**Dear parent/carer,**

You will be aware of some announcements from the government last week regarding mass Covid-19 testing in schools and a staggered start to next term for students. I think that there may be further announcements between now and 4th January 2021. I will, of course, contact you via the website over the holiday with any further changes. Please check the website regularly for any updates.

The current situation is (as of this morning, Tuesday 22 December):

**The government wants regular testing of both staff and students from 4th January 2021.**

**Only year 11, vulnerable children and the children of key workers will come on site to Unity College the week beginning 4th January 2021.**

**Students in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will stay at home and access their learning remotely and return on Monday 11th January 2021. All students will be expected to start learning from home at their normal timetabled time each day i.e. lessons start at 8.45am. Students are expected to log into all live learning sessions.**

**If you need passwords resetting to access remote learning please email** **loginhelp@unity.lancs.sch.uk** **If you need any other support to access remote learning please contact Mrs Hammond-Phillips by emailing** **z.hammond-phillips@unity.lancs.sch.uk**

**If your child is entitled to free school meals we will be in contact regarding how you can claim if your child is learning from home the week beginning Monday 4 January 2021.**

**Who comes to school on Monday 4th January 2021?**

**All year 11 students**, **children of key workers and vulnerable children should attend Unity College as normal from Monday 4 January 2021 at their normal time, in full uniform and enter the college through their normal door. If PE is on their timetable they should bring their PE kit with them that day.**

**Year 11**

**All year 11** should attend college as normal on Monday 4th January 2021. The start time for year 11 is **8.30am** and students should arrive at their normal entrance. Year 11 will be taught in their normal rooms by their teachers.

Please do not send any child back to Unity College with Covid-19 symptoms, or if anyone at home has Covid-19 symptoms.

**Children of key workers**

The Government published a list of "key workers" whose children will continue to be cared for at school amid the coronavirus pandemic.

**Health and social care**

Frontline health and social care staff such as doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, as well as support and specialist staff in the health and social care sector. In addition, it includes those working in supply chains including producers and distributors of medicines and personal protective equipment.

**Education and childcare**

Nursery, teaching staff and social workers.

**Key public services**

Those required to run the justice system, religious staff, as well as those responsible for managing the deceased, and journalists providing public service broadcasting.

**Local and national government**

Administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response or delivering essential public services, including payment of benefits.

**Food and other necessary goods**

Those involved in the production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery of food.

**Public safety and national security**

Police, support staff, Ministry of Defence civilian staff and armed forces personnel, fire and rescue staff, and those responsible for border security, prisons and probation.

**Transport**

Those who will keep air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response.

**Utilities, communication and financial services**

Staff required to keep oil, gas, electricity, water and sewerage operations running. Staff in the civil nuclear, chemical and telecommunications sectors. Those in postal services and those working to provide essential financial services.

**If you meet the criteria and require a place in school for your child for the week of 4th January 2021 please email** **a.hodgson@unity.lancs.sch.uk** **by Friday 1 January 2021 so that we can make the necessary arrangements. Email the following information - Name of your child and year group / your job title and place of work / your line managers email and phone number so that we can contact them.**

**Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children are:

* Children who have a social worker or those with special education needs or an educational health and care plan (EHCP) are considered to be vulnerable children.
* Children who are at risk of becoming NEET
* Children who are suffering with mental health issues

If your child falls into any of the above categories and **you need your child to attend college from the 4th January 2021** please could you email a.hodgson@unity.lancs.sch.uk by Friday 1st January 2021 stating which category your child falls into.

**It is essential that parents / carers contact us prior to Friday 1st January 2021 if they need supervision for their child so that we can plan accordingly.**

**Please note any key worker children or vulnerable children coming into college that week will be kept in year bubbles and it is likely that they will access their lessons on the computer in the same way students do from home.**

All staff will be in school and teaching, but we will be running all year 7, 8, 9 and 10 lessons remotely.

**Testing at Unity College**

The government has announced that testing schemes will be introduced in secondary schools in the new year, and that the return after the Christmas break will be staggered as the system is being set up.

**At this stage Unity College will not have in place a testing system on site for 4th January 2021. When we do have a system in place we will not run any testing programme without first informing parents / carers about it. Please do not worry, there would be no circumstance where your child would be forced to have a test against your wishes. Further details will follow in January 2021.**

Take care and a Happy Christmas to you all

Mrs S Cryer

Headteacher