

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Planned NEU strike Action – February and March 2023

The National Education Union (NEU) has announced that its ballot of teacher members in England has met the thresholds required to commence strike action, and has called upon its members to take part in strike action on:

- Wednesday 1st February
- Wednesday 1st March
- Wednesday 15th March
- Thursday 16th March

The NEU's dispute with the government is over the failure to address the crisis in school funding and to provide a fully-funded increase in teachers' pay which at least matches inflation and begins to restore lost pay. This affects the recruitment and retention of teachers, the quality of education provision and the welfare of all our children. Other teaching unions also balloted their members but did not reach the legal threshold for turn out to proceed with any form of action.

Some of the teachers at Alban City School are members of the NEU. Whether our staff choose to exercise their right to strike is a personal matter, and staff do not have to inform the school of their intention to strike until the actual day of the strike. Other non-striking unions have issued guidance to their members about how they should respond, including not to provide cover for striking colleagues.

The staff at ACS work extremely hard to ensure our children receive the very best education, support and care and they do not wish to disrupt this. The action they decide to take is not one that will be taken lightly. I hope it goes without saying that we as a school community support an individual's personal decision and understand that it is a very difficult decision for anyone to make.

The following classes will be closed on Wednesday 1st February:

- Lime
- Aqua
- Sky
- Crimson
- Amber
- Vermillion
- Amethyst
- Magenta

Please be aware that it is possible that other classes may have to close at short notice if teachers exercise their right to inform me on the day that they are taking strike action. Staff may also be affected if their own children are unable to go to school which means they cannot come to work. As in any emergency closure, parents will be informed by text, email and in-app notification if their child's class has unexpectedly had to close.

Remote learning

There is no legal requirement to teach the curriculum on strike days or for teachers to plan and provide online learning in advance of a strike, so work will not be set.

Benefits-related free school meals

Children eligible for a **benefits-related** free school meal (not the universal infants free school meal) are still entitled to receive a meal. A school lunch in a takeaway container will be available for those parents who wish to order and collect it. This will need to be ordered in advance so if you are eligible you will receive a separate form to indicate if you would like one.

Vulnerable children and critical workers' children

There is no legal requirement for schools to provide childcare on strike days for vulnerable or critical workers' children. We have explored the possibility of providing places for certain groups of children, but the children's safety has to be prioritised. As support staff should not be expected to provide cover for or take classes, where this would normally be done by teachers who are taking action, it will not be possible for any children from the classes that are closed to come to school because we will not be able to supervise them safely.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your support and understanding for our staff and for the teaching profession more widely. I am sure we all share the view that any improvements in teachers' pay and conditions and funding for schools will benefit all our children in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Stray