

31 January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write to update you on the industrial action currently being taken by members of the NEU. The union has confirmed it intends to strike on the following days next week:

- Monday 3 February
- Tuesday 4 February
- Wednesday 5 February
- Thursday 6 February

One key area of the recent negotiations was addressing the NEU's demand for a policy in relation to teaching and learning.

Despite the school meeting that demand, the NEU has informed us that it will continue its strike action because we have not given it a guarantee that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the closure of the Sixth Form.

As we have said before, this is a pledge we cannot fulfil. However, we can again confirm no more than two colleagues are at risk of compulsory redundancy. No other Cottingham colleagues will be affected by the closure of the Cottingham Sixth Form. This position has been shared directly with our staff.

The school remains open to all year groups and we are continuing to follow government guidance (*Handling Strike Action in Schools*, August 2023). It says: *"In the event of a strike, the Department for Education expects the Headteacher to take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible. There is no legal requirement to teach the curriculum on strike days."*

It is important to stress that NASUWT (The Teachers Union) has no issue with the leadership, policies or progress at Cottingham High School, and has fully supported the school's direction. There has been no challenge by Support Staff Unions. This industrial action is being taken by 20 NEU staff members, around 50% of NEU members at Cottingham High School.

By way of reassurance, we can confirm 80% of Faculty and Subject Leaders are not involved in the action and are ensuring work follows the usual schemes of learning; 100% of the leadership team are continuing their work as normal, and this includes support from specialist colleagues from across the Trust.

We can report that 70% of lessons have not been affected, and we are closely monitoring the timetables of students where this is not the case.

This week, we have had meetings with several parents, and this has been helpful in addressing specific concerns and clarifying the current situation. This approach has been working well, and we encourage anyone who would like to discuss the current arrangements, or indeed any other aspect of their child's education, to get in touch if they would like a meeting.

Next week, we launch the scheduled parent/carers and student survey, administered independently by Edurio, and this will provide us with valuable feedback in support of continued improvement.

We remain absolutely committed to working towards a mutually acceptable resolution of this dispute, and hope this can be achieved through continued negotiation, supported by ACAS.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J Kerby'.

Mr J Kerby
Headteacher