

Friday 20th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Strike Action – Wed 1st February, 2023

You will be aware that the NEU Teachers' Union has balloted its members, and that teachers belonging to this union have voted to strike over four days in February and March 2023. The first of these strike days is Wednesday 1st February.

Staff are not obliged to inform us if they intend to strike, so although we can ask them, they do not have to let us know until the day. However, I have asked the teachers if they are happy to share who intends to strike on 1st February, and I am still gathering responses.

There will likely be a number of teachers choosing to strike, but I do not yet have a clear sense of the scale of disruption. Furthermore, teachers who choose not to strike (and support staff who are not eligible to strike) may need to be absent on this day for their own childcare reasons, if their own child's school/year group has to close.

As you can imagine, this means we will not know about their absence until nearer the time, and we can only risk assess the ability to open the school/year groups when we know the staffing level we have available to us.

I aim to be able to write to you next week to let you know our position as a school so that you can, where needed, make necessary arrangements for your child.

Our current position (20/01/22) is that the school will be OPEN IN FULL, with no closures.

However, I must also advise that due to the nature of industrial action and the unknown numbers of staff (including support staff) who may need/choose to be off for their own childcare or strike action on this date, this may be **subject to change**.

The DfE stipulate that:

- In the event of strike action at a school, the Department for Education expects the headteacher to take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible.

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Sandford St. Martin's

P R I M A R Y S C H O O L

- Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the employer in a school must take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and pupils are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This applies to activities on or off school premises and schools will need to be mindful that responsibilities could be impacted on as a result of industrial action.
- Schools may choose to bring together groups and classes with teachers and support staff working together, as long as pupils' health and safety is ensured. *For pupils older than seven there are no set ratios for the number of staff required to supervise pupils on site.*
- There is no legal requirement to teach the curriculum on strike days.
- Continued attendance is important for all pupils. However, if the numbers of staff on strike mean you need to temporarily prioritise places in your setting you should, where possible, apply the principles set out in the emergency planning and response guidance by giving priority to vulnerable children and children of critical workers. In addition, schools should consider prioritising pupils due to take public examinations and other formal assessments.

On this basis, if staff shortages mean we have to reduce the 'school offer' on strike days, our plan would be to provide classes for vulnerable children, children of critical workers (just like we did in the pandemic) and Year 6 (KS2 SATs), Year 2 (KS1 SATs) and Year 1 children (Phonics Screening) as a minimum.

I wish to close by reminding you that due to the nature of industrial action and the unknown numbers of staff (including support staff) who may need/choose to be off for their own childcare or strike action on this date, **the plans above could be subject to change too.**

I will write again next week with a further update/confirmation of our position.

Best wishes,

Paul Beveridge

Headteacher