25th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Strike action by members of the National Education Union**

I am writing to you about forthcoming strike action by the National Education Union (NEU), one of the main teaching trade unions. You may have seen coverage of this in the news, and I wanted to inform you about the impact this is likely to have at our school.

There are three national and one regional day strikes planned. The strike days that are likely to affect schools in this area are:

* **Wednesday 1 February 2023**
* **Tuesday 28 February 2023**
* **Wednesday 15 March 2023**
* **Thursday 16 March 2023**

The NEU has posted a document for parents, carers and grandparents that explains their reasons for taking strike action. It can be found at <https://neu.org.uk/media/24511/view> if you wish to read it.

**How will strike action affect Birchfields?**

When a strike takes place, those taking strike action stop work and withdraw their labour. This means that those teachers involved in the action will not teach their classes or undertake any other duties on a strike day.

It is therefore incumbent upon me to consider the impact that industrial action will have on the operation of the school. One of the key issues is to assess whether there are sufficient staff available for the school to remain open, or partially open, during a strike.

To determine whether this school can remain fully or partially open, a detailed risk assessment has been conducted. This considers the impact that the action will have on the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors, and whether the school can run a full or amended curriculum, to determine whether it is possible to operate the school safely during the strike.

As head teacher, I and the Chair of Governors have decided the school will be **closed to all pupils** on **Wednesday 1st February.** I will carry out a further risk assessment for the remaining strike days but it is likely that school will be totally or partially closed on those days too.

**Remote learning**

On the strike day, remote learning will be available for pupils on the school website. However, please note that teachers who are on strike will not prepare or set work for pupils on strike days.

**School Lunches**

These will be provided for families to collect, if they are eligible for free school meals. Please contact the school office or [admin@birchfields.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:admin@birchfields.manchester.sch.uk) if you would like to order these **by Friday** **27th January please.**

Clearly this is a difficult situation, which will cause some disruption. I would ask you, however, to be understanding. A national strike by teachers is *very* unusual. Taking strike action is not something that any teacher would undertake lightly. Those on strike will have thought long and hard about their decision and will also lose pay for the days that they are on strike.

Yours faithfully,

Samantha Offord

Headteacher