

Our Ref SCR/EJO

December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

The term ends on **Friday 17 December 2021 at 12.05pm.**If you need your child to stay in college until 3.10pm on the last day of term, please contact main reception and supervision until 3.10pm will be arranged for your child.  The college will re-open on **Tuesday 4 January 2022 at 8.00am for testing only.**  Please could we ask parents/carers to continue with self-testing over the holidays. Students will be issued with test kits before the end of term. At the start of the new term in January 2022 we will be carrying out our testing during the first week.

**Start of term – January 2022**

The current Government guidance is that we should be testing students, who have consent to be tested, before they start back in January 2022. The following has been arranged:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Testing Date** | **Testing Time** | **Start Back at College** |
| 7 | Tuesday 4 January | 8.00am – 12.30pm | Wednesday 5 January at 8.40am |
| 11 | Tuesday 4 January | 1.00pm – 3.00pm | Wednesday 5 January at 8.40am |
| 8 | Wednesday 5 January  | 9.30am – 2.30pm | Thursday 6 January at 8.40am |
| 9 | Wednesday 5 January  | 9.30am – 2.30pm | Thursday 6 January at 8.40am |
| 10 | Wednesday 5 January  | 9.30am – 2.30pm | Thursday 6 January at 8.40am |

If you have consented for your child to be tested in college, they should arrive between the times above. If you have not consented but would now like your child to be tested, consent forms are available on our college website. Your child will not have to wear uniform to come for the test but they MUST have a face covering (unless exempt). They should arrive via the college decking area. Once they have had the test, they will be able to leave. 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. We ask that a second test will be carried out 3-5 days later at home using the home testing kits given to students.

**In summary:**

**• All year 11 will start at 8.40am on Wednesday 5 January 2022.**

**• All year 7 will start at 8.40am on Wednesday 5 January 2022.**

**• All years 8, 9 and 10 will start at 8.40am on Thursday 6 January 2022.**

Remote learning will be available on Tuesday 4 January for all year groups and on Wednesday 5 January for years 8, 9 and 10. The remote learning will follow your child’s normal timetabled lessons; however, break will be from 10.30am-11.10am.

For those students who will be coming into college for a Covid-19 test, there will not be an expectation to catch up with any part of a remote learning session missed. We do encourage all students to engage with the remote learning.

I take this opportunity to thank all parents for the overwhelming support we have had from you this term. It has been a very challenging term and we have had a number of positive Covid-19 cases.

Sadly, due to Covid-19 many of our usual festive celebrations have had to be cancelled. We do have our huge Christmas tree in the Foyer and I ask that students do not hand out Christmas cards in college to other students and staff this year.  Though the risk may be low, I want to ensure that we minimise the risk of spreading the infection at this time.

The government have stated that children who are entitled to free school meals will be issued with vouchers for the Christmas holiday.  This will be actioned prior to the Christmas break.

This term we have trialed the use of SchoolCloud, a website that has allowed us to hold virtual parents’ evenings. This has enabled us to meet with parents in a COVID secure way, face-to-face via a video appointment. Feedback from the Year 10 and Year 11 parents was very positive; therefore, we intend to use the same approach for the Year 8 and Year 9 parents’ evening due to take place next term. Please can we ask that you notify the college office if you have changed your home or email address. Year 8 and Year 9 parents should monitor the college website for further information about Parents’ Evenings. Parents will receive a letter inviting them to book appointments nearer to the time.

I ask parents/carers to continue to check the website every day for any updates. With over 1300 students in college the website is the quickest and most effective way of contacting and communicating with parents at this challenging time.  As government guidance is constantlychanging I ask that you check the college website before our return in January.

With the weather now deteriorating I strongly urge your child to wear a coat to college on top of their blazer.  All students and staff have to wear a face covering on entering the college, on corridors and social spaces unless exempt.  The vast majority of students bring a face covering to college each day but we still have a number of students arriving at college without a face covering.  We will provide a face covering if your child forgets but this should be the exception rather than the norm.  Can you please ensure that your child has a face covering with them each day. As per government guidance, students are expected to wear a face covering as they enter the college building and in communal areas.   Again, if this guidance changes this will be noted on our college website.

Students are always expected to be in full uniform including a blazer. I have been very impressed this term with how smart students look.  It is essential that all students are always in full uniform creating a “dressed for business” atmosphere throughout the college. If students are going to wear a jumper in college, it must have the college logo and be a V neck.  The college jumper is an optional uniform item.  Jewellery is not permitted for students except for a watch. Please ensure that your child does not have a piercing done over the Christmas break.  Any piercing should happen at the start of the summer break in 2022 so that the piercings can be removed during the college day.

A number of students will be hoping to receive a new mobile phone or another electronic device for Christmas.  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.

The winter season will soon be upon us and I hope that I will not have to close the college due to snow or other adverse weather conditions.  A decision to close the college is not undertaken lightly and I will only close the college for health and safety reasons.  It is an extremely difficult decision and I must take into consideration several things including how safe it is for students and staff to travel to and from college safely.  I also need to ensure that I have enough staff on site to teach and supervise students for the full day.  Many staff do not live locally and travel a distance to college each day, so they are not able to walk to work.  I will endeavour to make a decision regarding any closure by 7.30am in the morning and will post a message on the college website.  Please do not ring college as I may not have anybody available to answer the telephone as they may not be able to get to the college.  If the college is open but as a parent you are unable to get your child to college due to the conditions on the roads, or public transport is cancelled, you must use your judgment as to whether to send your child to college on that day.  If for any reason college does close, students will move to remote learning.

At the end of college parents/carers 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 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.

Your child MUST have the correct basic equipment for learning.  Can you please ensure that your child has everything they need each day including: basic writing/drawing implements such as a pen and pencil and also any specialist equipment/clothing e.g. food ingredients/PE kit for their lessons.  Students must also have an age appropriate reading book in their bag each day.

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 for penalty notices for 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 for 2021-22 and 2022-23 are available on the website and I draw your attention to the two weeks break in October 2022 where many parents have taken advantage of this to book holidays.

If your child is poorly can you please contact the attendance team at college first thing in the morning. Can you also try to ensure that students do not have time off college for doctors’ or dentists’ appointments unless it is an emergency appointment. A reminder 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. I am aware that a number of parents have had difficulty in getting through to staff via the telephone. On our website there is a list of email addresses for parents to contact their child’s House Leader, a Student Leader or a member of the Senior Leadership Team

I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support for Unity College as we work together to offer the very best learning opportunities and experiences for your child.  I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S Cryer

Headteacher