



25 February 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may be aware that Greta Thunberg has announced that she will be travelling to Bristol this Friday to join the Climate Change School Strike protest at College Green. Our Eco-Committee members will be attending the event with a member of staff to represent CGS. All students will be using tutor time on Thursday to prepare for our own Climate Change protest in school on Friday.

Before the holiday I received a warning letter from Avon and Somerset police about the College Green Protests. The police praised the main organisers of Bristol based youth led protests who have done a good job in mobilising young people to attend. These protestors work well with the police and deliver the protest as planned. They are not however able to control what happens outside of their influence or after their protest is finished.

Supt Andy Bennett wrote to all head teachers 'I do have concerns which come from observing two previous youth led protests on College Green as the Police Silver Commander. Not only young people attend and I saw a whole range of adults, some from local protest groups but others who were unknown to the police. Many of the young people were not in the company of parents and I saw the unknown adults talking to them. I saw what I can only describe as coercion from adults to get the young people to march at the end without planning or the following of the safety rules. Without stewarding of any kind the young people occupied the road and walked amongst moving traffic at great danger to themselves. I also witnessed criminal acts of damage including people walking over the top of cars. I am of the opinion that this was encouraged by the adults.

I also received intelligence that young people were being invited to adult led protest activity.

I want to stress that I am not trying to prevent protest or to undermine the planning of the one scheduled for next Friday however I remain concerned for the safety of some of the young people who will attend'.

Therefore, in consultation with the local authority and other local secondary schools, we have decided only to allow students to attend the event with **prior written permission** from their parents/carers (please email attendance@colstonsgirls.org) **and we will require parents/carers to collect their child from reception at break time (10.40-11.00)** to ensure that any CGS student attending the protest will be accompanied by an adult. Our year 12 students are in Birmingham at the What Careers Live event and must attend this trip as planned. We advise year 13 to attend their lessons as normal and require them to complete a request for absence form (collectible from V6 Reception) if they would like to attend the protest and we will also require parents/carers to write to school in advance (please email attendance@colstonsgirls.org) to authorise the absence.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kerry McCullagh
Acting Principal