

TLA / GPA

23<sup>rd</sup> February 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) on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023, I am writing to advise that a further day of strike action is planned for Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and this letter explains 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 and 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.

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. From our recent experience of strike action on 1<sup>st</sup> February, I am a little more informed as to the number of staff who are likely to remain available on 1<sup>st</sup> March, although it is worth noting that some colleagues have also made the decision to become members of the NEU in the last month. 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:

- Year 11 will 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 their normal classroom, a computer room or in the Main Hall if we need to amalgamate classes. **It is therefore essential that they have revision materials, private study resources or a reading book with them for the day**, since we are not obliged to provide cover work at these times.
- Years 7, 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. We have reviewed the approach from 1<sup>st</sup> February, and listened to feedback from our school community, and can confirm that **work (where applicable) will be set in accordance with the student's timetable for that day**. Non-striking 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.

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3. Whilst we appreciate that we were able to accommodate **Year 7 students** in addition to Year 11 on 1<sup>st</sup> February, this was due to Year 11 students sitting their formal exams at that time. This meant that they were largely supervised by exam invigilators on that day, with only minimal support from senior members of staff. Having reviewed anticipated staffing levels for 1<sup>st</sup> March, we regrettably feel that we can only be confident that we have sufficient capacity to accommodate one year group this time. So, taking into consideration the DfE advice to prioritise year groups that are due to sit public examinations this year, we have determined that this should be Year 11 at this crucial time of year.
4. **A small number of students from Years 7-10 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 7-10** can order a packed lunch if required and a separate communication will be sent via email to eligible families regarding this. Year 11 free school meals students 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.

Once again, this is a difficult situation, requiring us to make adjustments to our normal provision. I would ask you, however, to be understanding. Strike action is not something that any teacher would undertake lightly. Those on strike will have thought long and hard about their decision and are aware that they will also lose pay for withdrawing their labour on the day.

Please keep in mind that two further days of industrial action are scheduled for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March. 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