

Our ref: ljm/KDV/Correspondence

22 June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: NEU Strike Action

I wrote to you very recently and said that I thought it would be the last time I would contact you and at the time I genuinely thought it would be. Unfortunately, you will probably have heard that the NEU have announced a final round of strikes as we head into the summer holidays. Striking was discussed previously with the other three teaching unions also balloting for joint strikes in the new academic year. To date it has not been announced whether the government intends to reopen talks with the leaders of the unions.

For those not following the events around the strikes, the Unions were offered a pay deal in March 2023 which was rejected. The Education Secretary said that the offer was final and that the decision on next year's pay for Teachers would be based on the recommendations of the School Teacher's Review Body (STRB). Every year this body meets and decides what the pay award for teachers should be, based in part on the recruitment and retention figures in the sector which this year do not make good reading, but also within the "affordability" data that the government give them. The report was passed to the Education Secretary on 16th May 2022 and despite a leak to one newspaper several weeks ago, the government has refused to publish the document or open discussions with union leaders. The NEU therefore feel that they have no choice but to hold strike action again when they still have the mandate.

As I have said before, I am not a member of the NEU and therefore I present the information above for information rather than in judgement one way or another. The late release of the STRB report though does have a meaningful impact on schools' ability to plan for next year and will impact on the quality of provision they can put in place. At TCOLC we will of course do everything that we can possibly do to make sure our students remain successful and weather any storm that comes their way. Teachers' pay, school finances, staff workload and recruitment and retention though are all national issues that seem to be allowed to drift without a clear strategy from the government. TCOLC is in a good financial position, and we have again recruited really well for next year, but these issues will affect even us eventually and that is why so many teachers here feel strongly enough to strike and give up another days pay even in the cost of living crisis.

These strikes will inevitably mean that we will need to close to all students on:

- **Wednesday 5th July 2023**
- **Friday 7th July 2023**

We will send out the usual remote work pack for students to complete independently and we are currently looking at staffing levels to be able to invite Year 10 students into the building. If we are able to do this, we will inform Year 10 students through the Head of Year as soon as possible.

I am again sorry that your child will be experiencing this disruption to their education, and I am also sorry for the inconvenience that it will cause you as well but in terms of staffing levels we simply cannot cover the curriculum or safely manage a structured school day.

Kind regards,

Mr. K Vernon
Head Teacher