



Ebrington Primary & Nursery School

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Principal: Mr B F Guthrie, BA Hons ED PQH

19th April 2023

Dear Parent

Full day of strike action by teachers and school leaders on 26th April 2023

I am writing to you about the forthcoming strike action by the five teaching unions in Northern Ireland. You may have seen coverage of this on the news, and I wanted to inform you about the impact this is likely to have on our school.

How will strike action affect Ebrington PS & NU?

When a strike takes place, those taking strike action stop work and withdraw their labour. Staff members involved in this industrial action will therefore not be undertaking any duties on 26th April 2023.

A detailed risk assessment has been conducted which considers the impact the action will have on the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors, and whether the school can run a full or amended curriculum, to determine whether it is possible to operate the school safely during the strike.

The Board of Governors has determined that the school will be closed for all pupils on Wednesday 26th April and will reopen as normal on Thursday 27th April.

Clearly this is a difficult situation, which will cause some disruption. I would ask you, however, to be understanding. This is a **very unusual** circumstance and is a direct result of the failure to take into account the very real concerns expressed by teachers and school leaders. Taking strike action is not something that anyone would undertake lightly. Those on strike will have thought long and hard about their decision and will lose pay for the period that they are on strike.

This strike action is about the future of the teaching profession, and Education as a whole. We believe that our children deserve to have the best that society can offer and that means ensuring appropriate pay for school staff and school leaders to protect future recruitment and retention.

This dispute is about pay, but there are many other factors that have fed into the discontent at the present time; Employers and government have failed to protect our profession, have failed to deliver improvements in working terms and have allowed the support systems to be decimated.

For example, as a school, we lost extended schools funding in 2019, which had a major impact on breakfast club and after school provision and management. On 31st March 2023, I received confirmation that we were losing our Engage funding (used for additional pupil learning support) and Happy, Healthy Minds funding (used for school counsellor). As principal, I recognise the vital need both these currently have in school, so continue to fund these directly from the school delegated budget. Free school meals and crossing patrol services have impacted many. We continue to await the outcomes of more 'non-statutory' funding such as SEN funding. We should not be getting small pockets of funding to be used as 'sticking plasters', but should be funded appropriately based around the individual needs of the schools.

The education budget has continued to be cut over the last 10-12 years and is fully inadequate, with potential further cuts planned. The formula used to provide schools with their funding is, in my opinion, not fit for purpose as the needs of pupils entering school have changed so dramatically. We need to be asking the question of why our pupils in Northern Ireland are worth less than their peers in England, Scotland and Wales.

We are sorry for any inconvenience caused and would really appreciate your support by asking you to contact your local MLA, write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Permanent Secretary for Education, Minister of Education, Department of Education or your local MP, letting them know how this is affecting you and requesting that they deal with the issue immediately. You will find contact details for each of these people overleaf.

Kind regards,



B Guthrie
Principal

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