

26 January 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

Following my communication on Monday, I would like to share with you the full details of how the school will operate during the first day of industrial action on Wednesday 1 February 2023.

As you will be aware, members of the National Education Union (NEU) have voted to strike against government imposed pay and conditions. Approximately two-thirds of Denefield teachers are members of the NEU and I envisage that a large number of them will go on strike on 1 February. My priorities are to ensure students and staff are safe, that the school provides effective education, and that I protect the welfare and wellbeing of students and staff, whether they are on strike or not. I am also committed to providing you, as parents/carers, with full and timely information.

As a result, on 1 February 2023:

1. We will run a full timetable of online lessons for Years 7 to 11.
2. All those who wish to access these online lessons in school rather than at home may do so, subject to the school's capacity to supervise them.

Full details of these arrangements are below:

1. Full timetable of online lessons

With so many teachers on strike, it will not be possible to run live lessons as we did during lockdown. Instead, students will access quality-assured, pre-recorded lessons from the Oak National Academy, as well as undertaking knowledge-retrieval exercises such as quizzing. There will also be an opportunity for physical or wellbeing exercises. The normal timetable will be suspended and all students will study English, Maths, Science, History or Geography, and PE or Wellbeing. Lessons will be set via Satchel:One (Show My Homework) and although all lessons will be available from the beginning of the day, we suggest students follow the following timetable:

- 9.00am English
- 10.20am Maths
- 11.20am Science
- 1.00pm History or Geography (Years 7 to 9 will be set either History or Geography and Years 10 to 11 will choose whichever one they study)
- 1.00pm PE or Wellbeing
- Separate work will be set for Sixth Form students – further details will be supplied.

2. The school will be open for those who wish to access their online lessons on site

We will be supervising the library and a number of computer rooms so that those students who want to, or need to, do their online lessons in school may do so. I am confident that we will have capacity to accommodate all students who wish to study in school, but if we cannot safely accommodate all who would like to be in school, we will prioritise students as follows:

1. students with EHCPs, those who are classed as children who are looked after, those with a social worker, those who are refugees, and those who are classed as vulnerable
2. students where all parents/carers are critical/key workers
3. students on Free School Meals
4. Year 7 and Year 11 students
5. Year 8, 9 and 10 students, in that order.

If you wish your child to attend school then **you must complete the jotform [click here](#), no later than 9.00am on Monday 30 January**. We will confirm by the end of the same day that we will be able to supervise your child on strike day. Your child will need to be at the gate by 8.58am and must be in full school uniform. They will be greeted by a member of staff and informed which room to go to.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Will the canteen be open on 1 February?** Yes, the canteen will be open, although there may be a smaller choice of food available.
2. **My child is on Free School Meals. What should I do?** Any child who wishes to have their free school meal must attend school for the day.
3. **Why can't some year groups come in and have normal lessons for the day?** At present we do not know exactly which teachers will be on strike. It is likely to be more than half. This means that if we had any year groups in, more than half of their lessons would be cover lessons. And there won't be any cover work set, because teachers who have withdrawn their labour – and who are not getting paid – should not be expected to set cover work.
4. **Why can't the other teachers cover for striking teachers?** Firstly, I can't legally compel teachers to cover for striking teachers. In addition, I am mindful of the workload and wellbeing of all teachers – whether they are striking or not. Finally, even if it were legal or appropriate to ask non-striking teachers to cover for striking teachers, with two thirds of our teachers potentially on strike, there simply would not be enough teachers to provide cover.
5. **What about using agency staff?** Agency staff are currently few and far between – and many of them are members of the NEU and may therefore be on strike. Given that I cannot ask striking teachers to set cover work, even if we employed agency staff, there would be no work for them to deliver.
6. **What about the other potential strike days – 2 March, 15 March and 16 March?** I am hoping that in the four weeks between the first and second strike days the NEU and the government can reach agreement. If not, we will look at each strike day individually. If it is safe and sensible for us to have some year groups in school, having face to face lessons, then we will. It is far too early to know that at present.

Finally, I would like to thank all parents/carers for their support of the school at this crucial time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours faithfully

Mr E Towill MA (Oxon)
Headteacher