

10th February 2023

Dear parents and carers

You will be aware that the National Education Union (NEU) have declared strike action, the first day of which took place on Wednesday 1st February. This had long been planned as an INSET day for us at Lymm High and so it did not affect families (although a number of our teachers still took part in the strike). The next strike is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 28th February and, of course, this time the impact on families will be more significant.

Like most schools, we anticipate that the numbers of teachers involved means we will not be able to open safely for all students. School will therefore be **closed to Years 8, 9 and 10** on Tuesday 28th February. We will be **open to Years 7, 11, 12 and 13** and expect all students in these year groups to attend as normal.

In addition, if your child has an EHCP (whatever year group they are in) we will be able to supervise them in school for the day if you let us know in advance. If you would like us to do this, please email the SEND team so that we can ensure we are prepared.

The rationale for prioritising the above year groups for in-school provision is as follows:

- Years 11 and 13 have mock exams coming up, as well as external exams fairly soon.
- We are confident we can make sure that Year 11 students are given useful preparation for these exams, even where teachers are not available.
- Year 12 and 13 students can reasonably be expected to use the time productively and safely when their teachers are not available, working independently. Where teachers are in school (and the majority will be), lessons will proceed as normal.
- We appreciate that many parents of Year 7 students may be uncomfortable with leaving students of this age at home throughout the day. There is likely to be some disruption to Year 7 lessons on the day, but students will be safe and many/most lessons will go ahead as normal.

Work will be set for Years 8, 9 and 10 on Teams and we will be in touch nearer the time with details of this.

Please note that the NEU have also provisionally called strike action on **Wednesday 15th March and Thursday 16th March**. We will know more about our ability to open on those days based on the experience of 28th February and we will be in touch by the end of the week after half-term with more news on this.

I have not taken this decision lightly, but I am sure you appreciate my first priority has to be to open the site in a safe and secure manner. Please note that the strike is not happening because of any issues in school, but as a consequence of an ongoing national dispute between the NEU and the government. The NEU state that the action is because the Secretary of State has *“failed to give the undertaking sought by the NEU to make available additional and sufficient funds to allow employers (schools) to pay a fully funded increase in teachers’ pay at a rate greater than inflation”*. From the perspective of many of the teachers taking part in industrial action from Lymm High School, there are also broader concerns about the impact the lack of school funding is having on provision for students.

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Lymm High teachers in the NEU have made clear to me that the industrial action is absolutely not directed at myself or school leadership – and certainly not at parents and carers. Indeed, I know many of them feel very conflicted about what is the right course of action and are very mindful of the impact on students and families; they see this action as a last resort. Whilst this all has the potential to be a difficult time, I am confident that we will get through this as a community with good relationships intact and I thank you in advance for your understanding.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gwyn Williams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gwyn Williams