

26th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Proposed Strike Action

As you may be aware from recent media coverage, the National Education Union (NEU) has declared strike action. This action will take place on:

- **Wednesday 1st February 2023**
- **Tuesday 28th February 2023**
- **Wednesday 15th March and Thursday 16th March 2023.**

The strike action is happening because of a national dispute between the unions and the government over teachers' pay and school funding. It is not because of any specific issues at our academy. Please rest assured these are national decisions that have been taking place over recent months and will most likely affect over 23,000 schools across the country.

I am writing to you in order to provide you with as much notice as possible that learning is very likely to be disrupted on each of these dates. We have considered several options as we are only able to open the school if we have enough staff on site to keep everyone safe.

At this stage, on Wednesday 1st February it is highly likely that the academy will only be open to students in year 11 and those students who fall into the government's definition of vulnerable (who will be contacted individually over the coming week).

Some year 11 students also have a formal examination on this date and I would like to reassure parents that this will not be disrupted and our usual arrangements will be in place.

We know that open and honest relationships with our families are crucial for our students' success. As a number of you have asked about the strikes, I wanted to take this opportunity to explain a little bit more about the NEU's reasons for taking strike action.

- Strike action is not simply about pay. It is about the state of the school system as a whole and the lack of school funding which is impacting directly on children and staff.
- The government say that school funding is higher than ever. However, there are now more children in schools than ever before. As such, there is less funding to go around and fewer services than ever before.
- Support services (like special educational needs support, educational support, health support, social care etc) that used to be provided by local government have been cut. Currently, schools either pay for these services from existing budgets or manage it in school. This has had a huge impact on staff well-being across the country and partly explains why there is a significant teacher shortage and why thousands of teachers are leaving the profession.
- Teachers did have a pay rise in September. However, this was below the level of inflation and in real terms, a pay cut of over 7% in 2022. This follows a pay freeze at various point in the last 10 years of 'austerity' on public sector wages.
- The cost of all of the pay increases for teaching and support staff has been funded directly out of school budgets. No extra money has been given to schools to cover these payments. The NEU firmly believes that these pay increases should be covered by the government, rather than from the schools' own budgets and money that was allocated to provide your child/ren with the equipment, facilities, books and resources that they deserve.

Therefore, as a direct result of these issues, many teachers in schools across the country will be choosing to strike. Not for their own pay particularly, but because they fear for the teaching profession in general and the impact sustained underfunding is having and on their pupils and your children.

As ever, we want to support our families in the best way possible and want to reassure our entire community that if you need any help, advice or support on the days of the strike, key staff will be in the academy to assist. Students in Years 7-10 who are not expected in school on this date will not have their attendance record affected as there is a special code for exceptional circumstances, such as these.

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming strike day on February 1st, please email: nationalstrike@temac.co.uk and will be happy to any questions.

We know the children have faced much disruption over recent years owing to the COVID pandemic and so a range of work will be set on SENCA and google classroom for students to complete independently.

Thank you for your support and understanding in this matter and if the situation changes I will write to you to let you know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Miss Bowen', with a small flourish at the end.

Miss Bowen
Academy Headteacher