

26th January 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you will be aware from the press, and further to my article in last Friday's Sweyne Park Times, the National Education Union (NEU) has voted to take industrial action. This will affect our school on the following days:

- Wednesday 1st February 2023
- Wednesday 1st March 2023
- Wednesday 15th March 2023
- Thursday 16th March 2023

In England, the NEU's dispute is with the Secretary of State for Education and is not directed at individual schools. The NEU is calling on the Secretary of State to provide additional and sufficient funding for state-funded schools to provide a fully-funded, above inflation, pay rise.

Although we have been provided with an initial idea of the number of staff who are eligible to take industrial action, we will not know which individual teachers are striking until the morning of Wednesday 1st February. However, we are aware that more than 50% of our own teaching staff are eligible to take industrial action and the NEU has reported that an additional number of teachers are currently choosing to join the NEU prior to the strike action. This does, of course, make it almost impossible to plan ahead with any great level of certainty. Whilst we will always try to minimise the impact to families, there is no doubt that the strikes will serve their intended purpose to cause significant disruption to the provision of education.

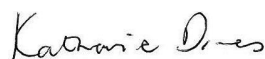
The safety of our pupils is paramount, and we have a duty to ensure that we can provide a safe and secure learning environment for them. As it stands, it is likely that we will not be in a position to open to all year groups, and, with this in mind, I strongly suggest that, where needed, you consider making alternative child care arrangements for younger pupils. In accordance with the Department for Education guidelines, we will prioritise examination year groups, and make any necessary provision for vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers. If your child falls within these categories and you know that you will require them to attend school, in the event of partial closure, please click [here](#) to complete a short MS Form (you should complete a separate form for each child).

In order to allow me and the Senior Leadership Team time to assess the teachers who are in school, and manage the timetable for the day, any pupils who do come into school will be asked to go directly to the Main Hall and register there. After the first day of action, we will have a better idea with regards to colleagues who have decided to take industrial action, and this will help to inform planning for subsequent strike days.

It is important to make you aware that we are not permitted to ask staff in the building to cover for striking colleagues, nor are striking colleagues obliged to set cover work. This means that it is inevitable that those pupils/students who are in school will have at least some sessions where they will be supervised and expected to undertake independent work. Likewise, for any pupils/students asked to work at home, the situation will be the same as they will only be provided with remote learning where their class teacher is in school.

Given that the situation is subject to change, I will confirm final arrangements as soon as I can so please do keep an eye on your emails and our school website.

Kind regards



Katharine Dines
Headteacher

