

Frettenham Primary School
Hainford Primary School
Horsford Primary School
Old Catton Junior School
White Woman Lane School
St. Faiths' Primary School



Nebula
where stars are born

Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher

26 January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to give you a very limited update to my previous letter about the strike action by teachers next week, Wednesday 1 February 2023. I am still in the process of trying to gather information to allow me to make a decision about each of our schools. Whilst the government's guidance encourages schools to remain open for pupils, the effect of the action by NEU members creates uncertainty, with safety considerations as well as unknown staffing complications in the mix for me to consider.

These are incredibly difficult decisions. As I said in my previous letter, whilst I am able to ask NEU members whether they will be striking, they are under no obligation to tell me. Therefore, at the moment, there remains a lack of certainty about how many teachers will be in all of our schools on the day of the strike. The potential for picket lines is an added factor – some colleagues will not want to cross them.

Then there is the issue of cover. Colleagues who are members of other unions cannot strike, but they may have voted for strike action in their own unions' ballot and many will want to be supportive of their colleagues. They will feel that covering their colleagues' classes undermines their action. I will need to be mindful of this and the potential for damaging working relationships between colleagues.

Safety, of course, is the main consideration in deciding whether to keep schools open. Government guidance suggests using support staff to cover classes, but this may mean fewer adults than usual looking after the same number of children, making it difficult to meet some children's needs. As a result, this could mean that some of our schools can only open for vulnerable pupils and if this is the case, we will contact parents individually to make this offer of provision.

Utmost in my mind is that I need to let you all know as soon as possible whether our schools will be open on 1st February so that you can make childcare arrangements if necessary. I will provide you with this information on Monday at the very latest. This may mean I have to make an early decision, based on limited information. If this is the case, and later I find out that more provision can be offered in any of our schools, the school/s will let you know as early as possible.

Thank you for your understanding

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. D. Best-White". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher
Nebula Federation