

TBA/RCL/LDA/GHA

Monday 13 March 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Industrial Action – Planned Closure on Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 March 2023

First of all, we genuinely hope this letter finds you all as well as you can possibly be.

Further to the extensive media coverage regarding the continued strike action by the National Education Union (NEU) and after a significant number of ensuing discussions, and conducting a final risk assessment, we will not be able to safely open the academy to our students on Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 March 2023. The main reason for this is we have had it confirmed that nearly 70 of our teaching staff will not be reporting for work these days but instead, opting to take industrial (strike) action in conjunction with their professional association, the National Education Union.

We will not know who those colleagues are until after the day itself has started as current legislation states these colleagues are not legally obliged to inform their respective schools of their decision beforehand, just their professional association who then pass on an overall number to the individual school's leader. Therefore, whilst we have secured a current working number, in all likelihood, this could run to over 80 teaching staff not reporting for work next Wednesday and Thursday.

It is also important to note there are many other somewhat restrictive factors when it comes to being able to plan for such days and when such a significant number of teaching staff will not be operational. Firstly, school leaders cannot ask those teaching staff to prepare cover work be it in the classroom or with regards remote learning. Secondly, school leaders are not able to direct other non-striking teaching staff to cover the lessons of colleagues who are taking industrial action. School leaders are able to look to bring in external cover teachers, however, nowadays, these are few and far between and in the majority of cases, the quality tends not to be of our expected standard. Furthermore, supply agencies themselves have said they are highly unlikely to supply staff on a strike day anyway.

We appreciate you may have questions relating to the rationale behind the strike action therefore please be aware that the National Education Union [NEU] has produced a leaflet for parents, carers and grandparents outlining why they have voted to take strike action. To read the message from the NEU, please click on the following link;

<https://neu.org.uk/media/24511/view>.

From a remote learning perspective, again, due to what we have already highlighted, we will not be able to provide our usual programme of lessons for every individual class and student, however, after some coordinated work from the academy's Quality of Education Team, we will be able to provide the following remote provision next Wednesday:

- Students in Years' 7, 8 and 9 will be set a range of learning tasks covering the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science; they will also be set a short research project. The work, once completed, can be submitted for feedback via email to the Quality of Education team or alternatively, be handed to the Student Support Centre (SSC) when the academy re-opens. A range of rewards will recognise student engagement and achievement in relation to the tasks set.

Students and parents/carers will be emailed full details of the work set by 4pm on Tuesday 14 March. Please do not submit any work directly to teaching staff, by email or in person – all work should be submitted via the email given in our communication to you on Tuesday.

- Students in Years' 10 and 11 will be encouraged to access Seneca Learning and other available online platforms, including MathsWatch, to consolidate learning across their key stage four courses. A reminder of how to access the range of online platforms will be emailed to students and parents/carers by 4pm on Tuesday 14 March.

- Years' 12 and 13 students should engage in independent study, homework and revision.

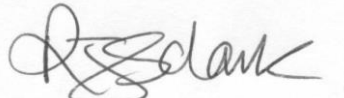
Students who are entitled to a free school meal this Wednesday and Thursday will automatically have their credit placed on their ParentPay account the day before. However, should any parent/carer wish for their child to access a packed lunch next Wednesday, please contact Mr Scott, Director of Finance and Premises, via R.Scott@plume.essex.sch.uk and this will be arranged.

We will conclude by apologising for having to write to you about this Wednesday's and Thursday's closures and for any disruption this may subsequently cause to some of you. However, and as we believe the vast majority of you know, from a Plume Academy perspective, never will such a decision be arrived at without a significant amount of due diligence occurring beforehand. Looking ahead, let us also hope more constructive discussions can be held between the professional associations and the Government to ensure further decisions like this one do not have to be taken in the future. It is somewhat superfluous to state that, should this period of national industrial action be called off, the academy will revert to being open as normal.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T Baster
Joint Head of Academy



Mrs R Clark
Joint Head of Academy

Plume, working with:

