



Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School

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Dear Parents/Guardians

RE: Strike Action

As you will be aware, teaching members of the National Education Union (NEU) have voted to take industrial action on four days over the coming months, the first of which is **Wednesday 1st February**. Approaching half of the teachers at our school are members of the NEU, with a significant number of these indicating that they plan to take part in the first day of the strike. There is no obligation for individuals to inform their employer of their intention to strike; I'm very grateful that my colleagues have supported my decision making through their openness. Whilst I can ask teachers if they would cover for striking colleagues, there is no compulsion on them to do so, in fact it is not a position that I would want to place any teacher in unless they approach me to volunteer their availability to cover. There is also no requirement for individual teachers engaged in industrial action to set cover work for their teaching groups. We do have members of our administrative staff that we can use for cover, and also members of the school's leadership team, but combined these do not compensate for the absences I am already aware of.

Advice from the Department for Education is that, where safe to do so, schools should make all attempts to remain open to as many students that they can, and that priority is given to vulnerable young people, the children of critical workers and those who will be taking public examinations in the coming months.

It is highly likely that there will be disruption to normal lessons for those students who are in school, which may require the need to supervise for some periods in large groups, possibly of mixed year groups. We will provide further details regarding what students will require to have with them to support this, but certainly a reading book will be essential.

Having considered the options open to us, I have decided that we will remain open for Years 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 students, but that we will be asking on this occasion that those students in Years 9 and 10 remain at home. We will provide some suggestions for online learning for these students, although this will be general and will not involve face-to-face online teaching. We will also provide a food parcel for any student who is eligible for Free School Meals but is asked not to attend. If you are the parents of a child in Years 9 or 10 and a critical worker, please contact vdrake@langton.kent.sch.uk to request that your child attends. These students will be supervised for the day. We will also be in contact with the parents of any student in Years 9 or 10 who we believe should attend school. This day does not count as an absence for students asked to stay at home, but would count as an absence for a student whose year group is in school.

We will be reviewing how our plans for this first strike day unfold to inform our actions for later ones. It may be that next time we can bring in more students, it may be that we need to bring in fewer; all decisions will be based on a risk assessment that we will complete in advance.

I do not believe that it is for me to make a public political point about this strike action. I will only add that having spoken to a number of my colleagues I am aware of the personal anguish the decision to strike or not has placed upon them; those who reach the difficult decision to remove their labour, and in doing so to lose a day's pay, are certainly no less committed to, nor less passionate about, the education of their students.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Pollard', written in a cursive style.

Paul Pollard

Headteacher