



27th January 2023

Dear Parents/carers

Many thanks to students and parents that have remained patient whilst plans were finalised in response to the National Education Union (NEU) declaring strike action, with the first of these strikes being held on Wednesday 1st February. Further strike days have been identified for Thursday 2nd March, Wednesday 15th March and Thursday 16th March.

As my letter on Wednesday stated, we have a significant number of teachers who are members of the NEU; although we are aware of the overall numbers, the NEU are not obliged to inform me how many of their members intend to strike. This has left me with limited options as I cannot ask other staff to cover for staff who are striking as this would undermine the strike and teachers' contracts protect them from such requests. I also need to be mindful of our ability to run the school safely.

I am sorry that this means that the school will only remain open to those students that are classed as vulnerable and are children of critical workers, although this number will also need to be capped due to staffing levels. The definition for both of these categories of students can be found in Annex A and Annex B of this document.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1114577/Emergency_planning_and_response_for_education_childcare_and_children_s_social_care_settings.pdf

Parents have been contacted to confirm if they are wanting to send their child into school next week and this form will close at **3pm on Monday 30th January**. The form can be accessed here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/Pa2FSrFi79>

(The link was sent out earlier in the week at the same time as Microsoft were experiencing worldwide glitches which may have affected our link. This has since been updated so if you had problems earlier in the week please do try again now).

For students that are on site on Wednesday 1st February, they should gather in the canteen at 8:40am, where they will be registered and the plans for the day will be explained.

Students that do not/cannot attend school next Wednesday as a result of the strike action will be provided with some general activities through ClassCharts. If your child will be unable to access online materials and you need to request paper copies of work, the deadline for this is 3pm on Monday 30th January. These requests should be made to your child's Head of House. Work will be passed on to the student during the school day on Tuesday 31st Jan.

I am sorry that alternative arrangements for the care of your child may need to be made for this day and for the disruption to your child's education. I understand that this situation may be frustrating for many of you and would ask that all members of the school community continue to treat each other with respect. We will continue to work closely with the staff union representatives and I will inform you as soon as possible for the plans for the future dates of action planned for 2nd March and 15th and 16th March. As you can see, we are far from being in control of this situation. Thank you, therefore, for your understanding as we try to do our best at this challenging time.



Other messages for the week can be read below:

Guided Choices – Year 9

Year 9 students have a busy few weeks ahead learning more about the selection of their GCSE subjects. The year group attended an assembly during extended tutor time this week where the timeline and process was explained by Ms Dee. This was followed by the year 9 Subject Evening that took place last night where I know a number of important conversations were held regarding the suitability of courses for students. Next Thursday, 26th January, parents and students are invited into school for the face to face event where specific information about all the courses can be gathered prior to final decisions being made. It's an exciting time for students and they should be assured that there is lots of support on offer to help with the decision making.

Further details of the process and the options booklet can be found here:

<https://www.nailseaschool.com/communication/information-evenings/>

Lost property

There are a large number of items in lost property currently. Lost property is stored outside the Heads of House office. If your child has misplaced any item of clothing or equipment I would ask them to come and check the current items. These items will be donated to local charity shops at the end of this term.

The Link – Director opportunity

Nailsea School's sister company 'The Link' is a registered charity which oversees the hiring of our facilities to community groups, clubs and the general public. We currently have a vacancy on the Board of Directors and would welcome new members from the local community. We aim to have a broad representation of staff and community members on the Board, reflecting the diverse types of groups that hire the facilities. As we already have representation from local football and rugby clubs on the board we would be particularly interested in applications from non-sporting representatives. You would need to commit to attending 4 meetings a year where discussions regarding our facilities and our role in the community is decided.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact Eve Haines, Business Development Manager, on EHaines@nailseaschool.com

Toilet etiquette

Over the last few weeks it has been brought to staff attention that the toilets on site are being misused by some students. Examples include more than one student attempting to enter a cubicle at once and food/toilet paper blocking the toilets. I am really proud of our facilities and based on feedback from student council we are continuing to act to improve the toilets even further, such as investigating pegs for the back of the toilet doors and ensuring locking systems are robust. I am sure you would join me in agreeing that the recently reported behaviour is not acceptable and if students are caught engaging in such activities sanctions will need to be applied.

Thanks, in advance for supporting the school's position on this and for discussing this matter at home.



Safer Internet Day – 7TH February

Ahead of Safer Internet Day, next week students will have an assembly on this important topic. Safer Internet Day is a global campaign to promote the safe and responsible use of technology, which calls on children and young people, parents, carers, teachers, social workers, law enforcement, companies, policymakers and more, to help to create a better internet. Using the internet safely and positively is a key message that we promote in school, and celebrating Safer Internet Day is a great opportunity for us to re-emphasise the online safety messages we deliver throughout the year. We would be delighted if you could join us in celebrating the day by continuing the conversation at home.

To help you with this, the UK Safer Internet Centre have created some free activities and information for parents and carers which are available at: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers> There are top tips, quizzes and films which you can use at home with your child. If you have any concerns or questions about keeping your child safe online, please do get in touch with your child's tutor, Head of House, or any of our Safeguarding Team:

<https://www.nailseaschool.com/our-team/safeguarding-team/>

Finally.... regular readers of this letter will know one of my great pleasures is watching (and re-watching!) 'The West Wing'. The Aaron Sorkin drama, airing from 1996 – 2006, has writing that is second to none and although there may be some storylines that haven't aged so well, it still manages to infuse much needed optimism and idealism. Although my favourite character is Josh Lyman, Deputy White House Chief of Staff, it would seem fitting this week to repeat the words of Sam Seaborn, the Deputy White House Communications Director. His words, below, are taken from an episode in season 1:

'Education is the silver bullet.

Education is everything.

We don't need little changes. We need gigantic revolutionary changes. Schools should be palaces.

Competition for the best teachers should be fierce. They should be getting six figure salaries.

Schools should be incredibly expensive for government and absolutely free of charge for citizens just like national defence'

Take care and be kind

Yours faithfully

Mrs Dee Elliott

Head teacher