



SUNNYMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Meadoway, Billericay, Essex CM11 2HL
Headteacher: Mrs Ronnie Branch BEd (Hons). NPQH
Telephone: 01277 651364
e-mail: admin@sunnymede-jun.essex.sch.uk
www.sunnymede-jun.ik.org

26th January 2023

Dear parents/carers

It is very likely from media coverage that you are aware the NEU (National Education Union) has declared strike action, which will take place on the following dates:

Wednesday 1st February
Wednesday 1st March
Tuesday 14th March
Wednesday 15th March

The strike is happening because of a national dispute between the unions and the government and not because of any issues specific to our school. The industrial action is based around the following issues:

- Teachers' pay: this is grabbing the headlines at the moment, as this has not kept pace with inflation and so teachers have had a 'real terms' pay cut for over ten years. The impact of this, along with an ever increasing and unsustainable workload, is that many teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years of their career and each year recruitment is more difficult.
- School funding: each year we are asked to do more and more, often working unmanageable hours, and with less and less human and physical resources: we can buy less resources, employ less staff and run less events.

Teachers really care about the quality of education we provide and schools are not funded adequately to provide the type of education we would like to. The five year financial forecast for schools is, indeed, bleak.

Our staff members at Sunnymede belong to a number of unions, some to the NEU. On this occasion, only NEU members are being called on to take strike action. Staff members are not obliged to tell the Headteacher what union they belong to or, indeed, whether they will be striking in advance of any planned strike day. This means it can be very difficult to avoid disruption.

However, I can confirm that my staff members who are members of the NEU have advised me in advance of their intentions for the strike date of Wednesday 1st February (next week). I can confirm, therefore, that the school will remain open for all pupils on Wednesday 1st February.

Whilst I am sure this is welcome news to you as parents, I cannot guarantee that the school will remain open on the other proposed strike days listed at the start of this letter. Please be aware, therefore, that there may be disruption on those dates.

I am sure there will be mixed feelings amongst you about strike action. I reassure you, however, that our staff care deeply about the care and education we provide and any decision they take to strike is not taken lightly by them. I, personally, will respect the decision any member of my staff has made in relation to this set of strikes or any further strike action in the future.

In summary, please make sure your child comes to school on Wednesday 1st February.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R Branch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mrs Ronnie Branch
Headteacher