



26th April 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Please be reminded that on Thursday 27th April the school will be closed for most students due to the national strike action by members of the National Education Union (NEU).

The exceptions for Thursday 27th April are the following:

- All Year 11 Students will be expected in school. Most students will be in lessons, with a small proportion of students sitting their Visual Art examination. Please note this is an external GCSE examination and should any student not be in school that day, they would fail their GCSE.
- All Year 13 Students will be expected in school, to facilitate their continued study for their examinations. A separate communication about this will be sent out by Ms Preston.
- A small number of Year 10 students who have a planned external controlled assessment will be expected on site to complete this part of their Digital IT course. A separate letter will go home to those students who will need to be in school.
- Year 10 Parents' Evening that was scheduled for this date has been moved to 11th May. We thank the NEU for agreeing to this although they are not obliged to they recognised how valuable this time is to parents and carers.

I can now also confirm the arrangements for the next strike date on the 2nd May. The school will be closed for most students, the exceptions to this are the following:

- All Year 11 Students will be expected in school, to facilitate their continued study for their examinations.
- All Year 13 Students will be expected in school, to facilitate their continued study for their examinations. A separate communication about this will be sent out by Ms Preston.
- The trip to the Ashmolean Museum for a small number of year 8 students studying Mandarin **will be going ahead as planned** and those students should report to school for normal morning registration. When the students return from the trip, they will be supervised in school for the rest of the day until 3.10pm.

As explained in previous correspondence, we have spent some considerable time risk assessing the situation, as far as we know it, and have again come to the inevitable conclusion that we simply will not have enough teaching staff in school to ensure that all pupils will be kept safe. Members of the NEU make up a significant number of the teaching staff here and they have indicated to me that they will be exercising their legal right to take industrial action in the form of a strike on the above date.

Registered Office: Rush Common School
Hendred Way, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 2AW

John Mason School is part of the Abingdon Learning Trust.
Abingdon Learning Trust is an exempt charity and a
company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England and Wales: **Company No. 7931866**

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Members of the other main teaching unions, have instructed their members not to take part in any activities that would contravene the strike action of other unions, such as covering lessons for colleagues who are striking, setting work on their behalf, or teaching classes that have been put together.

The situation is further compounded by the fact that teaching staff who have caring responsibilities for their own families have indicated that they may have to take time off school to look after their own children/dependents in the event that their own child's school is closed on this date as well.

It is apparent then, given the significant and overwhelming numbers of teachers who will not be available to teach, set work, cover lessons or perform duties, that we would in no way be able to keep our pupils safe, or supervise them adequately throughout an entire school day. The action by the NEU and the directed actions of other unions also mean that it is not possible for us to set remote learning to the standard that parents would usually expect and that we were able to provide during the school closures during the pandemic.

However, we will provide some remote learning activities for all year groups, mainly in core subjects. In addition, pupils can complete homework and independent study on Google Classroom and via the numerous online platforms we provide e.g. Sparx Maths, Seneca, Carousel, gcsepod, linguascope, Oak Academy and bedrock.

Children of Critical Workers

In line with DfE guidance 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings' we are also offering provision for children of those deemed to be critical workers. The DfE guidance is clear in asking schools to prioritise places for children of NHS staff and other emergency services, to protect essential public services.

We will not be able to offer taught lessons, but will be able to supervise those pupils who are eligible whilst they complete their remote work. Places will be limited. Please let us know by the end of Thursday 27th April if this is required for 2nd May, by emailing office.4126@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk and we will let you know if a place is available.

Pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

We are also working closely with our Catering Team to ensure that any pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals will be able to access a high-quality lunch as per their entitlement. Again, if any parent or carer would like to make use of this provision during the strike action, we will liaise with individual families to make this work. Please contact us by emailing office.4126@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk

Yours faithfully,

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Kirsty Rogers
Headteacher

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