



26th January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

NEU Strike Action

We wrote to you last week to share the dates of planned strike action by the NEU (National Education Union). We understand that you will welcome as much advance notice as possible of our plans, so I am writing to update you on arrangements for Wednesday 1st February 2023.

There are a significant number of our staff who are members of the NEU. Members are not obliged to tell us whether they intend to take strike action, so we can only plan based on our best estimates of the likely impact on staffing. We have risk-assessed these estimates against the safe running of the college and supervision of the children.

We have taken the decision to **close** the college to the following year groups on **Wednesday 1st February**:

- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 12

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer live online lessons for students through the day because we are unable to ask non-striking colleagues to 'cover' in this way. However, we have restored our Remote Learning pages on our website and updated the links to include material and lessons that would be an effective resource for students to work on during the industrial action. You can access this page here:

<https://www.elycollege.com/remotelearning>

Please note the History and RE Ely Cathedral visit for 7West has been postponed and will not take place on Wednesday 1st February – we are trying to find an alternative date and are working with the Cathedral. We will communicate further details around this as soon as we are able.

The following year groups will be expected to attend school as normal:

- Year 11
- Year 13

There is a Year 11 BTEC Digital Information Technology exam scheduled to take place on the morning of the 1st. It is vital that all students attend this exam as it is a key component of their final grade.

Where there are teachers who are not present, lessons will either be covered by a non-teaching member of staff who is able to do so, or students will be supervised in private study in either the main hall or an IT classroom by senior staff. It would be useful for students to bring in outstanding pieces of homework or reading that could be completed at short notice.

Year 13 students will be expected to attend college as normal but should be prepared for the potential for disruption to their lessons. Where a lesson does not run, we expect Year 13 students to engage in private study on site.

The college canteen will run as normal. Students who are not attending college but are eligible and require a free school meal will be able to come and collect a meal from college by arrangement. Please can you contact your House office if you want to take up this offer.

The college buses will run as normal on 1st February. There is no expectation that parents/carers or students not expected in college contact the school to confirm 'virtual' attendance, or that they are working from home.

It is possible that the NEU may organise a small 'picket' at the college entrance on the morning of the strike. This will be a small gathering of staff demonstrating their support for the strike. I'd like to reassure you that this will not be a disruptive or unpleasant occurrence, and those on the picket will not try to prevent or interfere with staff and students who are attending college.

We will review our arrangements prior to each of the other scheduled strike dates and communicate plans to you in advance. It remains possible that the dispute will be settled in time to avoid further action, but it is sensible to keep a record of these dates and be prepared for further disruption.

Wednesday 1st March

Wednesday 15th March

Thursday 16th March

As I outlined to you last week, the college and Meridian Trust take no collective position on the validity of the action being taken by the NEU. Please may I ask that you do not discuss the strike with members of staff. I have asked that staff similarly avoid discussing their personal views on the action directly with children, parents, and carers. However, we will take steps to explain in a balanced way to students what strike action means, and what the dispute that is causing this disruption is all about.

Many thanks for your understanding. I am sure we all look forward to a satisfactory resolution to this dispute and a return to normal provision.

Yours faithfully



Simon Warburton
Principal