

Thursday 29th June 2023

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A University of Kent Academies Trust School

Dear Parent/Carers,

Further Industrial Action and the INSET Day on Thursday 6th July 2023

I am sure you will be aware from news reports on Saturday 17th June, that the National Education Union (NEU) has declared two separate days of strike action which will take place on Wednesday 5th and Friday 7th July 2023. These two strike days straddle our planned INSET day on Thursday 6th July, this is the traditional day that Year 6 students who will be starting as Year 7 in September visit their new secondary schools.

While the planned action is as a result of a national dispute between the unions and the government, and not specifically the University of Kent Academies Trust or its academies, it is important that we respond accordingly in the interests of our students whilst respecting the rights of our staff. In anticipation of this action we have already prepared a response plan to minimise disruption and ensure vulnerable students and the children of key workers are still able to attend the academy in person.

I think it is also worth mentioning at this point that other teaching unions are currently balloting about joining the NEU on any further strike action in the Autumn Term, if the industrial action becomes national across all unions it will reduce even further the ability of schools to offer onsite or remote learning.

Students in Years 10 and 12 should attend CG as normal on both Wednesday 5th and Friday 7th July. We are able to accommodate these year groups onsite based on our judgement of the number of staff who will be on strike. Attendance for students in Years 10 and 12 on these days is therefore obligatory. Year 10 should report to the Lime Lounge at 8.45am and Year 12 to the Sixth Form Common Room at 8.45am. The Lime Lounge will offer its normal food service on both days.

All other year groups will be asked to study remotely during strike days and live online lessons will take place in line with the normal timetable where possible. Where a lesson was due to be taught by a member of staff that is on strike, we will endeavour to set work, but where this is not possible students should engage in independent study or research into the topics they are studying in that subject.

Children of critical workers or vulnerable students will be able to attend CG as normal and will join their classmates in virtual lessons under the supervision of our staff. Break and lunch times will operate as normal with appropriate supervision in place in the normal way. If you are a critical worker or have a vulnerable child and wish them to attend on these days, then please use the link below. These students should report to the Library at 8.45am on each day.

If your child is in receipt of free school meals and you wish them to pick one up from the Student Hub at the end of the day on Tuesday 4th July and Thursday 6th July, then please complete the following link.

<https://forms.office.com/e/3niudREuj6>

We appreciate that industrial action is disruptive, and you may need to change your plans or working arrangements whilst this action is ongoing. However, to minimise the impact on both students and families we have decided to cancel the INSET day on Thursday 6th July. We have used this as one of our INSET days to ensure all staff, facilities and resources are available to enable our new Year 7 students to have a successful, smooth and memorable primary to secondary transition day. However, now that two further strike days have been announced for this academic year, we have decided to cancel this INSET day to try and minimise the lost learning time caused by strike action for our current Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 students who will now all be expected onsite for a normal academy day. As you can appreciate having to make this late change to our plans will mean there are some slight changes having to be made to accommodate both sets of students onsite on the same day. For Year 12 who have lessons at Brompton Academy on Thursday, although BA are continuing with their INSET to accommodate their larger Year 7 intake, where possible the aim is to still offer Year 12 lessons. All Year 12 students who have lessons at BA should report to the Study Area at BA so that if their lessons are disrupted, they can continue with supervised study as they would on the strike days.

We will of course continue to monitor the arrangements in place and make modifications where possible to improve support for students wherever possible. If the strike action is called off, then we will confirm this as soon as we can and in this eventuality the academy will be open as usual to all students.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Walters
Principal