

Monday 23 January 2023



Dear Parent/Carer

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some factual information on the situation relating to industrial (strike) action by members of one of the teaching trade unions. It is very important to understand that it is the headteacher of individual schools who will communicate with you about the impact on your child's school and therefore any further queries must be directed to the school.

As you may have seen in the news, on Monday 16 January 2023 the National Education Union (NEU) announced that following a ballot of all its members, it had reached the threshold to hold industrial action. It has announced 4 days of industrial action for all its members. The dates that affect your child's school are:

- Wednesday 1 February 2023
- Wednesday 1 March 2023
- Wednesday 15 March 2023
- Thursday 16 March 2023

Information about the action taken by the NEU can be found on its website: <https://neu.org.uk/>

Each school in Essex will be affected differently by the strike action depending on the number of staff who are members of the NEU, the number that decide to strike on the dates above and other issues of absence the school may be experiencing such as staff illness. Each school will undertake a risk assessment to determine what education provision it may be able to make for your child on the days the strikes will be held.

The national Department for Education (DfE) has asked headteachers to prioritise attendance for examination year groups, vulnerable pupils, and children of critical workers. Schools are not required to teach the national curriculum on strike days.

It is up to your headteacher to write to you to outline what education provision it will be able to make depending on the number of teachers and support staff available. Headteachers can ask their staff in advance who will be taking strike action; however, NEU members do not have to provide this information until the actual day of the strike action, and there are legal limitations on who can be asked to cover for striking colleagues. This may mean that your headteacher may not be able to tell you the full arrangements until the morning of each strike day.

Your headteacher will seek to minimise any disruption to your child's education but if there is high level of staff taking industrial action on any given day, this may not be possible.

Your headteacher will write to you nearer the time to outline the arrangements that it will be putting in place to manage your child's education whilst the industrial action is underway.

If you have any questions about how this will affect your child(ren's) school, please contact the school directly.

Yours faithfully
Essex County Council
Education Directorate