



Unity College

*Specialising in English and The Arts*

Our ref: SCR/JBN

Summer 2013

Dear Parent / Guardian

I write to you at the end of our academic year at Unity College. The college will re-open for all students at 8.45am on Monday 9 September 2013. Students can arrive from 8am onwards, with lessons starting at 8.45am prompt. For those students who arrive early they may wish to use the Learning Zone, which opens at 8.00am to 8.40am, Monday to Friday. It also opens after school, until 4.30pm. Staff are available during these times to assist students with their homework or any questions they may have.

The government has amended legislation relating to school attendance from September 2013. This decision has been made to ensure schools and local authorities take a much firmer stance on unnecessary absence and to dispel the myth held by many parents that there is an entitlement to time off school for holiday in term time. It is a legal requirement for parents/guardians to obtain the permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school in order to take a holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for holidays during term time and may be issued with a Penalty Notice (£120 per parent per child) if they do so without prior arrangements with the Headteacher. All penalty notices are issued by the County Council and are not administered or collected by schools.

**Therefore, from 1 September 2013 Unity College will NOT authorise any holiday unless I am satisfied that there are 'exceptional circumstances' to warrant the granting of leave.**

If your child is poorly can you please contact the attendance team at college first thing in the morning. Can you also try to ensure that students do not have time off college for doctors or dentists appointments unless it is an emergency appointment. At Unity College there are a number of trips during the college day. Students will NOT be allowed to attend any of these trips if they do not have good attendance.

There will be a **big focus on punctuality** from September 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.

**Students must be in full uniform every day. If they are not in full uniform please expect them to be sent home.** All year 7 will be given a college tie on Monday 9 September 2013. 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 Unity College. It is essential that all students are in full uniform at all times creating a "dressed for business" atmosphere throughout the college. 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

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students will be asked to remove it. **Students must wear all black shoes or trainers, no coloured logos to be visible.**

**If a student arrives in college with an inappropriate hair colour/style or footwear that does not meet the college policy please expect them to be sent home.** A reminder that jewellery at Unity College is not permitted except for a watch. We do not allow any piercings. **If your child wishes to have a piercing please can you ensure that it is done at the beginning of the summer holiday so that it can be taken out for the start of college in September.**

A reminder that the first port of call for any concerns regarding your child is via your child's Personal Development Tutor (PD tutor). You can contact the PD Tutor via telephone on 01282 683010. You can also contact your child's PD tutor via email on [enquiries@unity-college.com](mailto:enquiries@unity-college.com).

I am concerned that we still have some children coming to college each day without the correct equipment for learning. Can you please ensure that your child has everything they need each day including the basic writing/drawing implements eg a pen and pencil, also any specialist equipment/clothing eg ingredients/PE kit for their lessons.

**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. You can email this information to [k.preston@unity-college.com](mailto:k.preston@unity-college.com).

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.

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

We have recently reviewed our approach to setting homework and there will be a few changes from September. Year 7 and 8 students will continue to receive ILAs (Independent Learning Activities). Year 7 students will also complete some of their ILAs in their new Learning Log books. We are also publishing a KS4 homework timetable on the college website to indicate how homework is spread across the week for students in years 9, 10 and 11.

At Unity College we have a 'consequences system' for dealing with poor behaviour. This builds on the existing consequences that we have in place to reward students through the VIVO system. All incidents of poor behaviour

are now logged and tracked electronically and all students and staff follow the same set of guidelines. The system has proved a huge success in the short time that it has been running and we look forward to further improvement as the year goes on. We will be including information about the consequences that your child has accrued on progress reports throughout the year. A full copy of the consequences system can be viewed on the college website.

Detention can be used as a sanction at Unity College for a range of reasons. Detention may be given at break time, lunchtime or after college. Parents must be given at least twenty four hours notice for a detention that will occur after the college day.

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.

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 write to reinforce to your child that all students are to stay on site throughout the college day. We have had a few incidents with students leaving the college site during lunch time. **If your child is caught off site without prior permission I will consider a fixed term exclusion for not following college rules.**

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 immediately.**

Unity College is a smoke free college. We have a clear policy that is available to read on our website which includes students, parents and visitors. 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. This includes e-cigarettes.

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 go to Internal Reception for further details where they can request a locker key for a deposit of £5. The deposit will be refunded when they finish their education at Unity College.

The mobile phone policy that we have in place is working extremely well and I take this opportunity to thank you for your support with this. 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 24 September between 5.30pm-7pm**. Existing 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](mailto:s.hudson@unity-college.com).

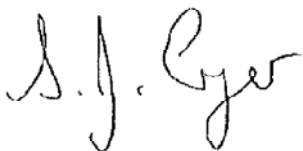
I ask that if you are dropping your child off before college or picking them up after college that you meet them at the front of college and not the back. The back of college is already heavily congested with parents picking and dropping off youngsters at Brunshaw Primary School and any more cars in that area would be extremely dangerous and cause unnecessary stress to the local neighbours. When collecting your child from the front of college or Towneley Holmes please make sure you are aware of your surroundings as approximately 1000 children may be leaving on foot and crossing roads within the vicinity.

I enclose the safeguarding parental booklet for you to read which explains our safeguarding procedures at Unity 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