

23 January 2023

Dear Parents

INDUSTRIAL ACTION - NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION

I feel certain that you will be aware that the National Education Union (NEU) balloted its members in furtherance of its dispute with HM Government. From a turnout of 53.27%, 90% of teachers nationally voted in favour of taking strike action. Buckinghamshire falls within the Eastern Region of the NEU; for the avoidance of doubt, the strike action has been declared on the following days:

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

The strike is as a result of a dispute with HM Government over teachers' pay and the funding of it. It is not a dispute with RGS. The NEU Deputy General Secretary has written to me to inform me that, at the time of her writing, 33 teachers at RGS are members of the NEU and are, therefore, eligible to take strike action on these days. The likelihood is that we will experience a significant staff shortage on these days.

In line with Department of Education (DfE) guidance, RGS will take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many students as possible. In doing so, we are undertaking a process of risk assessment to ensure that we meet our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure that staff and students are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Please be aware that we have many restrictions on how we are able to arrange cover for striking teachers and we cannot, for example, expect other staff to cover if it is not in their usual job description.

Heads/Senior staff are entitled to ask teachers of their intentions, and I have done so. However, the law states that teachers are within their rights not to inform the school in advance. I will send a further letter to parents once I have had sufficient information to carry out a risk assessment.

I interpret my responsibility *to take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many students as possible as maintaining as much continuity as possible for your son's education*. It may, therefore, be more beneficial for some, or all, year groups to undertake online learning - engaging in lessons with teachers who are working or undertaking subject related private study where a teacher is taking strike action.

Please note that boarding will remain open irrespective of the rest of the school.

If we do need to close the school to some or all students, we will offer provision in School as follows:

- Boys who are known to be 'vulnerable'; a member of staff will contact parents in the next few days.
- Sons of key/critical workers. Please see the list below and complete this MS Form if you feel that your son may need provision, irrespective of whether his year group is subject to a school/year group closure.

[Critical Workers Form](#)

Whilst parents will, inevitably, experience some inconvenience, I'd urge parents to remember that this industrial action has met all the legal ballot thresholds and that teachers will not have made their decisions lightly, howsoever they voted.

Yours sincerely
Philip Wayne
Headmaster

DfE guidance on Critical / Key Workers

Parents whose work is critical to an emergency response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined in the following sections. If exceptional circumstances mean that attendance is temporarily limited, children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to their setting if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.

Health and Social Care

This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and Childcare

This includes:

- childcare;
- support and teaching staff;
- social workers; and
- specialist education professionals.

Key Public Services

This includes:

- those essential to the running of the justice system;
- religious staff;
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services;
- those responsible for the management of the deceased; and
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and National Government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of:

- an emergency response; and
- essential public services, such as the payment of benefits including in government agencies.

Food and other Necessary Goods

This includes those involved in food:

- production;
- processing;
- distribution;
- sale and delivery; and
- those essential to the provision of other key goods (eg hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public Safety and National Security

This includes:

- police and support staff;
- Ministry of Defence civilians;
- contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to an emergency response);
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff);
- National Crime Agency staff; and
- those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during an emergency response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and Financial Services

This includes:

- staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure);
- the oil, gas, electricity, and water sectors (including sewerage);
- information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during an emergency response;
- key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services);
- postal services and delivery;
- payments providers; and
- waste disposal sectors.