



25 January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

INDUSTRIAL ACTION CONTEXT

You may have seen in the media that the National Education Union (NEU) has balloted their members on taking industrial action and that the results were announced on 16 January 2023. The union has met the required thresholds to take lawful industrial action, with over 90% of those who voted in favour on a turnout of 53%. The dispute is with the Secretary of State for Education rather than with the school itself and is in pursuit of a pay settlement that is more in line with inflation and where schools receive increased funding from central government to be able to afford this. The union's complaint is backed up by independent analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies where there has been a long period of reductions in teacher salaries since 2010, when inflation is factored in. I can also confirm that recruitment and retention of staff has become significantly more challenging, particularly in comparison with pay and conditions for graduate jobs in the private sector. We will plan communications to go to students, making it clear that they are not to ask staff who may be striking and who is not, please reiterate this at home.

WEDNESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2023 - IN SCHOOL PROVISION YEAR 11, YEAR 12 AND YEAR 13

The school will be open on 1 February 2023, but a significant number of staff are likely to be on strike. Each school has varying rates of union membership and the union that they belong to. Since members are not required to notify the school in advance of their intentions, I have conducted a risk assessment on the safety of the school being open to all students. In discussions within our senior team and the school governors, we have determined that we may not have sufficient staff available to safely manage over 900 students on site.

We are mindful of disruption faced by students due to Covid-19 over the past few years and have taken the decision to prioritise students that are studying for their forthcoming GCSE and A-level exams. **Therefore, on Wednesday 1 February 2023, students in Years 11, 12 and 13 should come to school as normal.** There may be periods of the day when their normal teacher is not available and independent working will be expected (Year 11 will be supervised). Year 11 may have an altered curriculum where study skills workshops or revision sessions are offered where staffing means that the normal timetable cannot be delivered.

For Sixth Form lessons students will not be notified in advance if their teacher is present or not. They should attend school as normal, including off-site lessons. If their teacher is absent then they should use the opportunity to conduct private study on site and should therefore bring any necessary study materials with them. Where appropriate we may authorise students to go home to study once we are able to confirm a teacher's absence. This decision will only take place on the day.

WEDNESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2023 - ONLINE PROVISION YEARS 7-10

Students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 should stay at home and undertake remote learning, following their normal timetable using the resources on google classroom. If there are gaps and work has not been set, online platforms should be used:

<https://classroom.thenational.academy/>

<https://hegartymaths.com/login/learner>

<https://ttrockstars.com/>

<https://my.educake.co.uk/student-login>

<https://www.linguascope.com/>

We know that some of our students have specific needs and we will be in touch with those families separately to discuss whether special provision may be required for them on this date. Please do not contact the school requesting that your child has permission to attend school on that day as we cannot accommodate this safely. **We will be in touch with you by the end of the school day on Friday 27 January** if your child is being offered a place in school. If your child is in this category, you will receive a direct confirmation from the school that your child is able to attend school on 1 February once we have the full picture of projected student numbers.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Children entitled to Free School Meals who are in school can access the normal meal service. We will confirm specific arrangements for the provision of Free School Meals for students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 who are working at home on Wednesday 1 February directly with parents/carers of these students.

I know that making alternative arrangements for your children will be difficult for some parents. We are giving as much notice as possible and running as many classes as we can safely. The fundamental rationale behind the industrial action remains a noble one: fair pay and conditions are necessary to ensure that we are able to have a qualified, specialist teacher in every classroom for young people.

Finally, there are further proposed dates for action: 1 March, 15 March and 16 March 2023. It is not possible to say at this stage whether the impact will be the same as on 1 February and I will write to you nearer the time once I am able to confirm arrangements in school. Please make contingency plans for childcare on these dates.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Mitcherson
Headteacher