

CLA / TLA

27th January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Strike action by members of the National Education Union

Further to my previous communication regarding planned strike action by members of the National Education Union (NEU), I am writing to you to explain our plans for the day and the provision we will be able to offer. The NEU has posted a document for parents, carers and grandparents that explains their reasons for taking strike action. It can be found at <https://neu.org.uk/media/24511/view> if you wish to read it.

When a strike takes place, those taking strike action stop work and withdraw their labour. This means that those teachers involved in the action will not teach their class(es) or undertake any other duties on a strike day. Moreover, members of other teaching unions may not be instructed to cover these lessons or duties; only senior leaders and cover supervisors can be directed to do so.

It is therefore incumbent upon me to consider the impact that industrial action will have on the safe operation of the school. One of the key issues is to assess whether there are sufficient staff available for the school to remain open, or partially open, during a strike. We know that nearly 60% of our teachers are members of the NEU, however, union members are not obliged to declare their intentions and so we may only find out the exact numbers of teachers taking action on the day itself. We therefore have to work on the basis of the worst-case scenario to determine whether Alec Hunter can remain fully or partially open, and to this end, a detailed risk assessment has been conducted. This considers the impact that the action will have on the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors, and whether the school can safely deliver a full or amended curriculum during the strike.

As Headteacher, and with the approval of the Saffron Academy Trust, I have determined the following arrangements for the day:

1. **Year 11 will attend school at the normal time** and will complete the formal exams scheduled for that day. The only change will be that **the Physics exam due to take place in the afternoon will now fill the Period 3 & 4 slot, with the German exam moving to the afternoon**. This means that all students who **do not** take German will be dismissed and allowed to return home to complete independent revision after the conclusion of their Physics exam (Combined Science students will therefore leave slightly earlier than those taking separate sciences). Students who **do** take German will remain on site for the remainder of Period 4 and lunchtime, until their exam begins in Period 5; they will be supervised as a group and will not be expected to go to their Period 4 lessons.
2. Since we are unsure of the number of staff striking, we only estimate that we have the capacity to accommodate one further year group on site safely. We feel that this should be Year 7, as the youngest year group. **Year 7 will therefore attend lessons as normal**. If the teacher is present, a standard lesson will be delivered as usual; if the teacher is absent, they will be supervised by a member of Leadership Group either in a computer room or in the Main Hall if we need to amalgamate classes. **It is therefore essential that they have a reading book with them for the day**, since cover work will not be provided at these times.

3. **Years 8, 9 and 10 will be asked to stay at home.** Non-striking members of staff will be expected to set work for all classes in these year groups on Satchel One by 8:40am, so that students may log on and progress through the work at their own pace. These teachers should be available to respond to email queries about the work set during the normal lesson time. Striking members of staff are not required to set work and other staff will not set work for the classes taught by striking colleagues. If your child does not have much work set for the day, additional lessons can be found on the Oak National Academy website (<https://classroom.thenational.academy/>) or there are plenty of activities on other platforms we recommend, such as GCSE Pod, SAM Learning, BBC Bitesize, Seneca and subject-specific ones like MathsWatch.
4. **A small number of students from Years 8-10 with specific needs will be invited into school to be supervised if they wish.** We will contact families of these students to make this offer, which is at the discretion of the school.
5. **All students eligible for free school meals in Years 8-10** can collect a packed lunch at the end of the day on Tuesday which will serve as their meal on Wednesday. Students in Year 11 who are entitled to a free school meal and do not take German can collect a similar packed lunch before leaving site after the Science exam. Year 11 free school meals students who do take German, plus all those in Year 7, may claim a free lunch in the canteen as usual.
6. Only certain areas of the playground will be in use on Wednesday which will reduce the number of duties required and ensure we can safely supervise. Students will be given directions on the day.

Clearly this is a difficult situation, which has prompted some adjustments to our normal provision. I would ask you, however, to be understanding. A national strike by teachers is *very* unusual. Strike action is not something that any teacher would undertake lightly. Those on strike will have thought long and hard about their decision and will also lose pay for withdrawing their labour on the day.

I did notify you, in my earlier letter, of the other dates on which industrial action is due to take place. Let us hope that a resolution to the dispute can be reached before then but if not, I will be in contact again to explain our plans for those days.

Yours sincerely



Mr T. Lawn
Headteacher