



25<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

### Re: Planned strike action on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023

As you will have seen in the news, the National Education Union (NEU) has announced that its members will be taking further national strike action within the next fortnight in relation to its dispute with the government around teacher and school staff pay. I am writing to update you on our contingency planning.

### What will happen at the school assuming the strike goes ahead as planned?

Regretfully, the impact on staffing levels means that the school will be closed to most pupils on both days.

- As was the case on previous strike days, pupils in Years 7 to 10 should remain at home and complete remote learning online. All details will be posted on Teams **and** on our school website. (Pupils unable to access online learning should speak to their form tutor to see how they can be given further support by the school.)
- The school will be open to provide limited supervised learning for a small number of pupils in vulnerable groups. These pupils have received a separate letter.
- Where necessary, we *may* also be able to offer a place in school to children of Critical Workers (e.g. emergency services workers). **Please note:** this is not an automatic entitlement and alternative childcare arrangements should still be put in place wherever possible. **To apply for a Critical Worker place for your child, you must complete this online form no later than 10am on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April:**

<https://forms.office.com/e/hXNKEYUs8k>

### What if my child qualifies for Free School Meals?

For pupils who are not going to be in school on the strike days, we will supply a supermarket voucher for the sum of £5.00. This is equivalent to two days' Free School Meals allocation.

## **A reminder about picket lines**

Some staff might form a picket line outside the school. If that is the case, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all students and parents that as a Trust we acknowledge staff's legal right to strike. Please ensure that any interactions you have with staff are courteous and respectful as they would be on any other day.

## **Why is the school not open for more pupils?**

The school's leadership (headteacher, governors and trustees) adopt a strictly neutral approach to this matter. Members of the NEU have met legal thresholds to take strike action and are entitled to do so by national employment law.

Under the law, union members are not required to inform the school until the strike day whether it is their intention to take industrial action or not. Members of non-striking unions are also permitted by law to refuse to undertake the duties of those members of staff who are on strike. This makes it very challenging to plan ahead with any certainty.

Based on the information available, our risk assessment shows that we will regrettably have insufficient staffing in place to open to whole year groups for pupils in Years 7 to 10.

## **Summary**

We appreciate that any partial closure may be disruptive to you, for which we apologise. We hope that you understand we have not taken these decisions lightly. Your child's education is important to *all* staff at Dereham Neatherd High School. We regret that we are having to close the school to so many pupils and all hope that this national dispute can be resolved as soon as possible. By putting in place remote learning, we can limit the impact the strike could have on your child's education.

If our plans change significantly, or if the strike action is cancelled or postponed by the NEU, I will write to you again with an update.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Mallett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Mr J. Mallett  
Headteacher