



The Ridgeway, St. Albans, Hertfordshire. AL4 9NX

Telephone: 01727 799560

Email: [admin@sandringham.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@sandringham.herts.sch.uk)

Website: [www.sandringham.herts.sch.uk](http://www.sandringham.herts.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Alan Gray, M.Sc., F.R.S.A.

Deputy Headteacher: Caroline Creaby, BA, M.Ed., Ed.D.

Deputy Headteacher: Mark Nicholls, BA (Hons)

File No: 109/2023

26<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

## Response to planned strike action by the NEU on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023

As communicated last week, teachers in the NEU have declared strike action, which will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 15<sup>th</sup> March and 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The strike is happening because of a national dispute between the unions and the government over teacher's pay and conditions, and not because of any issues at Sandringham.

The majority of members of the teaching staff at Sandringham are members of one of the unions, including about 50 who are in the NEU. We encourage staff to be part of a union for the protection and support it can offer. On 1<sup>st</sup> February, the school will be open to some year groups, and closed to others. NEU members are not obliged to say in advance whether they are striking or not, but (as usual) staff at Sandringham are keen to be supportive of the school community, so this letter notifies you of our plans. There could be last minute changes, so please bear that in mind. Some members of staff are definitely taking part in the planned action. (Some NEU members here have decided not to strike, and some may choose to strike on some rather than all of the dates).

Teachers at Sandringham have made it clear that they do not wish to strike, but find themselves in a position where they feel no option but to do so - it is not something they are doing lightly. Members of the NEU voted for strike action on a turnout of 53.2%, with 90.44% of those voting in favour of strike action. The issues that have led to this include pay of course, but also working conditions, recruitment and retention in the profession and overall school funding.

Health and Safety is the primary consideration when thinking about the operation of the school during strike action, although other considerations also need to be taken into account. Whilst guidance around strike action is provided by the DfE, this is guidance and is not statutory. All schools are, therefore, left to make decisions based on their own specific circumstances. It is worth bearing in mind that the support staff ballot fell short of the 50% threshold but indicated overwhelming support for strike action, as did the NAHT – the leadership union.

This communication is to give you as much notice as possible about our arrangements for 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023. The senior team have considered the situation and the information that we have on the impact of the strike on staffing levels. As a result, we have decided that on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 we should do the following:

- Years 7, 11, 12 and 13 must attend school as normal.
- Years 8, 9 and 10 will not be able to attend school and will need to study from home. Online learning will be provided by staff who are not striking throughout the day. Students should log



Artsmark  
Platinum Award  
Awarded by Arts  
Council England



onto their Google Classrooms each session and where there is no teacher within 5 minutes of the start of a lesson, they should consider this an independent study session to complete home learning/reading etc. Students should be at home for the duration of the school day following their normal timetable, as we did during the lock-down during Covid measures.

- Students attending school will have access to normal canteen provision.
- We are committed to providing a packed lunch to students in Years 8, 9 and 10 who are eligible for free school meals. We would be grateful if families could contact us to let us know if they will be collecting one.
- For students of critical workers who cannot supervise their children at home, they should notify the school of this so that we can consider how to accommodate these children on site during the day. Please bear in mind that there is likely to be limited capacity to manage these children.
- A separate communication will go to families of children who are vulnerable and the provision available to them.
- Normal transport will continue from Wheathampstead for those students attending school on the day.
- There are no planned examinations or trips on this day, and we do not anticipate any issues in this area.

I am sorry that you will have to make alternative arrangements for your child at short notice, and that they will experience 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. Sandringham remains committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students and delivering a high-quality education.

I am also extremely disappointed that teachers find themselves in a position where they feel the need to take industrial action and am supportive of them at a very difficult time. Families may agree or have a different point of view, but I would ask that we all respect each individuals' decisions on this matter.

Whilst individually I have no authority with the government, I would urge the government to engage in constructive dialogue with teaching unions and seek to resolve the dispute to everyone's satisfaction, and as quickly as possible.

We are working closely with our staff union representatives to keep up to date with the situation, and, whilst we do not anticipate any changes, I will inform you as soon as possible if arrangements do need to be adjusted further. If you have any questions, please contact either myself or Mr. Nicholls at the school.

Yours sincerely,



**Alan Gray**  
**Headteacher**