Our ref: SCR/EJO

July 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

Three hundred year 7 students will be starting at Unity College in September. Your year 7 child may not ever have been into Unity College as year 6 missed out on Open Evening and we have been unable to run any transition or tours of the college due to the pandemic. Sadly due to extensive building project, both inside the current building and in and around the new building, we are unable to offer a Summer school for new year 7 students for safety reasons.

To support your child on the first day of term, Wednesday 1 September 2021, ONLY year 7 will attend college for the day. Your child should arrive in uniform between 8.30am and 8.45am and arrive through the decking entrance at the front of college. Staff will be on hand to guide your child to their first class. Your child will not know what House they are in - North, South, East or West - so do not buy them a college tie as they will be given a Unity tie on the first morning. Your child will be offered a free lunch on the first day unless they would prefer to bring in a packed lunch. Your child will finish at 2.55pm on the first day. Please read the information on page 4 regarding car parking / dropping off your child.

We will have over 1,300 students at Unity College from September 2021. Sending out letters to all families takes time and is costly. The most rapid and effective way to communicate with parents/carers is via our college website [www.unity-college.com](http://www.unity-college.com)**. It is essential that parents/ carers and students check the website regularly for any updates/ news.** Over the summer break there will be a number of updates due to the continued turbulent times for schools regarding Covid-19 and the regular government updates. If you do not have access to the internet. please contact Mrs Ingham at k.ingham@unity.lancs.sch.uk who will send out any correspondence via the post.

Please check our college website for the holiday pattern for 2021- 2022. **Please note there is an additional holiday date for students and staff on Friday 29 April 2021.**

The government is currently expecting schools and colleges to test secondary school students for Covid-19 before they return to school in September. **If this is still the government’s expectation for the September start,** we are planning to test the new Year 7 on Tuesday 31 August between 8.00am – 12.30pm the day before they officially start at Unity College.

The test would only take a few minutes and we enclose a consent form which must be completed by a parent/carer and brought in on that day so that a Lateral Flow Test can be carried out. If you would like your child to have a lateral flow test on Tuesday 31st August 2021, your child should come to college between 8.00am and 12.30pm. They MUST bring with them the completed consent form. Your child will not have to wear uniform to come for the test but they MUST have a face covering (unless exempt). Once they have had the test, we will use this opportunity to take their thumb print for the college cashless catering system if we have the signed permission form for this. We have already received a number of these cashless catering forms and they can be brought on the day or a new form signed on the day by a parent/carer.

The test that will be carried out in college will be a double-nasal swab, therefore children can administer the test themselves. Parents are more than welcome to support the testing process by accompanying their child on site for the first test. Parents/carers MUST also wear a face covering (unless exempt.) Once your child has had the test and thumb print done, they will be able to go

home. Parents/carers are responsible for getting their child to college and back home safely. We will contact you ONLY if your child’s test comes back positive and this will be done within one hour of your child taking the test in college. A second test will be carried out 3-5 days later during the college day. Further information about these tests can be found on our website. **We will confirm via the website in mid-August if these tests are being carried out for year 7 on Tuesday 31 August 2021.**

Unity College is expanding and we have additional classrooms being built to accommodate the demand for places at Unity College. The new building houses nineteen classrooms, six of which are science laboratories, a new food technology room, a new library and PE changing facilities for boys and girls. Due to the pandemic, the date for completion has been put back from September 2021 until Spring 2022 so space will be at a premium between now and the opening of the new building. To help with this shortage of space, we have now fully amalgamated the City Learning Centre giving us three additional classrooms and a new dining area. Also, four temporary classrooms are arriving on site in July 2021.

There will be a great deal of planning over the summer holidays so that when we open in September your child will be offered a full, enriched curriculum and opportunities to catch up where they have missed out on key learning. I hope that we will be able to return to normal in September; however, all of this planning will depend on the current situation of Covid-19 in the local area and any further advice that the government sends to schools in the coming weeks.

I am awaiting clarification as to whether students and staff will need to wear a face covering (unless exempt) in lessons and on corridors from September 2021. It is going to be impossible to keep students in bubbles, due to our increase in numbers, but we will put stringent safety procedures in place to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19. Students MUST follow all our Covid-19 rules and use hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes which will be available in college for students; however, if your child wishes to bring in their own hand sanitiser and wipes, this is also acceptable. Further updates about Covid-19 restrictions will be placed onto the website in late August 2021. Students MUST bring with them their own basic equipment e.g. pens, pencils, ruler and eraser. **Year 7 students will be fully informed about our Covid-19 rules on the first day of college.**

It is essential that all students are always in full uniform 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 he / she has this done at the beginning of the summer holiday, so it can be removed for the new term in September. Spray cosmetics including deodorants, hairsprays etc are not permitted at Unity College due to the sensitivity of the fire alarms.

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 Ingham at college. Her email address is K.ingham@unity.lancs.sch.uk.

I also want to ensure you 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 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. We have had this system in place for the last twelve 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 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 the same 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 students do not have cigarettes on them in college. Any cigarettes found are confiscated and destroyed.

If your child needs to take any medication whilst in college, they must bring in a letter from a parent/carer 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.

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. **This must happen every day including the first day on Wednesday 1 September 2021.**

At the end of college parents ARE NOT able to 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 from college. 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. DO NOT park along Towneley Holmes Road as you may be issued with a fixed penalty notice by the Park Rangers. The only cars able to access the college between 2.30pm and 3.20pm are to collect a child who has a disability. If this is the case please contact college so that a car parking pass can be allocated to you. Please also refrain from parking at the back of college as this causes congestion for residents.

If you are coming into college during the day for a meeting, you can park on site including on the turning circle. Please ensure that you have made an appointment if you need to come into college and I ask that it is only one adult per meeting due to the ongoing pandemic. If you are coming in for a meeting, can you ensure that you wear a face covering on entering the building.

A number of students will bring in a mobile phone as they start high school. We will not take any responsibility for any mobile phone or any other electronic device including an iWatch that goes missing in college. If it is an expensive piece of equipment, I strongly encourage you to have it insured.

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 as parents I request that you continue to encourage your child to read widely and often at home.

**If you have not returned all the admission forms that we sent out to you recently. please do this as soon as possible. Until we have this information, we will not be able to admit your child to Unity College. If you have mislaid these forms, please email Mrs Oakley, Transition Manager, on c.oakley@unity.lancs.sch.uk and we will arrange for a new pack to be sent out. Please do this as a matter of urgency and before the end of term.**

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**. On the website there is also specific information about transition. Please check the website regularly for any updates especially over the summer holiday. On the website you will find a transition page where your child can have a virtual tour of the college, listen to some staff talking about Unity College and work that they can do from different subjects. Your child will receive reward points for any good work completed. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, a tour of the building cannot happen this term except for exceptional reasons e.g. your child has a disability.

If you have any concerns or worries between now and Tuesday 21 July 2021, please do not hesitate to contact our Year 6 Transition Manager, Mrs Oakley, via email on c.oakley@unity.lancs.sch.uk.

If you have any concerns over the summer break do not hesitate to contact college via enquiries@unity.lancs.sch.uk. We will try to make sure that we get back to you within 48 hours.

I look forward to meeting you in the future as your child starts on the next steps of their educational journey at Unity College.

Yours faithfully



S Cryer (Mrs)

Headteacher