

Dear Parents and Carers

**Planned strike action at Penrice Academy on:
Wednesday 1 February 2023**

I'm writing to give you as much notice as possible about our arrangements for Wednesday 1 February 2023 to enable you to arrange alternative childcare where needed.

Background

We have had confirmation from the NEU that members of the union intend to take formal industrial action by participating in a strike which will take place on Wednesday 1 February, Thursday 2 March, Wednesday 15 March and Thursday 16 March 2023.

The strike action is in relation to a national dispute around teachers and school staff pay. I wanted to take this opportunity to further explain the dispute and to also outline the school's plans during the strike.

What is the dispute which has led to the strike?

As you may know, teaching unions across England and Scotland, including the NEU, are in dispute with the Department for Education regarding their request for teachers' pay to keep up with inflation and the cost of living.

What will happen at the school during the strike?

We have conducted a risk assessment to assess how we can manage the school safely for staff and students during this period of industrial action. Given the staffing levels we believe we will have on the day, we feel we are able to partially open the school to Years 11 and also accommodate some SEND children and safeguard our most vulnerable young people. We may also be able to offer supervision to children from financially vulnerable families.

Students who will attend school:

Year 11 have been prioritised to attend school as they have public examinations this summer, as well as the days and weeks following strike action.

Year 11 will have a combination of timetabled lessons, where possible, and revision workshops. They should report to their tutor rooms as normal for registration and in full school uniform. Some classes may need to be combined and supervised by a non-specialist teacher or a member of senior staff.

Year 11 must attend school as planned on Wednesday 1 February as the Department for Education expects all school-registered children of compulsory school age to be in attendance on school opening days.



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Headteacher:

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Pride

Respect

Success

All other students (Year 7, 8, 9, 10)

Years 7 – 10: As always, tasks and homework will be available on Satchel One for most subjects, and especially in English, Maths and Science.

If you need IT support with Satchel One, our team are available to support you by email on: IThelpdesk@penrice.org.uk

Learning Centre and Student Family Centre

Some students will be invited into school to join our Learning Centre and Student Family Centre. You will hear from the SEND or Safeguarding teams directly to arrange this provision with you over the coming week.

Critical Workers / Financially Vulnerable Families

We will be opening on Wednesday 1 February on a much-reduced staffing model. If you feel your work is of critical importance on the day of the strikes (e.g. NHS, public safety and national security), or if the school closure will cause your family financial hardship, please request a place by completing this form by clicking on the link by 8.00am on Monday 30 January 2023.

<https://forms.office.com/e/3hUAVMkZkj>

We will consider all requests based on our projected capacity but will only be able to offer a small number of limited places.

Practical arrangements

- Buses will run as normal.
- Catering for staff and students will be provided in the school canteen as normal.
- Students in Years 7-10 who are entitled to Free School Meals will be offered a packed lunch to take home with them on the afternoon of Tuesday 31 January. This should then be refrigerated at home.
- After school activities are cancelled on this day.

Picket lines

Some staff might form a picket line outside the school. A picket line is where staff gather near the entrance to a workplace to protest in person and they may be holding notice boards or banners. If this is the case, I would like to take this opportunity to inform all students and parents that, as a Trust, we support our staff's legal right to strike. Please ensure that any interactions you have with staff are as courteous and respectful as they would be on any other day.

I would also like to remind you that it is unlawful for people who are not members of staff at the school (or their union representatives) to join a picket line. We therefore ask parents or carers or pupils to refrain from joining any picket line.

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We have tried to give parents and carers as much notice as possible of these arrangements, as we appreciate that any closure or partial closure is disruptive to you, for which we apologise. We hope that you understand we have not taken these decisions lightly and had to take decisions to secure the health and safety of your child and any non-striking staff in consideration of anticipated heavily reduced numbers of staffing.

I understand that this situation may be frustrating and ask that all members of our school community continue to treat each other with politeness and respect. Penrice Academy remains committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for everyone. Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate that your child's education is important to all staff at Penrice.

We are working closely with our union representatives to keep up to date with the situation, and I will inform you as soon as possible if arrangements change further. Further strike days have been scheduled for Tuesday 2 March, Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 March and I would encourage you to consider contingency plans for childcare on these days.

If you have any questions, please contact the school as usual: enquiries@penrice.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Lucy Gambier
Headteacher

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