



St Mary's Catholic School

Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE7 7PE

where everyone can succeed



Tel: 0191 2153260 Fax: 0191 2153279

admin@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk

www.stmarysnewcastle.co.uk

19th April, 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your families had a lovely Easter break.

We had a really excellent spring term in school before the holidays, with the vast majority of our students working very well in lessons and demonstrating superb effort and commitment to their studies. I was also very impressed to see so many of our students making the most of their wonderful God-given gifts and talents in taking part in such a wide-range of extra-curricular and wider opportunities, including educational visits. Thank you so much to our fantastic teaching and support staff team for their continued excellent support for our students and we look forward to another successful term ahead, with many opportunities for our students, both within and outside of lessons. Thank you also for your tremendous support. We really appreciate it.

As per our message earlier this week, the **NEU has announced further national strike days on Thursday 27th April 2023 and Tuesday 2nd May 2023**. We will be in touch with you if any agreement should be reached between trade unions and the government before the 27th April, however, as things stand, the two planned strike days are going ahead.

Our legal duty of care to all students and staff, including ensuring the health and safety of all, is paramount in our decision-making about whether full or partial closure is necessary and therefore, as with the previous strike days, we will not be able to keep the school open for all year groups. **As always, we have considered these plans very carefully and, given that the first GCSE and A Level exams for our students begin in late April/early May 2023, we feel that we must bring our examination year groups into school on both days, Year 11 and Year 13. We would strongly urge parents and carers to ensure that all Year 11 and 13 students attend school on both of the strike days, to help students to maximise their potential in the lead up to their summer examinations. Some exams, such as MFL speaking exams, are taking place as normal on these strike days.**

We know that with some students working at home on these strike days, it will cause difficulties for some families and we are very grateful for your understanding and patience with this. For parents and carers information, if there are any further strike days following the May half-term break, we will be able to bring some other year groups into school, given that Year 11 and Year 13 students will be on study leave for their exams by that point. If any further strike action is announced, we will let parents and carers know as soon as possible.

Therefore, the plans for the two planned strike days on Thursday 27th April 2023 and Tuesday 2nd May 2023 are below:

- **A group of vulnerable students across Years 7-13 will be able attend school** (*Miss Lague, Director of Student Support, will be in touch with the parents/carers of these children to confirm this*).
- **Year 11 students should attend school.** They will complete their normal subject lessons.
- **Year 13 students should attend school.** They will complete their normal subject lessons.
- **Year 7-10 and Year 12 students will work at home.** Students will be provided with 5 hours of high-quality subject work, including meaningful exam revision work for students in Years 10 and 12. Teachers not participating in industrial action will upload lessons onto Teams for their timetabled classes. Students should check their Class Teams Tile for this work. If subject teachers are not in school, high-quality work will also be uploaded onto the Year Group Teams Tile (*Miss Rossi, Director of Learning, will be in touch with all Year 7-10 & Year 12 parents/carers and students in due course to outline more detail about these resources*).
- **We will also be in touch with the families of all students who receive Free School Meals (FSM) in Years 7-10 and Year 12.** We want to ensure that every child is still able to have a hot meal on this day. Therefore, we will provide students with a voucher to be able to purchase this meal. Any students who receive free school meals in Year 11 and 13, or in the group of vulnerable students attending school, will receive their lunch in school as normal.



Furthermore, a reminder that we also have **two bank holidays in the next few weeks**. Monday 1st May is a bank holiday, as well as the additional bank holiday for the coronation weekend on Monday 8th May 2023. Therefore, all schools nationally will be closed on these two days.

Thank you very much for your continued support.

Very best wishes,



Miss Patterson
Headteacher

