



Monday 30th to Friday 6th February 2023

Headteachers' Blog

Dear Families

National Education Union (NEU) Strike Action

Unfortunately, I have had to close school today due to the strike action taken by the NEU. As a reminder, this action is not a one off. The proposed future strike dates are:

- Wednesday 1st March (Eastern region strike)
- Wednesday 15th March (National strike)
- Thursday 16th March (National strike)

At Stowmarket a significant proportion of teachers are members of the NEU. Teachers do not have to tell me if they plan to strike or not, nor if they are members of any Union, so planning for such days is extremely difficult. I had originally wanted to offer a programme for Year 11, however non-striking teachers are not required to 'cover' for absent colleagues, and so it became apparent that I could not guarantee enough adults in key spaces at particular points during the day. I know that this action by the NEU has split public opinion, and I know how impacting lost days of learning are, and how disruptive it can be for families.

The union will, of course, attempt to negotiate with the Government, but if the strike action continues, then Stowmarket may well be closed to some or all pupils on the dates shown above. I appreciate that strike action will inconvenience you and be detrimental to your child's education, but it is also important to recognise that schools are facing increasing financial and recruitment pressures, with Stowmarket feeling the impact of this every year.

The NEU are asking for a "fully funded, above-inflation pay rise". In my 8 year tenure at Stowmarket, I have seen the amount of funding per pupil reduce in real-terms, and the salaries of teachers and support staff have not kept pace with inflation. Where there have been increases in pay or staffing costs (such as National Insurance), these have not always been "fully funded" by the Government, thus putting further pressures on school budgets.

Recruitment and retention of all staff is currently proving really challenging, even in a school with a growing positive reputation. The national recruitment of student teachers for 2022/23 was 29% below target. You may feel that teacher salaries are good, but I urge you to consider that teachers have completed a 3-year degree course and a 1-year post-graduate degree; this commitment to qualifying for the role means that many teachers are also paying off university tuition fees from their salaries every month.

Despite promises of extra funding over the next 2 years, our budget forecasting shows that we will have to cut costs and it is unlikely that we will be able to maintain our current offer to pupils. I am hopeful that the Government and Unions will be able to negotiate an appropriate settlement so that all of the proposed strike action does not have to take place. Staff who are not members of the NEU will continue to work on the strike days and we will ensure that the work they undertake will benefit the pupils upon their return.

Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter.

Mr Lee-Allan

Year 11 Success Sessions - Half Term 3 and 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lunchtime 1.30-2.10pm	<p>History DRE 2.01 Invitation only</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>	<p>Music MBS Unit 2 'Managing a Music Product' <u>coursework</u></p> <p>GCSE PE Practical DWI (SH)</p> <p>Engineering ADU G.01</p> <p>Graphics ADU G.01</p> <p>Health & Social Care GWH C7</p> <p>Drama NRE (WK B only) G.07</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>	<p>Res Mats JHA G.06</p> <p>Engineering ADU G.01</p> <p>Graphics ADU G.01</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>	<p>Res Mats JHA G.06 (Wk A only) VGI G.05</p> <p>GCSE PE Theory DWI C6</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>	<p>Res Mats JHA G.06</p> <p>Engineering ADU G.01</p> <p>Graphics ADU G.01</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>
After School 3.10-4.10pm	<p>ENGLISH JAR 6.30pm - Online</p> <p>Res Mats JHA G.06</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>	<p>Geography 2.17 JTH</p> <p>Engineering ADU G.01</p> <p>Graphics ADU G.01</p> <p>History SSM LRC</p> <p>Res Mats JHA G.06</p> <p>Art/Photography GPA 119/LGA 117</p>	<p>SCIENCE CLU, RYF and GRS 2.05</p> <p>French 1.02 GDO</p> <p>German CWI 1.01/IST 1.03 (Alternate weeks)</p> <p>Res Mats JHA G.06</p> <p>Imedia AVW 2.20</p> <p>Art/Photography GPA 119/LGA 117</p>	<p>MATHS Higher 1.10 SFI Foundation 1.12 LAN</p> <p>Res Mats JHA G.06, VGI G.05</p> <p>Engineering ADU G.01</p> <p>Graphics ADU G.01</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>	<p>MATHS Higher 1.10 SFI Foundation 1.12 LAN</p> <p>Res Mats JHA G.06, VGI G.05</p> <p>Engineering ADU G.01</p> <p>Graphics ADU G.01</p> <p>Art GPA 119</p> <p>Photography LGA 117</p>



Time To Talk Day

It's Time to Talk Day on Thursday 3 February 2023 Run by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, [Time to Talk Day](#) is the nation's biggest mental health conversation.

Conversations have the power to change lives - helping to create supportive communities where we can talk openly about mental health and feel empowered to seek help when we need it. Here are some top tips about starting conversations:

Ask questions and listen—Asking questions can give the person space to express how they're feeling and what they're going through, and it will help you to understand their experience better. Try to ask questions that are open and not leading or judgmental, like "how does that affect you?" or "what does it feel like?"

Think about the time and place—Sometimes it's easier to talk side by side rather than face to face. So, if you do talk in person, you might want to chat while you are doing something else. You could start a conversation when you're walking, cooking or stuck in traffic. However, don't let the search for the perfect place put you off!

Treat them the same—When someone has a mental health problem, they're still the same person as they were before. And that means when a friend or loved one opens up about mental health, they don't want to be treated any differently. If you want to support them, keep it simple. Do the things you'd normally do.

Don't try and fix it—When someone has a mental health problem, they're still the same person as they were before. And that means when a friend or loved one opens up about mental health, they don't want to be treated any differently. If you want to support them, keep it simple. Do the things you'd normally do.

Be patient—No matter how hard you try, some people might not be ready to talk about what they're going through. That's ok - the fact that you've tried to talk to them about it may make it easier for them to open up another time.



Reporting a student absence

When reporting a student absence please call us on 01449 613541 and select option 1. Could you please also clarify the reason for their absence, we are receiving some messages that just say, "will not be in". You can also email us using: attendance@stowhigh.com

Dates for your Diary

31st January 2023 – Advice & Slice – Careers in Theatre & The Arts

1st February 2023 – NEU Strikes

3rd February 2023 – Drop-in Session with Suffolk Rural College

6th February 2023 – National Apprenticeship Week

7th February 2023 – Tea & Talk & Focus Group for SEND Parents – All Years

8th February 2023 – Trip Yr. 10 & 11 Cambridge Poetry Workshop

8th February 2023 – Friends of Stowmarket High School General Meeting 6.45 pm

9th – 17th February 2023 – Ski Trip

10th February 2023 – Macbeth Quantum Theatre Company in School

13th February 2023 – Half Term

Useful Contact Information:

Head of Year 7	Mrs T Goodman	t.goodman@stowhigh.com
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Head of Year 9	Mrs A Hackett	a.hackett@stowhigh.com
Head of Year 10	Ms Z Rudling	z.rudling@stowhigh.com
Head of Year 11	Miss R Harrigan	r.harrigan@stowhigh.com
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Attendance/Student Absence		attendance@stowhigh.com

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enquiries@stowhigh.com