



Da Vinci Academy
A L.E.A.D. Academy



Headteacher: Mrs. Katie Roberts

Address: St Andrew's View
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Wednesday 25th January 2023

Dear Da Vinci Families,

Proposed Strike Action

As you may be aware from recent media coverage, the National Education Union (NEU) has declared strike action. This action will take place on Wednesday 1st February, Wednesday 1st March, Wednesday 15th March and Thursday 16th March. The strike action is happening because of a national dispute between the unions and the government over teachers' pay and school funding. It is not because of any specific issues at our academy.

We are writing to you in order to provide you with as much notice as possible that learning is very likely to be disrupted on each of these dates. At this stage we are considering several options.

We are only able to open the school if we have enough staff on site to keep everyone safe.

At this point, we are not yet in a position to confirm the final arrangements for the opening of the academy on the 1st February (and on the subsequent strike dates). However please can you start to think about alternative childcare arrangements for each of these dates.

We know that open and honest relationships with our families are crucial for our students' success. As a number of you have asked about the strikes, we wanted to take this opportunity to explain a little bit more about the NEU's reasons for taking strike action.

- Strike action is not simply about pay. It is about the state of the school system as a whole and the lack of school funding which is impacting directly on children and staff.
- The government say that school funding is higher than ever. However, there are now more children in schools than ever before. As such, there is less funding to go around and fewer services than ever before.
- Support services (like special educational needs support, educational support, health support, social care etc) that used to be provided by local government have been cut. Currently, schools either pay for these services from existing budgets or manage it in school. This has had a huge impact on staff well-being across the country and partly explains why there is a significant teacher shortage and why thousands of teachers are leaving the profession. Indeed, recent statistics show that one in eight teachers leaves the profession after just one year in the classroom, with one in three leaving the profession within five years.
- Teachers did have a pay rise in September. However, this was below the level of inflation and in real terms, a pay cut of over 7% in 2022. This follows a pay freeze at various points in the last 10 years of 'austerity' on public sector wages.

The cost of all of the pay increases for teaching and support staff has been funded directly out of school budgets. No extra money has been given to schools to cover these payments. This further exacerbates the financial issues schools are facing. The NEU firmly believes that these pay increases should be covered by the government, rather than from





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the schools' own budgets and money that was allocated to provide your child/ren with the equipment, facilities, books and resources that they deserve.

Therefore, as a direct result of these issues, many teachers in schools across the country will be choosing to strike. Not for their own pay particularly, but because they fear for the teaching profession in general and the impact sustained underfunding is having on their pupils and your children.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to the teachers and support staff in our academy. They work tirelessly for the good of every child in their care as well as our entire community. We fully understand that this situation may be frustrating for you. Equally, we recognise that everyone has their own opinion about strike action.

That said, it is important that all members of our community are respectful to each other. We expect all community members to respect the rights of any teacher (or any other public service personnel taking strike action) as it is their democratic right to do so. This means that if you have any questions or queries about the strike action you should email: office@davinciacademy.co.uk

Please be assured that every member of the staff of **Da Vinci Academy remain committed to providing a safe and secure environment for your child as well as and delivering high-quality teaching in the classroom.**

Once we have further information about the strike action taking place, we will write to you to provide you with the exact details of our plans for next Wednesday.

Very best wishes,
Da Vinci Academy

