



Dear Parents and Carers

As per my previous letter, the National Education Union (NEU) is in a formal dispute with the Secretary of State for Education and have voted for strike action.

The NEU's members strike will be continued on:

- **Thursday 27 April 2023**
- **Tuesday 2 May 2023.**

In keeping with my responsibilities in regards Health and Safety I am only able to keep the school open for Year 11 students due to a large number of colleagues in the NEU.

We aware that the NHS School Age Immunisation Team had originally scheduled a Year 9 vaccination session on Thursday 27th April. The session will be rearranged, we will provide further details of the new event closer to the time.

In terms of the education received by Year 7-11, this is provided as before:

- Year 11 students will receive a combination of onsite timetabled lessons and supported revision and examination preparation.
- For all other years, curriculum work will be provided via the year group Teams page.

If your child is in receipt of free school meals and you would like a meal to be provided on the days of the strike action, please email [notify@fernwoodschool.org.uk](mailto:notify@fernwoodschool.org.uk) by 3pm on Tuesday 25th of April.

**Across the country recruitment and retention of staff needs a clear strategy.** I have never known recruitment and retention to be so challenging. Pay is but one factor among many. I have been in contact with organisations responsible for training and I am led to believe the situation is worsening. We need a resolution to the dispute and a clear strategy for recruitment.

As you will be aware, not all who enter training for secondary school teaching decide that it is the career for them. For detailed information I have extracted the data below from government census information. **In summary it is very concerning.**

Initial Teacher Training Census 2022/23.

- Overall, 59% of the teacher training target was achieved in secondary subjects (compared to 79% in 2021/22). The secondary target has not been met since 2012/13, except in 2020/21.
- Overall, 62% of the teacher training target was achieved for English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (compared to 84% in 2021/22). These subjects include English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, French, German, History and Geography. The target for History was exceeded.

More detail can be found below:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/initial-teacher-training-census#releaseHeadlines-summary>

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Whether you run a home, a school or a business we are all aware of the pressures of inflation. From a school perspective last year's 5% pay rise was not funded. The current offer for teacher salaries for 2023/24 offers a further 4.5% pay rise of which 4% must come from existing school budgets. This will ultimately be to the detriment of children's education and wellbeing. Within the space of two years, we are facing a 9.5% increase in teaching costs (unfunded) as well as the inflationary increases already mentioned.

An organisation for senior leaders and Headteachers called ASCL, have also responded to the proposal. 56% of eligible members responded, with 13% of these voting 'yes' to the offer, and 87% voting 'no'. We asked a supplementary question of those voting 'no' asking them to state the most significant factor for their response. The results were:

- Inadequacy of the pay offer (for 2022-23, 2023-24, or both) – 29%.
- Inadequacy of the additional funding provided to schools for a 4.5% pay award in 2023/24 – 69%.
- Inadequacy of the other measures – 2%.

Nottingham University Teacher Training have informed me that their current situation is as follows: *'currently we have just over 100 students on course, normally we have cohorts of around 180 to 200. Looking ahead to next year we currently have 60 confirmed offers for secondary, at the same point last year we had 77 and as you can see from above this was down on our usual numbers.'*

Teachers make a big difference to children's lives. I loved my time teaching. I want that sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm restored. I am proud of Fernwood staff. I am proud of our students. We need the profession to be restored and feel valued on a national level so that we protect the education of future generations.

I hope a clear strategy is found soon, thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

Paul Burke  
Head Teacher

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