



BOWERHAM PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

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25th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

As you will be aware, the National Education Union is taking industrial action, and strikes will affect some schools on the 1st and 28th February and the 15th and 16th March. Mrs Banks will have been in touch with you directly about the likely impact on your child.

We understand that the strikes may provoke frustration, anger and disappointment for many families.

We want to explain some of the current challenges that our school is facing, which may help you to understand why some staff feel that they must, as a last resort, take industrial action. As a governing body, we are committed to supporting our staff at Bowerham, who work so hard for our children.

Our teachers love their jobs, but increasing numbers of teachers are leaving the profession because of falling wages, a challenging funding climate and endlessly increasing workload pressure. As a governing body, we want to provide a happy, healthy, well funded workplace for staff, but this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Governors have not failed to notice the falling numbers of job applications when we have vacancies. Nationally, one in three teachers is leaving the profession within five years.

We are being asked to make very difficult decisions around budgets, and we must be honest about the cuts that are likely to be made in the coming months and years due to a lack of sustainable funding from the government.

Only last week we reluctantly agreed with staff that we will have to pause building plans, freeze recruitment, and look seriously at cutting the numbers of teaching assistants in school. Our fuel bill has doubled in the last year, from £36,000 to £74,000. We have not received any additional funding to cover this and it is expected to rise further. Staff pay rises due to an increase in the Living Wage are also unfunded. Within the next three years, our deficit will be over a million pounds if we do not take action now and make cuts.

No one wants to have to make these difficult decisions, but the current situation requires it and it will inevitably have an impact on the quality of our provision in the years to come.

Stand tall, reach high, love learning

*The Bowerham School community is proud to nurture aspiration,
inspire love for life-long learning and prepare children for a changing
Society.*



What that means in real terms is fewer skilled and supportive adults, school trips, fun activities, and educational opportunities for our children. We also understand that teachers and support staff have endured 12 years of pay erosion due to inflation.

If you also feel strongly about this issue and would like to take action as a family, we would suggest that you, and your child(ren) write to your local Member of Parliament, setting out your concerns.

There will be a picket line outside the school on 1st February and if you wish to visit it to express your support for striking staff, you are welcome to do so.

None of us underestimate the disruption that strikes can cause, but in this case we feel strongly that parents must understand and be fully aware of the challenges facing our school.

Yours sincerely

The Governing Body of Bowerham School

Joanna Young - Chair
David Knight – Vice Chair
Jo Banks
Dan Baxter
Katy Dickinson
Ben Hanley
Tamsin Kind
Simon Oakley
Geraldine Pollock
Laura Premack
Rebekah Redmile
Jane Shepherd
Craig Smith
Pete Thomas