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25<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Industrial action by the NEU - Notification of school closure**

*The National Education Union (NEU) is in a formal trade dispute with the Secretary of State for Education because she has failed to give the undertaking sought by the NEU to make available additional and sufficient funds to allow employers to pay a fully funded increase in teachers' pay at a rate greater than inflation (as measured by September 2022 RPI).*

As you are aware from my letter that I sent on Friday the NEU has announced strike action over pay for its teaching members. The proposed dates for strikes by NEU teachers are as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 (national strike)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 (South West)
- 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (national strike)
- 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (national strike)

Our approach has been governed by the following principles: To ensure the safety of students and staff, to respect the legitimate right for colleagues to take industrial action, whilst meeting our responsibility to provide as much continuity of education as possible.

### **Risk assessment**

Following the announcement of strike action, we have carried out a risk assessment to determine whether it is safe to operate the school site on the first strike day, Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February. A wide range of factors have been considered, but specifically:

- **Proportion of NEU members:** *The majority of Gordano teaching staff are members of the NEU. Whilst the NEU has informed us of the number of its members at the school we do not know any further details with any accuracy*
- **Position of other unions:** *I cannot ask other teachers to cover for staff who are striking as this would be to undermine the strike and teachers' contracts protect them from such actions. This includes taking lessons, duties or setting work for striking colleagues*

The factors above mean that we do not know with certainty which colleagues will be striking - only that the majority of them are eligible to do so.

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As a result, we have concluded that **it is not safe to open the school to students on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023. Therefore, if the strike action goes ahead, the school will be closed to students on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023.** We have not taken this decision lightly. We remain committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our pupils, and feel that we would be unable to provide this with the staff we have available.

### **Supervision of a very small number of students**

- We will operate a small on-site supervised IT provision for students identified by the school. Families will be contacted later today to advise of this provision and we ask that you confirm your space following the link in the email you will receive.
- We will also operate a small provision for a limited number of Year 11 and Year 13 students **who do not have access to a study space at home**. I ask parents to support us by only booking a space for your child if there is no other alternative option. This will be a supervised computer base. The link to book this provision is [here](#). If numbers are too high we will need to review this provision.

### **Provision of education on 1<sup>st</sup> February**

- Where colleagues are not striking and it is their working day, staff will set tasks for their classes on ClassCharts, work will be provided before your child's lesson is due to start
- There will be lessons where work **cannot** be set due to the teachers involved being on strike and other colleagues not being able to set work for striking colleagues. In these cases, students will be given a year group guidance sheet on ClassCharts which will signpost them to available lessons on a variety of online platforms such as:
  - [Oak National Academy](#)
  - [BBC Bitesize](#)
  - Other online services
  - Independent revision or study
  - Wider reading
- If your child is unable to access learning online, please email their Director of Key Stage by **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January** and we will provide paper resources on **Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January** for collection on the way home
- If students in Year 12 and 13 have not got work on ClassCharts because their teacher is on strike they should use the day for independent study revising the topics they have already covered this academic year – the Sixth Form team will send further, more detailed guidance

### **Free School Meals**

Aspens will provide a packed lunch for students on Free School Meals. Eligible students can collect a lunch pack for Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February from the canteen on their way home on **Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January**.

### **Year 8 Progress Evening**

We will write to parents of Year 8 students shortly to inform them of the contingency planning for Year 8 Progress Evening which is currently due to take place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March.

If this industrial dispute is not resolved before the further planned dates (2<sup>nd</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March) then the school will review its risk assessment and plans following 1<sup>st</sup> February and I will contact parents to confirm the arrangements for those days.

We appreciate that there is likely to be significant inconvenience for parents and carers as a result of the planned action. I therefore want to thank you in advance for your understanding as we try to do our best at this challenging time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Blundell', with a small dot at the end.

**Ms L Blundell**  
**Headteacher**