

PORTISHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Learning and achieving together

31st January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following my letter from 24th January, I am now getting in touch to give you as much notice as possible about our arrangements for the planned strike day on Wednesday 1st February.

Industrial action by the NEU

The National Education Union (NEU) is in a formal trade dispute with the Secretary of State for Education because she has failed to give the undertaking sought by the NEU 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 (as measured by September 2022 RPI). The proposed dates for strikes by NEU teachers are as follows:

- 1st February 2023 (national strike)
- 2nd March 2023 (South West)
- 15th March 2023 (national strike)
- 16th March 2023 (national strike)

Our approach has been governed by the following principles:

To ensure the safety of students and staff, to respect the legitimate right for colleagues to take industrial action, whilst meeting our responsibility to provide as much continuity of education as possible.

Risk assessment

Following the announcement of strike action, we have carried out a risk assessment to determine whether it is safe to operate the school site on the first strike day, Wednesday 1st February. A wide range of factors have been considered, but specifically:

- Proportion of NEU members: The NEU has informed us of the number of its members at the school.
- Position of other unions: I cannot ask other teachers to cover for staff who are striking as this would be to undermine the strike and teachers' contracts protect them from such actions. This includes taking lessons, duties or setting work for striking colleagues.

The factors above mean that we do not know with certainty which colleagues will be striking

And we will therefore need to close the following classes on 1st February:

Octopus Class

Seal Class

Seahorse Class

Penguin Class

Anning in the morning (PE/swimming with sports coaches in the afternoon, the side gate will be open from 1pm)

Brunel Class

Scott Class

Peake Class

Fossey Class

Parks Class

Darwin Class

Learning

For children who are not in school on 1st February we have created a learning offer attached. This is optional for children to complete and they will not be expected to submit the work and teachers will not mark or assess it. The activities are based around parts of the curriculum they have previously learnt about so that children will already have understanding of the curriculum area. This will provide an important opportunity for them to recall and revisit their prior learning.

Catering Arrangements and Free School Meals

Our caterers, Aspens, will provide lunches to children who are in school as normal.

Aspens will provide a packed lunch for students on Free School Meals who are not in school on 1st February. This will be available for children who qualify for free school meals - this is different than the Universal Free School Meals that children in Reception – Y2 are entitled to. Eligible students will be given a lunch pack for Wednesday 1st February on their way home on Tuesday 31st January.

Provision for Vulnerable Pupils

We have a very limited capacity to offer supervision in school for vulnerable pupils whose classes are not in school on 1st February. It is likely that they will be working with different members of staff and routines and provision will be different than usual. If your child is in this category you will already have been contacted to be offered a place. Please bring your child to the school office at normal drop off time rather than the classroom and pick up from the office at the end of the school day.

Wrap-around Care, Breakfast Clubs, and After School Activities

We will continue to provide breakfast club and afterschool club childcare. This will not be open to children who are not in school because of strike action on 1st February.

I'm sorry that you will have had to make alternative arrangements for your child at short notice, and that they will experience further disruption to their education. I understand that this situation may be frustrating, and ask that all members of our school community continue to treat each other with respect as teachers do have a democratic right to take industrial action. Democracy is a fundamental British value, and one which we teach the children. Portishead Primary School remains committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our pupils and delivering high-quality teaching.

We are working closely with our staff union representatives to keep up to date with the situation, and I will inform you as soon as possible if arrangements change further.

We will send out an update as we know more about each further strike date, the next being Thursday 2nd of March.

Kind regards,
Richard Riordan

Headteacher
Portishead Primary School