Tuesday 24th January 2023

Dear parents and carers,

By now you will all be aware of the planned industrial action over pay and conditions by teaching unions. Following on from the letter from Essex County Council attached to my newsletter yesterday, I am writing to you to give you more information about what may happen on these days with regard to our school and to also explain some of the reasons for the action.

It is a common misconception that teachers are taking industrial action solely because of pay. This is **not** the driving force for striking amongst my staff and is only a very tiny piece of the picture. Education has been chronically underfunded by Government for many years and this is having a direct impact on your children. You may know that nationally, teachers were recently given a pay rise of up to 5%. It is important to be aware that no extra funding was given to schools within their budgets to accommodate this. As you can imagine, particularly in a small school like ours, this has had a massively detrimental effect on our already tightly squeezed budget. Challenging decisions with regard to staffing, purchasing resources and the maintenance of our beautiful school building are becoming ever more difficult.

At Great Bardfield, I am lucky to have the most committed and hardworking staff I have ever had the pleasure of working with. They do not want to strike. Many of them cannot afford to lose a day of pay in the current cost of living crisis. As teachers we are all aware of the impact of the COVID pandemic and the gaps in learning many of our children still have. We know children need to be in school. However as a profession, if we do not take collective action and stand together, the leaders of this country will not improve things for education, our communities and our children.

On Wednesday 1st February, school will be open to our most vulnerable children and the children of critical workers only. We will only have very limited capacity in school and so I ask you to support our community by **only seeking a place if both parents are critical workers and you have no other option** but to send your children to school. We will not be in a position to deliver the National Curriculum on this day and teachers will not be setting remote home learning. If requests surpass our maximum numbers with regard to our risk-assessment, I will make decisions based on individual cases. If you would like to request a place for your child, please return the form attached by Thursday 26th January via **email only.** You will be contacted on Thursday evening via text if we are able to accommodate your request.

As always, I would like to thank you all for supporting our wonderful school and staff. This situation is far from ideal and it is important that we work together at this time.

Kind Regards



Mrs Crow

Headteacher

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| **Request for a critical worker place at school on Wednesday 1st February 2023** |
| **Name of child/children:** |  |
| **Critical Worker** (name of parent) | **Critical Worker Role** | **Place of work** (including address, postcode and contact number for line manager) | **Days of week and hours worked** |
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