Our ref: SCR/EJO

May 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

It has been a delight to have all the students back into college since March 2021. To date we have had no Covid-19 cases in college since we re-opened and I take this opportunity to congratulate all students on how well they have adhered to all the safety precautions we have put in place to minimise the risk of the spread of Covid-19. Students MUST carry on adhering to all Covid-19 procedures that we have put in place until further notice including wearing a face covering unless exempt.

You will be aware that Unity College is expanding and a large new building funded by Lancashire County Council, is currently being built behind the astro turf. The new building should have been ready for September 2021, but due to Covid-19 the building work has been delayed and will now not be ready until Spring 2022. The new building will consist of six extra Science classrooms, 11 general classrooms, a new library, an additional Food Technology room and additional PE changing facilities. This is a very exciting time for the college however, between September 2021 and the opening of the new building, space will be at a premium due to all years being oversubscribed. The City Learning Centre has now been fully amalgamated into Unity College to give us three additional classrooms and additional canteen space.

The college will close for the half term holiday on Friday 28 May 2021 at 3.10pm and will re-open for students on **Monday 7 June 2021.** Students will be expected to arrive at college at their designated start times and entrances. Years 7 – 10 will begin their new academic year with new timetables and new teachers on **Monday 21 June 2021. We hope that from Monday 21 June 2021 we can relax a number of the current Covid-19 restrictions that we currently have in place. I will update you on the website when we get further clarification from the government.**

I write in advance to inform you that Unity College will finish for the summer holidays on **Tuesday 20 July at 12.05pm.**

I have been extremely impressed by how smart most 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 due to health and safety reasons, this includes ear piercings, face piercings and tongue piercings. If your child is going to have a piercing can you ensure that they have this done at the beginning of the summer holiday, so it can be removed for the new term in September. Students should not be wearing a hoodie or sports top under their blazer. **Spray cosmetics including deodorants, hairsprays etc are not permitted at Unity College due to the sensitivity of the fire alarms.**

I have noticed that a few students are wearing too much make-up for college. Please remind your child that if they wear make-up this should be minimal and subtle, otherwise they will be asked to remove it when they arrive at college in the morning. Some skirt lengths are also causing me concern as they are not of a modest length. If your child is going to wear a skirt for college, please ensure that it is a modest length and appropriate for college. We will only accept tailored trousers; black leggings and skinny black jeans are not acceptable as part of the college uniform. Over the knee socks are also unacceptable and should not be worn.

We continue with our huge focus on literacy and oracy with an ambition that all students read well and develop a love of reading. All students must have a reading book in their bag every day and I request that you continue to encourage your child to read widely and often at home.

If your child is entitled to Free School Meals and you have not yet claimed them, I urge you to check this. When parents claim this entitlement, extra funds come into college for students. If you have any questions about your entitlement, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Ingham at college.

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 and we will continue to refer parents to LCC for penalty notices due to unauthorised holidays and for persistent poor attendance. I would like to thank those parents who have supported us in this matter and continue to do so. The holiday dates are available on the website and I draw your attention to the two-week break in October 2021 where many parents have taken advantage of this 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. 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 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 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 to ensure that students do not have cigarettes on them in college. Any cigarettes, lighters, matches or e-cigarettes found are confiscated and destroyed.

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 at the crossing at the entrance of the college. Alternatively, park in the pay and display car park and you child can make their way to college from there.

At the end of college 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 the car park. **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 to collect 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 back of college is already heavily congested with parents picking and dropping off youngsters at Brunshaw Primary School. Any more cars in that area would be extremely dangerous and cause unnecessary stress to the local neighbours. I ask that you only use the front of the college to collect and drop off your child.

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.

This is the last half termly letter that we will be sending home via post to all parents. From now onwards all letters will be placed onto the website rather than the costly way of printing and posting to over 1,300 families. The letter will be posted onto the website the last week of every half term. If, however you do not have access to the internet can you please contact Mrs Ingham at Unity College either by telephone or (k.ingham@unity.lancs.sch.uk) and we will ensure that a letter is posted home to you.

The college website has a wealth of information for parents and students. Please take some time to look at our website [www.unity-college.com](http://www.unity-college.com) on a regular basis.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your support to Unity College as we work together to offer the very best learning opportunities and experiences for your child during their secondary education.

Yours faithfully



S Cryer (Mrs)

Headteacher