

Blossom Federation

Daubeney, Sebright and Lauriston



17th Jan 2023

Industrial Action Update 1

Dear Parents & Carers

You may be aware from the media that the National Education Union (NEU), which represents some teachers and support staff, has announced that its ballot of members in England, has met the thresholds required to commence industrial action for teachers.

Other unions, including the NAHT and NASUWT, did not reach the threshold for industrial action to take place, however the reasons for agreeing to ballot remain a consistent message across the profession.

This is based on the pursuance of above inflation pay rises and in seeing improvements in the Government funding provided to schools, especially to fund increases in pay. These issues contribute in part to staff leaving the profession, especially in London, and in schools having to make significant cuts which impacts the quality of provision.

Dr Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretaries of the National Education Union, said:

"We have continually raised our concerns with successive education secretaries about teacher and support staff pay and its funding in schools and colleges, but instead of seeking to resolve the issue they have sat on their hands. It is disappointing that the Government prefers to talk about yet more draconian anti-strike legislation, rather than work with us to address the causes of strike action. This is not about a pay rise but correcting historic real-terms pay cuts. Teachers have lost 23% in real-terms since 2010, and support staff 27% over the same period. The average 5% pay rise for teachers this year is some 7% behind inflation. In the midst of a cost of living crisis, that is an unsustainable situation."

I want to assure you that industrial action is **not** something staff in the education profession take lightly. It is also a rarity. I have only experienced this on a handful of occasions in my time as a school leader and recognise the disruption and personal anxiety this creates. I am sure we have all shared both support, frustration and worry over recent ambulance workers, nursing staff and rail worker strikes, and all leaders realise the impact of industrial action on our community. Staff taking industrial action themselves do not

get paid and this demonstrates, during our current cost of living crisis, how important it is to the staff to take a stand.

This **first** letter is to inform you of the information above. Across the Federation, we are making plans to determine whether each school will **close to children or open partially**. This is dependent on the numbers of NEU staff members who intend to take industrial action. While employees are not required to tell their employers whether they intend to take strike action, employers are able to ask staff in advance if they intend to strike to enable them to plan how to manage the strike.

Over the next day or so, we should have a clearer picture of how this affects each school but you should prepare for the **schools being closed next Wednesday 1st February**. This may also impact our Children's Centres.

There are further planned strike dates for the UK, but the subsequent London dates are as follows:

- Thursday 2nd March
- Wednesday 15th March
- Thursday 16th March

There are a maximum of 4 strike days.

You will hear from each school by the end of this week with a further update.

Yours sincerely



Robin Warren

Executive Head Teacher

The Blossom Federation of Daubeney, Sebright & Lauriston Schools