

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust
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27 February 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

As explained in my letter dated 21st February, the National Education Union (NEU), in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992, are calling upon their members to strike; approximately half of Oaklands teaching staff are members of the NEU.

On Tuesday of last week, The Secretary of State for Education wrote to the teaching unions offering to move into formal talks on pay, conditions and reform that will address all areas in dispute. This offer, was made on the condition that the NEU pauses its strike action to ensure talks can take place in good faith and without the disruption of ongoing action. The Government made the same request of the Royal College of Nursing who, having accepted, have now entered intense discussions with ministers to resolve their own pay disputes. There is still a possibility that the action will be called off if all sides decide to find a resolution, however I now have to take the necessary contingency measures on the assumption that the action continues.

The next proposed industrial action will take place on Thursday 2nd March. In accordance with the regulations, Trade Union members do not have to give advance notice of their intention to strike, nor do they have to respond when asked. Despite this, a number of colleagues have given me notice. Non-striking staff cannot be compelled to cover for striking colleagues.

This situation is further compounded by staff who have young children needing to take leave as their children's schools are shut.

To determine if there will be the need for a full or partial closure on some or all of these days, we have undertaken a Risk Assessment and I am writing to confirm our arrangements for Thursday 2nd March.

The school will be open to Years 7, 11, 12 and 13 only on 2nd March 2023. Students in Year 8, 9 and 10 should not come to school on that day.

Provision will be made in school for vulnerable students in Years 8, 9 and 10 this includes those with an EHCP, on child protection plan, or who are looked after. Please contact the Head of Year 8, 9 and 10 if this is required.

At this juncture we believed that most Year 11 lessons will continue, however Year 11 students should come into school with revision materials for core subjects should it be needed.

We appreciate that industrial action is disruptive, and you may need to change your plans or working arrangements, whilst this action is ongoing. We will, of course, continue to monitor the arrangements in place and make modifications to improve support for students, wherever possible. However, ensuring the health and safety of our students must take priority. I cannot risk having large numbers of students in school without supervision during lessons, lunchtime or breaktime.

Students who are eligible for free school meals and not in school will be provided with a voucher to cover lunch costs on that day. Further details about this will be provided to relevant families.

Staff who are on strike cannot be compelled to set work for students who are at home although some may choose to do so. Staff not on strike will set work though through MS Teams.

The information in this letter reflects the position at the time of writing. As I mentioned earlier, there is a chance that action may be suspended. Equally, if I become aware before Thursday 2nd March that significantly more staff intend to strike then further action may be necessary in school, please be aware that notification of this could be at short notice.

Please note that our show, School of Rock, will still take place on Thursday 2nd March at 7.00pm. Tickets can be bought via the following link: [School of Rock Tickets](#)

The next strike days are planned for Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th March. Year 11 mock exams will continue on the 15th as the invigilation team will cover these.

We will treat each strike day as an individual instance and will, therefore, make a decision and inform parents no later than the week prior to each of the proposed strike dates.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher