



Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Headteacher's Weekly Update

### National Strike Action by the NEU

As I informed you last week, members of the National Education Union (the largest teacher union) have voted in favour of taking strike action. The strike dates announced are:

- Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February
- Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March
- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March
- Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March

The strike action is the result of a national dispute over pay.

Due to the number of teaching staff who are members of this union, I am letting you know that there will be disruption to our usual provision on these days.

**On Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February students in only Years 11, 12 and 13 must attend school. Students in Years 7-10 must, regrettably, remain at home.**

Where their teacher is in school, students will have their lessons as usual. If any of their teachers are striking however, Year 11 students will be supervised to complete independent revision while Sixth Formers will study independently, as they would normally during a non-contact period. Students should come to school with revision materials so that they are able to work independently if required.

For the other year groups, the students will remain at home. They will be offered live lessons via Teams if their teacher is not striking. As staff are not required to tell us if they are striking, students will need to log on at the start of each lesson. If they do not have a lesson, students should complete any outstanding homework or read.

For all pupils in receipt of free school meals, they will be able to collect a high-quality packed lunch after school on Tuesday from the canteen.

I appreciate that families may be frustrated by this action, but as headteacher, I need to deal with the situation in the most pragmatic way I can, in the knowledge that my first duty must be the health and safety of all members of the school community.

Decisions regarding our provision for the later strike dates will be communicated closer to the event.

I had a constructive meeting with the NEU representative at this school and they have asked me to share a message from them. I have done so below, so that parents can be aware of the context that will lead some teachers here to take industrial action in the coming weeks.



### **Message to parents from the NEU rep at The Emmbrook School:**

The National Education Union's teaching members voted to take strike action in demanding a pay increase for a well-funded education to "Save Our Schools". Teachers will lose a day's pay for each day they are on strike.

Please be assured, this is not against the school, which we love. This is a nationwide dispute with the Secretary of State for Education.

We believe the continued underfunding of our schools is detrimental to the children and staff. Nationally and especially locally, there is a crisis in education, in recruitment and retention of teachers and in increasing class sizes with diminishing resources.

We believe education is the most important right and we are fighting for your children and for our profession, for a better future for all.

We all share, support and value this school's vision and aspirations for your children. Our commitment to your children and to this school will not waiver and we will continue to support your children to the best of our ability despite the difficult financial challenges we are facing.

As headteacher, I will always aim to make well-reasoned pragmatic decisions. As we begin a period of industrial action (which could yet become prolonged) I will continue to balance my duties and responsibilities with the intention of doing the best that I can by students and staff.

### **Year 9 Options Evening – Change of Date**

Options Evening is a useful part of helping our Year 9 students make informed choices about the subjects they will choose to study in Year 10 (all students continue to study English, Maths, Science and PE). We have changed the date of Options Evening to **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February** (6.15pm). Miss Fry will share more details in the coming days.

### **Thanks from the Wokingham Foodbank**

We've received a grateful thanks from the [Wokingham Foodbank](#) for the generous donation we made as a community to their Christmas reverse advent scheme. The Emmbrook donated a combined total 202.5 Kilos of food and goods, which is an amazing amount. The foodbank has seen a great increase in the need for their service during the past year, and will continue to provide essential items such as food and household goods. There is information about how you can support this important work on their website.

I hope that you all have a good weekend.

Best wishes,

**Nick McSweeney**

Headteacher

[nmcsweeney@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:nmcsweeney@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk)