

TLA / GPA

21st April 2023



Dear Parent/Carer,

Strike action by members of the National Education Union

Further to my previous communications regarding planned strike action by members of the National Education Union (NEU) during the Spring term, I am writing to advise that a further day of strike action is planned for Thursday 27th April and this letter explains our plans for this day and the provision we will be able to offer. In addition to this, a day of industrial action is also planned for Tuesday 2nd May and I will write separately regarding the plans for that day. 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 during the Spring term, I am a little more informed as to the number of staff who are likely to remain available on Thursday 27th April. It is worth noting that some colleagues took action on one or more of the previous days and some on all, but in addition, some staff members have made the decision to become members of the NEU very recently. 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 Thursday 27th April:

- 1. 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 and private study resources with them for the day**, since we are not obliged to provide cover work at these times. Due to the proximity of exams, the NEU has permitted Headteachers to discuss, with union representatives, ways in which colleagues can support the strike action whilst also minimising the impact on Year 11 students preparing for exams. I will be exploring this dispensation with our NEU reps over the coming days with a view to maintaining as normal a service as possible to Year 11 in the circumstances.
- 2. Year 10 students should attend school at the normal time** as they will be undertaking formal exams on the day of industrial action. Year 10 students will be supervised by exam invigilators for the majority of the time. However, during the course of the morning, there will be times when students will need to revise independently, without computer access, under Leadership Group supervision and **it is therefore essential that they have hard copy revision materials and private study resources with them for the day.**

ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY Stubbs Lane, Braintree, Essex CM7 3NR.
t: 01376 321813 e: admin@alechunter.com w: www.alechunter.com

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3. **Year 10 students who are not sitting the Geography exam paper in the afternoon will leave the school site at the end of the Physics exam in Period 4, to complete independent revision at home for the remainder of the school day.**
4. **Year 10 students who are timetabled to sit the Geography exam paper in the afternoon must remain on school premises.** Once the Geography exam has finished, they will be permitted to leave site and go home.
5. **Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 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 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.
6. **A small number of students from Years 7, 8 and 9 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.
7. **Students eligible for free school meals in Years 10 and 11** will be able to claim a free lunch in the canteen as usual. Year 10 students not taking the Geography exam will need to claim this at breaktime.
8. **All students eligible for free school meals in Years 7, 8 and 9** can order a packed lunch if required and a separate communication will be sent via email to eligible families regarding this.
9. Only certain areas of the playground will be in use on Thursday, 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.

If you have any queries about the arrangements for Thursday 27th April, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T. Lawn
Headteacher