



21st April 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

NEU Strike Action – 27th April and 2nd May

As the dispute continues between the National Education Union (NEU) and the government there will be more strike action over the next fortnight. To give you as much notice as possible, I am writing to set out arrangements for Thursday 27th April and Tuesday 2nd May 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.

As we communicated in March, we are mindful that the four previous days have resulted in students from Years 8 to 10 not being able to attend college, with only Year 7 being able to attend the last strike day instead of Year 11. 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, 8 and 9 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, Year 11 have oral assessments in Spanish taking place on the 27th April and art formal examinations taking place on the 2nd and 3rd May – therefore Year 11 students will have to attend college on both strike days.

Therefore, we have taken the decision to **close** college to the following year groups on **Thursday 27th April**:

- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9

Students in Years 10, 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 **Tuesday 2nd May**:

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

Students in Years 11, 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/remotelearning>

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 both strike days. 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