



LONGBENTON HIGH SCHOOL

25th January 2023

Dear Parents & Carers

School closure due to industrial action: Wednesday 1st February 2023

As you are aware, there is national disruption to schools planned by the NEU (National Education Union) next Wednesday February 1st; this aligns with other sectors taking industrial action (striking) on the same date. This strike action is not affecting all schools in the same way - some can remain fully or partially operational due to differing numbers of NEU staff.

This disruption is not aimed specifically at our school, but is a national campaign affecting the whole of England. As our school has higher NEU membership than some neighbouring secondary schools, we are being impacted more severely on this date.

As a result, school will be closed to Years 7-11 on Wednesday 1st February, with the following mitigations:

- We have the capacity to open to limited numbers of key worker children / vulnerable children who cannot safely stay at home on this date. We can only supervise students working independently in the SSC with non-NEU learning support staff and the senior team. They will not be able to attend any taught lessons. This must be bookable by parents in advance and there is a risk assessed capacity limit. We will prioritise students who are LAC (Looked After Children) and/or those with an EHCP in the first instance and advise parents of available spaces. Please use the following link in order to book a space by 9am on Monday 30th January: [SSC Booking Form](#)
- School will be open from 10am-1pm for Year 11 ONLY to come in and work in a supervised independent study capacity, should they so wish. This is optional/not compulsory. The number of Year 11 lessons that can run on this date with non-NEU staff is unfortunately severely limited. The intention is for Year 11 students to use this day to revise and prepare for their forthcoming mock exams in March. We will be providing some practice mock papers to use alongside any other revision resources they already have. If your Year 11 child would like to come and work/revise in school on this date, please let us know in advance at this link: [Year 11 Booking Form](#) Please note that the kitchen will not be open, so students will need to bring a packed lunch.
- School will be open for Year 12 and Year 13 to attend lessons with non-NEU staff (of which there are again a very limited number) and to attend lessons at GSHS (where there is less disruption as fewer NEU members). The bus to GSHS will still be running. We will make students aware of the lessons which will /

will not be staffed. Students can work independently in the 6th form area if their lesson is not running but can also work at home should they wish. Students should liaise with the Head of Sixth Form, Ms Potts.

Please read the **FAQs** below for further information on the reasons for this decision to close.

It is worth bearing in mind that the next dates for planned strike action are on different days of the week and affect different weeks of our fortnightly timetable. Therefore, the plan for those dates may be different to this one. I will be in touch with more details about the next date (28th February) before the end of this half term.

In the meantime, thank you for your patience and understanding.

Yours faithfully



Kelly Holbrook
Headteacher

Strike Action FAQs - Parents, Carers and Students

Why is there industrial (strike) action affecting schools?

In its campaign for a fully funded, above inflation pay rise, teacher members of the National Education Union (NEU) and NEU support staff in Wales have voted for strike action. The NEU have outlined 7 days of strike action (max. of 4 days for any one school).

In our school the following dates apply (there are other dates which affect other regions only):

- 1st February
- 28th February
- 15th March
- 16th March

This action is not specific to our school; it is a national campaign. Every school is affected differently depending on phase (primary or secondary) and the number of NEU teaching staff members in each school.

Trade union strike action is designed to be disruptive, so it is to be expected that the majority of schools nationally will not be able to operate as they normally would.

What is happening at LHS on Wednesday 1st February?

- School will be closed to Y7-11. We do not have sufficient non-striking staff to teach classes or supervise the site safely.
- The school building will be open to limited numbers of key worker children / vulnerable children who cannot safely stay at home on this date. We can only supervise students working independently in the SSC (Student Support Centre) with non-NEU learning support staff and the senior team. They will not be able to attend any taught lessons. This must be bookable by parents in advance and there is a risk assessed capacity limit.
- School will be open from 10am-1pm for Year 11 to come in and work in a supervised independent study capacity, should they so wish. This is optional/not compulsory. The number of Year 11 lessons

that can run on this date with non-NEU staff is unfortunately severely limited. The intention is for Year 11 students to use this day to revise and prepare for their forthcoming mock exams in March. We will be providing some practice mock papers to use alongside any other revision resources they already have.

- School will be open for Year 12 and Year 13 to attend lessons with non-NEU staff (of which there are a again a very limited number) and to attend lessons at GSHS (where there is less disruption as fewer NEU members). The bus to GSHS will still be running. We will make students aware of the lessons which will / will not be running. Students can work independently in the 6th form area if their lesson is not running but can also work at home.

Why can't we keep LHS fully staffed/fully open?

Every school in North Tyneside has differing numbers of NEU teachers. The main two teaching unions are NEU and NASUWT. The numbers striking mean that we cannot keep the school fully open safely for everyone or staff classes when we only have SLT (senior leadership team) to use for supervision.

Why can't other teachers cover for colleagues?

It is of course theoretically possible to reallocate some duties during a period of industrial action, but we cannot place unreasonable expectations on members of staff not taking part. The Department of Education have made clear in guidance issued to headteachers that 'rarely cover' principles would apply for non-striking staff (ie we cannot force staff to cover for colleagues). We also are mindful and respectful of the right to strike / non-striking staff being asked to 'undermine' colleagues. The numbers striking are also simply too high to cover.

Why can't you just use supply staff?

Historically, employers were not permitted to use agency workers to replace a striking workforce because it was judged to breach the European Convention on Human Rights which affords individuals the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of their interests. In July 2022, the law was changed, allowing employers to use agency workers to replace strikers. Even if we chose to try and do so, there is a national shortage of teachers, teaching assistants and agency/supply staff, so we are not able to source or book the agency staff to do this. We also simply have too many classes to cover.

Are we entitled to know the names of those striking?

No, while trade unions are obliged to inform employers as to the number of members being induced to take industrial action, they are not obliged to provide names. Names of striking staff will not be shared.

What happens if the headteacher/senior leadership team go on strike?

There are no members of the senior team who are also NEU members; they will not be striking on these dates.

Will work be set for students by staff who are striking? Will there be remote lessons?

Striking teachers cannot be asked to set work for students to complete on the day of the strike. The Department of Education have made clear in guidance issued to headteachers that there is no requirement for striking teachers to make up the time or teach extra lessons following strike action. This is also why remote lessons cannot be delivered. Students will be provided with tasks/instructions in Y11-13 to complete independently (but without any expectation of anything being marked - this would be deemed additional work in relation to industrial action rules). Any instructions for years 7-10 will follow in due course.

Will there be a picket line?

NEU have stated that there will not be a picket line made up of our staff on our gate.

What about free school meals - can students come and collect lunch?

Yes - this will be organised through catering staff. They will be ready for collection by students at the end of the school day on Tuesday.

If my child is working in school on 1.2.23, do they need to wear uniform?

Yes.