Our ref: SCR/EJO

10 February 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian

The college closes for February half-term at the end of the day on **Friday 14 February 2020** and re-opens on **Monday 24 February 2020.**  The college will close for the Easter break after college on Friday 3 April 2020 and will re-open on Monday 20 April 2020.  The college will be closed for the May bank holiday on Friday 8 May 2020.   A reminder that lessons start promptly at 8.45am and ALL students are expected to be in college by 8.40am at the latest.

The college has been asked by Lancashire County Council to increase its numbers to accommodate the increasing demand for places at Unity College.  In order to accommodate this increase Lancashire County Council have agreed to a new build to give the college additional classrooms.  It is essential that any new building work does not disturb the learning of the current students at college. The new building is anticipated to be ready for September 2021 and the college to be at full capacity by September 2025.  I will write to you in due course when I have further information.

I have been extremely impressed by how smart the students look in their uniform.  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.Please ensure that your child is in the correct full uniform every day.  A reminder that jewellery at Unity College is not permitted except for a watch. We do not allow any piercings**.**The fashionable over the knee socks **are NOT permitted** at college as they are not appropriate for school.  **I have noticed that some students are wearing too much makeup for college. Can you remind your child that, if they wear makeup, this should be minimal and subtle, otherwise they will be asked to remove it when they arrive at college in the morning.**

If your child is staying in college after 3.10pm, they should either be at a club/activity or at the Learning Zone where there is staff supervision.  Students cannot just sit in the canteen area after the end of the college day as there is no supervision available. A reminder that the Learning Zone is open after school, Monday to Friday until 4.15pm.

The parking situation is much improved.  A reminder that in the mornings parents can come onto the college site and drop their 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.   At the end of the college day parents **ARE NOT able t**o enter the college site to collect their child; 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, 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 will be issued with a fixed penalty notice.  The only cars able to access the college between 2.30pm and 3.20pm are those collecting a child who has a disability.  Please refrain from parking at the back of college as this also causes congestion for local residents.  If you are picking your child up from an after-college club, you will be able to collect them 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.

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 having the intent to sell 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 at Unity College, I will not hesitate to permanently exclude them from Unity College.**

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

If you need to contact a member of staff about any issues, this can be done via telephone, email or letter.  It is not always possible to respond immediately due to teaching commitments, therefore we will endeavour to respond to you within 24 hours.  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.  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.

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 overall attendance percentage and the usual procedures for poor attendance will apply.

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 of Unity College as we work together to offer the very best learning opportunities and experiences for your child.

**Dates for your diary**

* Year 8 Parents’ Evening (X Half) – Wednesday 4 March 2020 from 4.00pm – 6.15pm
* Year 8 Parents’ Evening (Y Half) – Wednesday 11 March 2020 from 4.00pm – 6.15pm
* Year 8 options meetings (parent and student to meet with a senior member of staff to agree option choices for their GCSEs)– week beginning 9 March 2020
* Year 10 examinations – week beginning Monday 16 March 2020
* Year 8 examination – week beginning Monday 4 May 2020
* Year 7 examinations – week beginning Monday 8 June 2020
* Year 9 examinations – week beginning Monday 22 June 2020
* Start of the year 11 GCSE examinations Monday 11 May – Thursday 18 June 2020
* Year 11 Prom – Friday 19 June 2020

Yours faithfully



S Cryer (Mrs)

Headteacher