



**MONTPELIER  
HIGH SCHOOL**  
1891

Cheltenham Road,  
Montpelier,  
Bristol BS6 5RD

**Kerry McCullagh**  
Principal

T: 0117 942 4328  
W: [montpschool.org](http://montpschool.org)  
E: [mhs-info@montpschool.org](mailto:mhs-info@montpschool.org)

21st October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you have had a happy and healthy start to the half-term holiday.

Opportunity to meet our CEO, David Watson and Chair of our Trust Board, Gail Bragg

Please find attached details of our Vision and Strategy virtual event on Tuesday 2nd November 6-7pm lead by our CEO, Dave Watson, and our Chair of the Trust Board, Gail Bragg. During the meeting, we will explain how and why our vision and strategy seeks to make a positive difference to all students from all backgrounds, all of whom have the ability to succeed. Dave Watson and Gail Bragg also want to listen to our school community and understand how we can work together most effectively to bring our ambitious goal to life. Please read the attached letter to find out how you can attend the virtual meeting.

Increased COVID cases in Bristol and across the South West

We look forward to having all students back to school on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November. Our decision to ask year 10 and 11 to attend lessons from home via Live Remote Learning was due to staff absences and our risk assessment of safe staffing levels required to meet our core function of providing a safe learning environment. We chose years 10 and 11 to remain at home because case numbers were highest in those year groups and because they were best placed to be able to move to Live Remote Learning.

Our experience at Montpelier High School is very similar to the pattern across the city. Following high rates in Bristol and the South West during July and August there was a dramatic reduction in early September, with rates remaining low until the last week. Bristol Public Health were concerned that the sudden reduction in rates was not what was expected and, following reports from a number of schools, concerns were escalated to both UKHSA and DHSC on the possibility that there was an issue in PCR testing result. Investigation to date has confirmed that there was an issue in PCR testing process, which has led to the suspension of testing at a laboratory in Wolverhampton. We now know that a substantial number of PCR tests from the South West, including a proportion from Bristol were processed at this lab between the 8th of September and 12th of October. Now that this issue has been resolved Bristol Public Health are confident that PCR test results taken since the 12th of October are correct and anyone who may have received an incorrect result has been contacted and if appropriate advised to isolate and retest.

The steep rise in rates that we are currently seeing in Bristol and the surrounding area is now a true reflection of the situation and reflects a rise in rates, which is being seen across the country. In the South West we will also be seeing some impact of the laboratory issue which will have had some impact on local transmission. The majority of our cases are currently within the school age group and therefore for schools the half term break couldn't have come at a better time as it does give opportunity to a 'firebreak' in transmission.

The Bristol Public Health team have asked schools to promote the following to their communities:

- Continue twice weekly LFD testing through the holiday (additional testing kits can be order to your home or collected free of charge from pharmacies, more information is available [here](#))
- Everyone to follow COVID safety over the holiday, the half-term will only provide a ‘firebreak’ if we exercise caution in our personal behaviour over the holiday
- Any adults who have not taken up the vaccine are encouraged to do so
- Every student (who can) to take a LFD test on the evening of Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October or the morning of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November before returning to school.
- Anyone who is unwell should not attend school.
- Any student with a household member who has tested positive to take daily LFD tests and a PCR if they receive a positive LFD or develop symptoms

#### Why don't under-18s have to self-isolate and won't this spread Covid in education settings?

The government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. We have moved away from stringent restrictions on everyone's day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, every adult has been offered the opportunity for 2 doses of the vaccine, and all children aged 12 and over are now eligible for vaccination. The government's priority is for settings to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health. There continues to be a range of protective measures in education settings, including regular asymptomatic testing, hygiene measures and ventilation. Since September, CO2 monitors have been sent out to schools.

#### Continued COVID contingency planning at Montpelier High School

In addition to our usual COVID safe processes. When we return from the holiday the following measures from our COVID contingency plan will continue to be in operation until at least Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November:

1. All year 8, 10 and 11 voluntary daily LFD testing.
2. Cancellation of gathering our whole school together for these external events for November:
  - Commemoration (5<sup>th</sup> November) at the Cathedral
  - Prize Day (15<sup>th</sup> November) at the Hippodrome

Commemoration will become a normal school day and Prize Day will be run as a remote event with students attending from home.

3. Re-introducing bubbles at break and lunchtime inside (all students will continue to be able to play outside).
4. Pausing our Enrichment programme – students will leave at the times shown below. A small number of Enrichments will continue on a risk assessed basis, students and parents/carers will

be contacted directly with information on this. The PE department will run a reduced extra-curricular offer and will provide further information on this when we return from the holiday.

5. Introducing a staggered end to every day from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> to Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November:

Year	Mon*	Tues*	Wed**	Thurs*	Fri**
7	3.25	2.55	2.45	2.55	2.25
8	3.30	3.00	2.50	3.00	2.30
9	3.35	3.05	2.55	3.05	2.35
10	3.40	3.10	3.00	3.10	2.40
11	3.45	3.15	3.15	3.15	2.45
12 & 13	3.45	3.15	3.20	3.15	2.45

\* Leaving from tutor time

\*\*Leaving from p.5 lesson

#### Students with additional needs and vulnerabilities

Our SEND department will provide additional support for our SEND students; please contact our SENDCo Elaine Cogan if your SEND child requires a review of their COVID safety. For all other students with additional needs please contact your child's tutor/mentor who will be able to carry out an initial assessment and refer on for additional support as required.

#### Vaccination centres for 12 to 15-year-olds

Chief executive of NHS England Amanda Pritchard told the health select committee earlier today that 12 to 15-year-olds can now book a Covid-19 vaccination through the NHS booking service during half-term. The service has previously only been open to over-16s. This will supplement the school-based vaccination programme and increase the speed at which this age group can get vaccinated. We have been given 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> November as the dates when the vaccination service (Sirona) will be coming to Montpelier High School to provide an in school vaccination programme. Working with Sirona we will provide full details of the in-school vaccination programme after the holiday.

If you want to arrange for your child to be vaccinated yourself over the holiday you will receive a letter from the NHS with full information including the following:

How to book your child's vaccination yourself outside of school:

This letter shows you how to book your child's appointment in a larger vaccination centre if that is your preference. To avoid disruption to your child's education you should aim to book your appointment outside school hours.

To book online:

- Visit [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination)

To book on the phone:

- If you cannot book your appointment online, phone **119** free of charge, 7am to 11pm, 7 days a week. You can ask someone else to do this for you. Please let us know if you need an interpreter.

- You can use text phone **18001 119** or the NHS British Sign Language interpreter service at [www.interpreternow.co.uk/nhs119](http://www.interpreternow.co.uk/nhs119)

If you can't get a convenient appointment at first using the details in this letter, please try again later as more booking slots may become available.

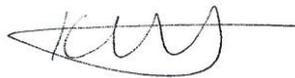
#### Reporting absences to school

Wherever possible, please email our attendance officer with absence information on [mhs-attendance@montpschool.org](mailto:mhs-attendance@montpschool.org) or phone our absence line on 0117 942 4328 choosing option 1. You can also report a COVID test result using our Microsoft form that appears on a link from the top banner of our main website page here is a link direct to this page: [Report a COVID test result](#)

#### Year 7 school place for September 2022

A reminder for parents and carers of Year 6 students to apply for a Year 7 school place for September 2022 by the closing date of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. The preferred method of application is online. Families living in Bristol can apply online at [New year 7 secondary school place - bristol.gov.uk](http://New year 7 secondary school place - bristol.gov.uk).

Very best wishes



**Kerry McCullagh** Principal