



9th March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

NEU Strike Action – 15th and 16th March 2023

As there has been no settlement yet in the dispute between the National Education Union (NEU) and the government, it looks very likely that there will be more strike action next week. To give you as much notice as possible, I am writing to set out arrangements for Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th March 2023.

A significant number of our staff 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 are mindful that the two previous days have resulted in students from Years 7 to 10 not being able to attend college. Ideally, we would want to balance the impact of the strike on students by varying the year groups who are able to come into college and we understand that keeping Year 7 and 8 students at home can be problematic for working parents. However, there are two key factors at play in deciding about which students we can invite into college. Firstly, what is the possible impact of staff absence on the classes in that particular year and secondly, are there time limited requirements on the students that a day out of college could be detrimental to their examinations.

We have reviewed the potential impact on the curriculum for Wednesday 15th March and have forecast that Year 11 will be the least impacted year group with 14% of lessons on the day being unable to run – we can manage this with our existing cover staff and the bulk of the day for the year group will be close to normal. However, some year groups face far more disruption, Year 7 are likely to miss nearly a third of their teachers for the day and Year 9 well over a third. We also need to consider that Year 11 are in the final days of completing their Non-Examined Assessment – this forms a key part of their final grade and must be completed within lesson time.

Therefore, we have taken the decision to **close** college to the following year groups on **Wednesday 15th March**:

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

Students in Years 11, 12 and 13 will be expected to attend school as normal.

We have taken the decision to **close** college to the following year groups on **Thursday 16th March**:

- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11 – **although specific students working on NEA assessments will be required to attend college – details of who these students are will be shared by Friday.**

Students in Years 7, 12 and 13 will be expected to attend school as normal.

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 will update 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/remoteteaching>

Where there are teachers who are not present, 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 12 and 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 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 15th and 16th March. 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.

As I outlined previously, 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