



23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

## Re: Planned strike action by the National Education Union (NEU)

You may be aware from media coverage that the National Education Union (NEU) has declared strike action, which is currently planned to take place in our region on the following dates:

- **Wednesday 1st February 2023**
- **Thursday 2nd March 2023**
- **Wednesday 15th March 2023**
- **Thursday 16th March 2023**

The strikes are happening because of a national dispute between the NEU and the Government over teachers' pay and the impact of funding on schools over a number of years, and not because of any issues at our school. The Government is engaging in talks with the NEU so we will be waiting for any update on the current position with regards to the planned strike action depending on the outcome of those talks.

I am contacting you at this point to give you as much notice as possible about our arrangements and so that you can take the necessary action for your child(ren) if or when it may be required. Members of the NEU are not required to let us know in advance whether they intend to be away from school although some may indicate their intentions to us. This means that, until the days of the strikes, we will not know for certain whether we will be able to run the school as we normally would. That being said I have met with our NEU union reps and they have confirmed that approximately 60% of our teaching staff and some members of our support staff will not be in school. In addition to this staff who are not in the NEU may feel unwilling to cross a picket line (the picket line is metaphorical i.e. not real) but some staff may choose to work remotely in sympathy with the reasons for the strike. Taking all of the above into consideration I have made the decision that school will remain open to vulnerable children, the children of critical workers and for pupils sitting planned exams. School will be closed to other children and work will be set for them. Below is a summary what each group are doing on each of the strike days:



	<b>Wednesday 1st February 2023</b> Strike day 1	<b>Thursday 2nd March 2023</b> Strike day 2	<b>Wednesday 15th March 2023</b> Strike day 3	<b>Thursday 16th March 2023</b> Strike day 4
<b>Year 7</b>	Working remotely at home. Guidance on Y7 Google Classroom			
<b>Year 8</b>	Working remotely at home. Guidance on Y8 Google Classroom			
<b>Year 9</b>	Working remotely at home. Guidance on Y9 Google Classroom			
<b>Year 10</b>	Working remotely at home – Year 10 exam preparation. Blank revision book for notes provided.		Year 10 exams continue – refer to timetable for timings. <b>ALL YEAR 10 PUPILS IN SCHOOL</b>	Year 10 exams continue – refer to timetable for timings. <b>ALL YEAR 10 PUPILS IN SCHOOL</b>
<b>Year 11</b>	Individual MFL speaking exams as arranged by MFL Department please speak to CL for details.	<b>WAVE exams continue:</b> 8.40am for 9.00am start Maths Paper 3. <b>ALL YEAR 11 PUPILS IN SCHOOL.</b> Then pupils go home UNLESS doing English paper 2 which starts at 12pm. Year 11 can stay and revise in the canteen and then can go home after the exam at about 2pm.	Working remotely at home – GCSE & BTEC summer exam preparation. Blank revision book for notes provided.	
<b>Year 12</b>	Working remotely at home – AS/BTEC summer exam preparation. Spend one hour each day on Super-Curricular reading			
<b>Year 13</b>	Working remotely at home – A2/BTEC summer exam preparation. Spend one hour each day on Super-Curricular reading			

We are super conscious that high levels of attendance are important for all students and I can assure you that all possible avenues have been explored in order to keep the school fully open. In line with the Department for Education's advice on 'Handling Strike Action in Schools' we are applying the principles set out in the DfE's emergency planning and response guidance by giving priority to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers (Annex A and B at [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings October 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) and then, if possible, those sitting public examinations this summer.

We will communicate separately and directly with those parents/carers who have responsibility for children deemed vulnerable who will be prioritised as remaining in school during any strike days. If you are a critical worker and would like your child to be in school for the strike days please could you contact my PA at [zwilkins@swakeleys.org.uk](mailto:zwilkins@swakeleys.org.uk) by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January.

Following the repeal of Regulation 7 in July 2022, it is now possible for employers to engage with agency staff to replace the work of those taking official strike action. However, I need to stress that the availability of agency teaching supply staff is scarce generally and the cost exceptionally high against already challenging budgetary demands upon schools. With the majority of state funded schools having teaching staff who are members of the NEU, the pressures on the small pool of supply staff will be unprecedented during the strike days.



Our experience of delivering blended and online learning, developed during the pandemic, means that we have a well-established online learning facility, although we may not have staff able to facilitate this fully for all subject areas on any strike day. The Department for Education has said that there is no obligation for schools to cover the curriculum on strike days. However I am sure that we can agree that we want your child to be busy and engaged on the strike days. Because I am unable to know for sure which members of staff will be in school I am therefore not able to guarantee work will be consistently available for all students. We will ask staff who are not striking to provide work for students. Some staff will teach lessons via google meet. Other staff may set work on google classroom. If no work is available on google classroom we have provided some standalone activities which should keep your child busy over the strike days. Attached is information about what each year group should do on strike days and this will also be available on your child's year group google classroom.

Should your child require access to a device in order to complete work at home on the strike days please could you email my pa at: [zwilkins@swakeleys.org.uk](mailto:zwilkins@swakeleys.org.uk) by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January.

If your child is eligible for free school meals then we will send you out vouchers to cover the cost of lunches for the four days of strikes.

I am sorry that you may have to make alternative arrangements for your child at short notice, and that they may experience further disruption to their education but hope that in communicating the uncertainty of the situation and our plan for the strikes will enable you time to make arrangements. I understand that this situation may be frustrating and you should be assured that Swakeleys School for Girls remains committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students and delivering high-quality teaching and learning.

I will inform you as soon as possible if or when I know further details and hope that a resolution can be reached between the NEU and the Government as quickly as possible. In the meantime if you have any queries do please address them to: [office@swakeleys.org.uk](mailto:office@swakeleys.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Kelda Stevenson