



Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all well.

Our recent residential to Haag Farm was enjoyed by the Year 7 students, and we were grateful for all the positive feedback from both parents and the children. We were also grateful for the messages of thanks from parents to all the staff involved. It was lovely to see so many of you with your children at our recent Parents' Evenings for years 9 and 11 and we hope you found it informative.

As a community we have been shocked and saddened to learn about the devastation caused by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. The images on the news are truly distressing. I have been made aware that some of you have lost loved ones as a result and we extend our heartfelt condolences to you. We are planning to have a non-uniform day next half-term to raise some money; all proceeds will go to the charities helping those in need in both countries- more detail to follow.

I will write again next half term with further fundraising ideas. Currently £13,000 has been raised towards the fitness trail which is an amazing achievement.

Sadly, Headteacher organisations report that no meaningful dialogue has begun with the government in order to resolve the current dispute. As per my previous letter regarding the strikes, the National Education Union (NEU) is in a formal dispute with the Secretary of State for Education and members have voted for strike action.

The NEU's members will take part in strike action on the following dates:

- **Wednesday 1 March 2023, Wednesday 15 March 2023, Thursday 16 March 2023**

In keeping with my responsibilities with regards to Health and Safety, I am only able to keep the school open for year 11 students on Wednesday March 1st due to the fact that a large number of colleagues are in the NEU. Further detail will be following about the 15th/16th March.

I know that these decisions are taken with a huge level of emotional conflict as staff want to be in school with children. I have never known the areas of recruitment and retention to be so challenging. Pay is but one factor among many. I could recommend some clear policy decisions that I believe would resolve the conflict and restore teaching to what it has been and should be – ***one of the best jobs in the world (admittedly challenging)***. However, I am not in a position to be able to influence that decision!

The new Management Information System is progressing, and I would like to highlight that students have been receiving **weekly emails** about their Fernwood Award tally, giving greater detail than is possible via the Arbor app. Students are now informed about their progress in each category with information about how many points are needed to achieve the next award.

Wishing you all a good break.

Kind regards

Paul Burke

Headteacher

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High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All

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