



Specialising in English and The Arts

Our ref: SCR/JBN

December 2013

Dear Parent / Guardian

I write to you at the end of a very busy term at Unity College. On our last day of term, Friday 20 December, the college will be having a non-uniform day where students who wish to come to college in non-uniform will pay a minimum of £1. All the money raised on the day will be given to NSPCC. Please see attached letter from the Head Girl and Head Boy for further information about the non-uniform day.

The college will close at 2.15pm on Friday 20 December 2013 for the Christmas break and **return on Monday 6 January 2014 at 8.45am**. For parents who wish to keep their child in college until 3.10pm on Friday 20 December 2013 supervision can be arranged. If this is the case your child will stay in the Learning Zone from 2.15pm onwards; the Learning Zone will stay open until 4.00pm on the last day of term.

Our year 7's have been rehearsing very hard for their first performance of the year, **Grimm Fairy Tales**. There are still a few tickets remaining for the evening performance on Wednesday 18 December. Tickets cost £2 and include free mince pies, mulled wine, carol singing around a Christmas tree and the show which runs for approximately 45 minutes. Please see our website to book tickets online or you can purchase them in college.

On Thursday 9 January 2014 we are holding our mock GCSE examination results morning for year 11. Students who took their GCSE in Mathematics and English Language in November 2013 will also receive their actual GCSE results on that day.

I have received a complaint this week about the litter on the pathway outside the college from a member of the public. I am sure that all the litter is not directly linked to Unity College students but some may be. I have spoken to students last week in assembly about litter. Can you please speak to your child to ensure that they do not drop litter either in college or out of college. It only takes a few students dropping litter to bring down the excellent reputation the college has in the town.

There will be a big push on punctuality after the Christmas break. It is vital that your child arrives in plenty of time for the start of lesson 1. Lesson 1 starts promptly at 8.45am. We will be closely monitoring punctuality and if your child does not have a good punctuality record from January 2014 onwards they will not be allowed to attend any of the reward trips including any whole school trips such as the Blackpool trip. This procedure is already in operation for students who do not have attendance of 95% or above. I take this opportunity to remind you about certain attendance issues. Holidays should not be taken in term time and will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. 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. I'd like to thank those parents who have supported us in this matter and continue to do so.

Towneley Holmes, Burnley, Lancashire, BB11 3DF

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At Unity College we have a very effective prefect system. The process for applying for prefects for the current year 10 has just started and if your child is in year 10 I urge you to speak to your child to consider applying to become a prefect at Unity College. Students are asked to write a one page letter to myself explaining why they think they should be considered to be a prefect. Next term I will personally interview every student who sends in a letter of application.

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 Clark at the college.

Students are expected to be in full uniform including a blazer at all times. **Due to students' request the jumper is now an optional item.** If students are going to wear a jumper in college it must have the college logo and be a V neck. It is essential that all students are in full uniform at all times creating a "dressed for business" atmosphere throughout the college. Shirts are expected to be tucked in and their tie of an appropriate length. A reminder that jewellery at Unity College is not permitted except for a watch. **We do not allow any piercings. Hair styles and colour must also conform to our "dressed for business" ethos with no unnatural colours. Footwear should be black shoes or all black trainers.** If your child arrives in college and is not "dressed for business" they will be sent home immediately with a letter requesting that they conform to our rules. For those students who wish to wear makeup this should be minimal and subtle, otherwise students will be asked to remove it.

A reminder that if your child brings their mobile phone, iPod, skateboard, bike or any other personal equipment to college that we cannot take responsibility for it or pay out compensation if it is lost or stolen. The students bring them to college at their own risk. We still have a number of student lockers available if your child would like to reserve one. Please ask your child to see Internal Reception for further details.

The winter season is upon us and we 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 have to take into consideration a number of 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 endeavor to make a decision regarding any closure by 7.30am in the morning and will post a message on the college website. If I am closing the college I will also contact 2BR and Radio Lancashire to ask them to announce any closure. If it is announced on the radio the message has come from me as I have to give the radio station a password to ensure that the message is not a prank. 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.



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In February 2014, the college is putting on the production Fame the Musical. The production involves the biggest cast we have ever had and promises to be a spectacular show. The musical runs from Tuesday 4th February to Saturday 8 February with a matinée and evening performance on Saturday 8 February. You can buy tickets now from the college website www.unity-college.com or at college.

At Unity College we have a 'consequences system' for dealing with poor behaviour. This builds on the existing consequences that we have in place to reward students through the VIVO system. All incidents of poor behaviour are logged and tracked electronically and all students and staff follow the same set of guidelines. A full copy of the consequences system can be viewed on the college website.

Detention can be used as a sanction at Unity College for a range of reasons. Detention may be given at break time, lunchtime or after college. Parents must be given at least twenty four hours' notice for a detention that will occur after the college day.

I write to reinforce to your child that all students are to stay on site throughout the college day. We have had a few incidents with students leaving the college site during lunch time. If your child is caught off site without prior permission I will consider a fixed term exclusion for not following college rules.

There is always on-going publicity in the national newspapers about drugs used by teenagers in and outside of school. If a student is caught selling drugs to anyone at Unity College that student will be permanently excluded immediately.

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 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 (including a penknife) at Unity College I will not hesitate to permanently exclude them immediately. If a child arrives in college with anything that could be interpreted as a weapon such as a pen knife or BB gun they must hand it in immediately to ensure that they are not permanently excluded.

Unity College is a smoke free college. We have a clear policy that is available to read on our website which includes students, parents and visitors. 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. We also do spot checks to ensure that students are not in possession of cigarettes. Any child caught with cigarettes will have them confiscated and parents will be informed. This includes e-cigarettes.

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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. You can also contact your child's PD tutor via email on enquiries@unity-college.com.

I am concerned that we still have some children coming to college each day without the correct equipment for learning. Can you please ensure that your child has everything they need each day including the basic writing/drawing implements eg a pen and pencil, also any specialist equipment/clothing eg ingredients/PE kit for their lessons.

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

Under the Data Protection Act, all schools must inform parents and guardians about Privacy Notices (formally known as Fair Processing Notices) which relates to the personal data that is held in the college about your child. These details can be found on our website, or alternatively, if you don't have access to the internet a hard copy can be collected from college. Please note that all college policies including our safeguarding and child protection policies can be found on the website including our college equality statement.

I write to thank you for your support and understanding regarding the new parking procedures for parents. The system is working extremely well and is much safer for children coming to and leaving college.

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 unless you are dropping off a child who has a disability. Please drive slowly and give students the right of way at the crossing at the entrance of the college.

At the end of college parents ARE NOT able 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, 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. The only cars able to access the college between 2.30pm and 3.20pm are to collect a child who has a disability.

We have a few parents who arrive to pick up their child at the end of the college day but arrive before 2.30pm and park on the college site and wait until their child finishes college at 3.10pm. If you are picking your child up after college you are not able to enter the college site and wait on site for your child to finish college. Please park on the car park opposite the college. Please refrain from parking at the back of college as this also causes congestion for local residents.

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If you are picking up your child up after an after college club you can collect your child from the turning circle on the college site. If you are coming into college during the college day for a meeting you can park on the college site including the turning circle.

Please inform us if you have a change of address, telephone number or other contact details. It is vital that we keep your child's records up to date. You can email this information to k.ingham@unity-college.com or complete the attached form and return for the attention of Mrs Ingham.

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 faithfully

S Cryer

S Cryer (Mrs)
Headteacher



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CHANGES TO CONTACT DETAILS

Student Name: _____ PD Group: _____

Address change:

Telephone Number(s) change:

Home: _____ / _____

Work: _____ / _____

Mobile: _____ / _____

Any other changes:

Please return to Internal Reception for the attention of Mrs Ingham. Thank you.