



**MONTPELIER
HIGH SCHOOL**
1891

Cheltenham Road,
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Kerry McCullagh
Principal

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4th January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Happy New Year, I hope that you and your families had a happy and healthy Christmas holiday and New Year celebrations. We start another year needing to introduce additional measures to allow us to learn to live with Coronavirus. Exercising personal responsibility and following communal safe practices will help us to be able to continue learning together at school.

On 2nd January all head teachers received an update from the Department of Education (DfE) - here is a summary of the key points with the full details at the end of my letter:

- For staff and students who can take LFD tests; the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID has been reduced from 10 to 7 days. Please inform us immediately if your child tested positive for COVID on or after Monday 27th December.
- Fully vaccinated adults as well as all children and young people (under 18 and a half), who are well and symptom free, can continue to attend school if they are a close contact of a confirmed COVID case, when they take daily LFD tests with negative results and are symptom free.
- At risk 12-15 year olds and all 16-17 year olds can take up vaccine boosters.
- Face masks are to be worn in classrooms as well as corridors – please ensure your child attends school with a plain face mask (blue/black/white are all acceptable – no fashion face masks please). Also please remind your child in Years 8 and above to pack their mini whiteboard and pen for school tomorrow.
- The definition of vulnerable children and critical worker children has been extended. We will be updating our records to ensure we have accurate lists of all students who would be invited to attend school in the event of a partial or full school closure.

It remains the government's intention that all schools will remain fully open for face-to-face teaching. These additional measures will help us to keep everyone safe whilst reducing the disruption to education. Regular testing with a wider use of face masks are sensible and proportionate measures to take to secure schools staying open. We strongly request that all in our community, who can, continue to test twice weekly [reporting the result to us](#) and the NHS.

The latest DfE guidance has provided the following clarity: even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.

I have attached my previous letter outlining the return to school testing for your convenience.



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Please do support your child to take LFD test at home today if they haven't taken their regular test on Sunday/Monday. All of our previous COVID safe and contingency plans remain in place; as do our plans for the term ahead. We will continue to monitor these constantly and update you immediately if any changes are required.

Good luck to Year 13, who start their mock examinations tomorrow, and Year 12 who have assessments the following week.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kerry McCullagh
Principal

Below are the full details from the DfE update introduced above:

Information on the changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 **has been reduced to 7 days** in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or carer discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 8.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.



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Children under 5 are not being advised to take part in daily testing of close contacts. If a child under 5 is a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to self-isolate and should not start daily testing. If they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 they should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19, and arrange to take a PCR test as soon as possible. They can continue to attend an education or childcare setting while waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should follow the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on COVID-19 vaccination booster doses for at-risk 12 to 15 year olds and all 16 to 17 year olds

In response to the threat from the Omicron variant, the JCVI advised that a Pfizer booster vaccine should be offered to:

- children aged 12 to 15 years old who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of immunosuppressed individuals, and those who are severely immunosuppressed and have had a third primary dose
- all young people aged 16 to 17 years old

The NHS will communicate how eligible children and young people can get their boosters shortly.

Vaccines are our best weapon against this virus and our booster programme has accelerated rapidly, with almost 30 million doses of boosters or third doses administered, and more than half of adults jabbed, securing vital protection. Vaccination reduces the likelihood of infection, helps break chains of transmission and is safe and effective – so we encourage all those eligible to consider taking up the offer.

Updated guidance on the use of face coverings in education settings

From Sunday 2 January, it is recommended that face coverings are worn in classrooms where pupils in year 7 and above are educated. The advice is short term only, to support pupils and teachers as they return to school this term and builds on the existing proportionate guidance that recommends face coverings for all adults in communal areas of all settings. We are updating our guidance to reflect this. The advice on face coverings in classrooms will be in place until Wednesday 26 January, when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed.

Update to the definition of vulnerable children

For many children, continuing to have the protective factor of face-to-face education is vital. Throughout the pandemic, settings have continued to provide on-site places for this group of children. As has been the case since March 2020, there are three categories of children and young people who should benefit from on-site provision:



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- those with a social worker
- those with an Education, Health and Care Plan
- a group of children considered locally, including by settings and local authorities, to be 'otherwise vulnerable'

We are updating our [guidance on children of critical workers and vulnerable children who can access school or education settings](#) to include a broader definition of children classified as vulnerable. In addition to the above, this list now includes:

- children known to children's social care services in the past
- children whose home circumstances might be particularly challenging because of domestic abuse, parental offending, adult mental health issues, and drug and alcohol addiction