May 2019

Dear Parent / Carer

I am delighted that you have chosen Unity College for your child’s secondary education. At Unity College we believe in a three-way partnership of students, parents and staff working together with one aim in mind: providing the very best education that we can for every student. Parents are vital to our success, and I hope that you will take an active and inclusive role in college life.

I am writing to you to offer your child an exciting opportunity during their last half term at primary school before transferring to Unity College in September. All the year 6 students who are coming to Unity College in September have the opportunity to spend four days at Unity College on Thursday 20 June and Friday 21 June, and the following week Thursday 27 June and Friday 28 June at Unity College. Your child’s primary school is aware of this arrangement and fully supports this transition programme**. If there are planned trips and activities for year 6 in primary school on any of these Thursdays or Fridays, then these activities will take priority and students will attend their primary school on those days.**

Please complete all the permission forms enclosed with this letter and return them to the main reception at Unity College as soon as possible. These can either be dropped off in person, posted to the college or your child can bring them in on their first transition day on Thursday 20 June 2019. The permission forms enclosed with this letter are as follows:-

* Mobile Phone / Electronic Devices Policy
* Medical Information
* Student Registration Form
* Home College Agreement
* Cashless Catering and ParentPay
* Locker Key Request

Other information enclosed with this letter:-

* Free School Meals
* Our Vision
* Holiday Dates
* Operation Encompass

The documents listed above are available on our school website. They can be found in the ‘Year 6 transition’ tab of the ‘Parents’ section. We will regularly update the website with information that you and your child will find useful for their transition from primary school to Unity College.

On the transition days, year 6 students will be expected to make their own way to and from Unity College. Your child must be at Unity College by 8.40am at the latest and will finish college slightly earlier at 2.50pm on these days. A free lunch will be provided on each of the days that your child attends Unity College in June 2019. We would like students to come to college in their usual primary school uniform.

This transition programme will give your child huge benefits as it is a fantastic way for them to get to know their new teachers, build friendships and explore their exciting new college building and facilities. Our aspiration is to build on students’ learning from the primary phase to help us set appropriate challenges for the next stage of their learning progression before your child even starts at Unity College in September 2019.

On **Wednesday 10 July 2019** we will be holding our **Year 6 Parents’ Information Evening**. Due to being oversubscribed again this year there will be a meeting at 5.00pm and one at 6.00pm. You can choose to attend either meeting. There will be no need for your child to attend on the evening but it is very important that you as a parent or carer are able to attend so that you gather the information that you need before your child starts at Unity College in September. If you do have childcare issues, your child is welcome to come with you on the evening and will be supervised in college during the meeting.

Lancashire County Council have asked Unity College to take thirty additional students into our new year 7 for September 2019 on top of our normal admission number. This has been agreed and in order to accommodate the additional students, Lancashire County Council have handed over the full use of the City Learning Centre (which is attached to Unity College) to Unity College from September 2019. There will be some alterations to the CLC over the summer break for the space to be used effectively by students and staff. The CLC will be relocated in Burnley.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about Unity College. I attach a copy of the college vision for you to read so that, as a key stakeholder at Unity College you can share in the college’s aspirations and support us as we strive to offer an outstanding education for your child. As part of this vision we have a huge focus on literacy and oracy with an ambition that all students read well and develop a love of reading. **Your child will be expected to have a book to read in their school bag every day from September.**

Your child will start at Unity College on Monday 2 September 2019. College starts at 8.45am so students will be expected to be in the building by 8.40am at the latest. The college day ends at 3.10pm each day. ALL students are expected to stay on site throughout the college day. At Unity College we offer a free morning club from 8.00am-8.40am each day and a free after school homework club from 3.10pm-4.30pm Monday to Thursday. Your child does not need to book into these sessions, they just need to go to the ICT rooms where staff will be available to supervise students and support them with their homework. We also offer a wide range of after school activities and your child will find out more about these once they start in September.

I have enclosed a holiday list for 2019/2020 for your information. Holidays should not be taken in term time and will not be authorised. 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. The holiday dates are available on the website and I draw your attention to the two-week break in October 2019 where many parents have taken the advantage to book a holiday.

If your child is ill, could you please contact the attendance team at college first thing in the morning. Please try to ensure that your child does not have time off college for doctor or dentist appointments unless it is an emergency appointment. Could I remind you 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. If you have difficulty in getting through to staff via the telephone, our website has a list of useful email addresses to enable parents to contact their child’s House Leader, Student Leader or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

I 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 are sometimes spot checks by myself and Mrs Hodgson, Deputy Headteacher, using handheld 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. We have had this system in place for the last ten years ensuring that all members of our college community are safe. If a child is caught in possession of any knife at Unity College, I will not hesitate to permanently exclude them from Unity College. There is always on-going 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 or with the intent to sell drugs to anyone at Unity College that student will be permanently excluded immediately.

Unity College is a smoke free site. 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. Additionally, 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 and are treated in the same way as cigarettes. Lighters and matches are NOT allowed in college and, if students are caught in possession of these items, there will be a serious sanction. We have regular searches of students to ensure that they do not have cigarettes on them in college. Any cigarettes found are confiscated and destroyed.

We have a cashless catering system at Unity College and students will be trained on how to use this on their transition visits. Your child will have their thumb print scanned and I attach information about this system. Your child will be able to credit their account with cash when they arrive on the morning of Monday 2 September 2019. You will receive information regarding our on line payments via Parent Pay if you wish to use this system. For students on free school meals they will have their account credited each day for a free meal.

Students must be in full uniform every day. The college jumper is optional, but every child MUST have a blazer. If there are any financial difficulties at home preventing your child being in full uniform, could you please contact us 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. There are a number of retailers that sell Unity College uniform and PE kit. Further information regarding this will be available on Wednesday 10 July at our Year 6 Parents’ Information Evening.

Hair styles and colour must also conform to a “dressed for business” ethos with no unnatural hair colours or extreme hair styles. 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.** Spray cosmetics including deodorants, hairsprays etc are also not permitted at Unity College due to the sensitivity of the fire alarms.

All students in year 7 will receive a free college tie. The ties are in House colours as we have a House system at Unity College. Your child will be allocated to one of our Houses; North, South, East or West House. Your child will be given the correct coloured tie on Monday 2 September depending on which House they are in.

As so many parents drop off and pick up their child from college, we have a system in place that all parents need to adhere to. I ask that, in the mornings, if you are dropping your child off in a car that you drop your child off on the turning circle only. Please ensure that you park in the drop off area. Please leave promptly after dropping off your child. Do not park on the college car park, including the disabled parking bays. Please drive slowly and give students the right of way on the crossing at the entrance of the college. Alternatively, park in the pay and display car park and your child can make their way to college from there.

At the end of the college day parents ARE NOT to enter the college site to collect their child and access for parents in cars will be prohibited from 2.30pm until 3.20pm. Please park on the car park opposite the college if you are collecting your child. I am aware it is a pay and display car park but as long as you do not leave your vehicle you will not have to pay.

Please park sensibly on the pay and display car park to allow cars to enter and leave safely. DO NOT park along Towneley Holmes Road as you may be issued with a fixed penalty notice. I also request that if you are parking a distance away from the college, for example at the rear of Todmorden Road or Woodgrove Road, that you park considerately for residents.

The only cars able to access the college site between 2.30pm and 3.20pm are those collecting a child who has a disability. The speed limit on Towneley Holmes is 20 miles per hour and on the college site it is 5 miles per hour.

The roads behind the college are already heavily congested with parents picking and dropping off youngsters at Brunshaw Primary School, so I ask that you only use the front of the college to collect and drop off your child. Any more cars in that area would be extremely dangerous and cause unnecessary stress to the local residents.

If you are picking up your child from an after-college club, you will be able to collect your child from the turning circle on the college site. If you are coming into college during the college day for a meeting you will be able to park on the college site including the turning circle.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) took effect from 25 May 2018. Unity College have appointed HY Education Law and HR Specialists as their Data Protection Officer. The contact details are:

HY

1 Reed House

Hunter’s Lane

Rochdale

OL16 1YL

E mail INFO@WEARHY.COM

There is further information available on the college website regarding GDPR.

Our college building is fantastic and will offer your child a brilliant learning environment over the next five years. You can find lots of interesting information on the college website [www.unity-college.com](http://www.unity-college.com). On the website there is also a specific information about transition.

If you have any concerns or worries over the next few weeks please do not hesitate to contact our Year 6 Transition Manager, Mrs Oakley, at college either via telephone or via email on c.oakley@unity.lancs.sch.uk

I look forward to meeting you on Wednesday 10 July 2019 at 5.00pm or 6.00pm for our Year 6 Parents’ Information evening.

Yours faithfully

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S Cryer (Mrs)

Headteacher