches are NOT allowed in college and if students are caught in possession of these items there will be a serious sanction.**

Due to the sensitivity of our smoke alarms in college I can no longer allow students to bring in aerosols eg deodorant or hairspray, however roll on deodorants are permitted.



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A reminder that if your child brings their mobile phone, iPod, skateboard, bike or any other personal equipment to college that we cannot take responsibility for it or pay out compensation if it is lost or stolen. The students bring them to college at their own risk. We still have a number of student lockers available if your child would like to reserve one. Please ask your child to see Mr Parrish at Internal Reception for further details.

In October 2011 I informed parents and students about the new "Mobile Phone Policy" at Unity College. We have had a huge amount of support from parents which has helped reduce the number of students using their mobile phones in lessons. If you are happy for your child to bring a mobile phone / iPod into college and have not yet completed the consent form then your child can collect one from Internal Reception to bring home so that both you and your child can sign that you agree to the conditions of the policy. Your child can then return the form back to Internal Reception.

There will be a **Parents Council meeting on Tuesday 14 May at 5.30pm**. This is a very proactive group and new parent members will be very welcome. Please let Mrs Hudson at Unity College know in advance if you wish to attend by emailing her on: s.hudson@unity-college.com.

Please inform us if you have a change of address, telephone number or other contact details. It is vital that we keep your child's records up to date. If your child needs to take any medication whilst in college they must bring in a letter from a parent / guardian with full authorisation and instructions. Your child must take it to the first aid room. The medication must be clearly labelled. Any medication will be stored securely in the first aid room. If there is a medical emergency it will be the decision of the first aider and a member of the senior leadership team as to whether an ambulance is needed.

Could I take this opportunity to remind you about certain attendance issues. Holidays should not be taken in term time and will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances and/or the students attendance is above 95%. All holiday requests should be made in writing to the Headteacher prior to booking the holiday. We will continue to refer for penalty notices for unauthorised holidays and for persistent poor attendance. I'd like to thank those parents who have supported us in this matter and continue to do so.

There is also a focus on the punctuality of students and to this aim we have set procedures for dealing with students who are late. This includes the use of detentions, internal exclusions and ultimately the possibility of penalty notices for parents of persistent offenders. In addition students who are late after the register has closed will be given a U code in the register instead of a late mark and this will count as an absence from the morning session. This will affect their % attendance and the usual procedures for poor attendance will apply.

Under the Data Protection Act, all schools must inform parents and guardians about Privacy Notices (formally known as Fair Processing Notices) which relates to the personal data that is held in the college about your child. These details can be found on our website, or alternatively, if you don't have access to the internet a hard copy can be



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collected from college. Please note that all college policies including our safeguarding and child protection policies can be found on the website.

I urge you as parents to check if your child is entitled to **Free School Meals** and have not yet claimed them. By parents claiming this entitlement extra funds come into college for students. If you have any questions about your entitlement please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Clark at the college.

I would be grateful if you would read this letter through with your child so that they fully understand the expectations of the college. I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support to Unity College as we work together to offer the very best learning opportunities and experiences for your child.

Yours faithfully

S Cryer (Mrs)
Headteacher