



Learning together, growing together

Dorin Park School and Specialist SEN College

02.05.2023 – Strike Clarification; Summer Building Work; Personal Assistant Adverts

Dear Families,

Strike Clarification: Some families have asked for clarification on pupil strike attendance. Therefore, I am writing to explain in more detail how this has been managed in school. On the initial NEU Strike Action Days, all teachers chose to take strike action, so just a group of most vulnerable pupils were invited to attend school. In the following NEU Strike Action Days, a small number of teachers chose not to strike and therefore a small number of classes were invited to attend school when their usual class teacher for that day was on site. The classes invited to attend have been different each strike day because some teachers have chosen to strike on some days and not others. I understand that to parents this may look as if there is no pattern to our offer on strike days, and that we are inviting pupils in whose parents are happy to keep them at home. I'm sorry that this cannot be helped. We cannot break the strike and bring in whole classes of pupils when their teacher is striking.

Please remember that teachers are not choosing strike action purely because of pay. Unfunded pay rises, such as the one we encountered last academic year, cost the school an extra £150,000. The new pay award recently offered for teachers was only partially funded, and unions chose to reject this as school budgets, particularly those of special schools, are significantly stretched. We are required to submit a balanced budget to the Local Authority each year; therefore, when budgets cannot cover staff wages, due to unfunded pay rises and the cost of utilities, we have to reduce the provision for our pupils. Our teachers know that this would cause a serious risk to our ability to meet the needs of your children, who all need their teachers and support staff, and the specialist support received from, for example, our wellbeing, family support and visual impairment teams.

When I have written to you in advance of each NEU Strike Action Week, I have asked you to please advise us if you feel we have overlooked an aspect of your child's or family's vulnerability. Thank you to those who have done so. I am sorry that we are not able to provide key-worker places on strike action days.

Building Work: Due to building work over the summer that will affect electrical supply, drainage and our kitchen area, ***we are unable to hold a summer school this year.*** I know this will be a disappointment to families. We do hope to be able to offer this in future years.

Personal Assistants (PAs): In light of this and the significant difficulties families have had sourcing for their children, we will invite families to advertise for PAs within school to support pupils in holiday periods. Staff will not be available to work as PAs on evenings/weekends during term time. There are only a small number of staff who have capacity for PA work in the holidays, but parents are welcome to advertise these roles in school via a poster/email which will be circulated to all staff. Any employment of Dorin Park staff will be completely separate to their school employment – it would be a private arrangement between families and individuals. Please send any adverts to Maxine Nevitt via Parentcomms (parentcomms@dorinpark.cheshire.sch.uk) to be circulated.

Any staff taking on new PA work with Dorin Park families will be required to sign a confidentiality and code of conduct agreement, which will be shared with parents. ***Staff working in your child's class will not be able to take on PA work with them.***

Yours sincerely,
Lucy Lee

Head Teacher – Lucy Lee

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