

18th March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may have seen information on social media or in the news about planned industrial action at Rothwell Junior School, part of the Pathfinder Schools family, tomorrow (Tuesday 19th March).

This is hugely disappointing news as we had hoped to engage in talks with union representatives to discuss their concerns and to find a mutually agreeable way forward at a meeting scheduled for Friday 15th March at 3.45pm.

Very sadly, immediately prior to this meeting taking place, the union staff were handing out information to parents at pick up time to indicate that they would be going ahead with strike action. Subsequently, this was posted on social media without our knowledge. To reiterate, this was before our planned negotiation meeting that day.

This was hugely disappointing news as we had hoped to engage in talks with union representatives to discuss their concerns and to find a mutually agreeable way forward before causing uncertainty and confusion for parents and the community. This is normal practice.

Our main priority is to minimise any impact on children at Rothwell Junior School because of this action, and to ensure they continue to have access to the highest standards of education. We recognise that strike days are also hugely disruptive for families, in terms of work, caring or other commitments.

Rothwell Junior School will therefore remain open on Tuesday and, so far as possible, deliver a typical school day.

We remain committed to productive discussions with the NASUWT, as demonstrated by our willingness to meet the NASUWT on Sunday 17th March, despite the failure of the NASUWT to act in good faith previously. Our door remains open should they wish to engage with us positively. A further meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 19th March at 3.30pm.

We continue to be hopeful that a resolution can be found, we have already proposed several concessions that would enable us to ensure children at the school continue to receive an improved education, whilst taking due consideration of the concerns raised by staff. The reality is that Rothwell Junior School sits within the bottom 10% of schools nationally for key stage 2 outcomes. Children deserve better than this and we want to work closely with the staff, so they feel supported, as we introduce the improvements that are needed.

To be clear, we respect the right of staff to engage in union activity, but we also must respect the rights of those who choose not to. Please could we ask that everyone is mindful of this in their interactions, whether that is face to face or on social media.

We understand that news like this is unsettling, and we are committed to being open and transparent with you and will provide you with further updates on any developments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Sims', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Emma Sims

Chief Executive, Pathfinder Schools