

FRED LONGWORTH HIGH SCHOOL



Strike Action – Wednesday 1st February 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

As you are probably aware, the National Education Union (NEU) recently held a national ballot for industrial action. The NEU is in dispute with the Secretary of State and teaching members have voted for strike action because of a failure to make available additional and sufficient funds to allow employers to pay a fully funded increase in teachers' pay at a rate greater than inflation.

The union has subsequently given notice of four days of strikes, the first of which will take place on **Wednesday 1st February 2023**. The subsequent days are as follows: **Tuesday 28 February 2023; Wednesday 15 March 2023 and Thursday 16 March 2023**.

I write to inform you that because of this industrial action, the school will have to close on 1st February 2023 for health and safety reasons. A significant proportion of our teaching staff are members of the NEU which means that there will not be enough staff on site to ensure the safety of all 1300 students. Assuming that the later strike days go ahead, I give you advance warning that it is the likelihood that we will also have to close on these days as well.

On the 1st February, school will only be open to a small number of select students between 9:00am and 1:30pm. Parents of these students will be contacted separately about the arrangements for this day. For Year 11 students, we will be able to open and supervise the school library so that any student wishing to come into school between 9:00am and 1:30pm to carry out private study will be able to do so. If your child is normally in receipt of Free School Meals, we can still provide your child with a packed lunch which they can come into school to collect at 1pm on the strike day. If you would like us to arrange this lunch, please contact Mr Whalley by Monday 30th January using the email address whalleyj@flhs.wigan.sch.uk.

A note on the strike action

The teaching profession, along with countless other professionals and workers across the public sector have seen an erosion of their pay in real terms over several years. A key demand of this strike action is not just to pursue an above inflation pay-rise for teachers but to also ensure that, if granted, this is a fully funded pay-rise. Any pay rise awarded, if not fully funded will have to come out of existing school budgets which are already stretched due to rising costs and because of the impact of real term cuts over many years. The most recent, below inflation pay rise given to teachers was largely unfunded and the slight increases in funding we have received are insufficient to meet all of our rising costs.

We fully understand that this strike is inconvenient and disruptive but please do not email the school to complain about this action or with suggestions on how we might better manage the situation. This dispute is with the government and not the school. NEU members are exercising their right to withdraw their labour, and with skeleton staffing, we cannot safely open the school. The impact of the strike will also vary from school-to-school. Schools with fewer NEU members than ourselves may be able to avoid full closure. If you do feel strongly about this matter, you need to address your concerns to your local MP. You might also wish to contact your local MP and ask them to champion greater funding for all state schools. As a school, we are incredibly lucky to be having a new build at a significant cost; however, the funding that has been provided for this is completely separate to the funding which is used to pay our day-to-day bills and staff our curriculum and pastoral system. As explained, this funding has been stretched for a number of years. Any further demands that are placed on an

already squeezed budget will have a direct impact in how we provide for your child's education.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P Davies', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

P Davies
Headteacher