

24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Parent/Carers

### **Re: Planned strike action at Birklands Primary School on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February**

I write to update you on the progress of our contingency planning during the forthcoming strike action in schools.

#### **Background**

We have had confirmation from NEU that members of the union intend to take formal industrial action by participating in a strike which will take place on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February.

The strike action is in relation to a national dispute around teacher and school staff pay. I wanted to take this opportunity to further explain the dispute and to also outline the school's plans during the strike.

#### **What is the dispute which has led to the strike about?**

As you may know, over the summer the Department for Education agreed to a 5% pay rise for teachers. Teaching unions across England and Scotland, including NEU are in dispute with the Department for Education regarding their request for teachers pay to keep up with inflation and the cost of living.

#### **What will happen at the school during the strike?**

Based upon the number of teaching staff available on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>, decisions have had to be made around which year groups and groups of children will be able to attend school. These decisions are not taken lightly and are based upon DfE and Trust guidance, whilst considering health and safety and the needs of the children. Due to teacher numbers, the children may not be with their class teacher and year groups may need to be mixed beyond the usual structure. The structure of the day will also change and although linked to the current curriculum will not follow the children's current learning.

- School will be open for all children in Y1, Y2, Y6 and the expectation is for them to attend as per the DfE guidance. Please note that there will be no PE on this day so uniform should be worn.
- School will also be open for those children currently in receipt of benefits related Free School Meals (FSM).

- If your child does not fall into any of the aforementioned year groups (Nursery, Reception, Y3, Y4 and Y5) or category of (FSM), they will come home with their learning on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January, to be completed and returned on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

Some staff might form a picket line outside the school. A picket line is where staff gather near the entrance to a workplace to protest in person, they may be holding notice boards or banners. If that is the case, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all students and parents that as a Trust we support our 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.

We would also like to remind you that it is unlawful for people who are not members of staff at the school (or their union representatives) to join a picket line. We therefore ask parents or carers or pupils to refrain from joining any picket line.

We have tried to give parents and carers as much notice as possible of these circumstances. We appreciate that any partial opening may be disruptive to you, for which we apologise.

Please be aware that these plans could be subject to change on the morning of Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February, as teachers are entitled to decide on the day should they choose to strike.

Lastly, we want to take this opportunity to reiterate that your child's education is important to *all* staff at Birklands Primary School. We hope that by putting in place these contingency plans we can limit any impact the strike could have to your child's education.

Yours sincerely

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

Mrs V Farr  
Head Teacher