



Planned industrial action in schools in England Stakeholder information pack

Overview

This information pack is for DfE stakeholder organisations representing groups impacted by planned industrial action in schools in England. This includes groups representing children and families.

In the event of strike action at a school, the school leader or the local authority that manages the school will take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible. [We have produced updated guidance](#) to help them do this.

This stakeholder pack contains **links to additional guidance and communications resources** and **answers to frequently asked questions** to support you to communicate with your audiences (including pupils, parents and families) about the potential impact of industrial action in schools.

This pack will be regularly updated and shared with you. For more information on these resources please contact external.affairs@education.gov.uk

Guidance and additional information

- [Parent and carer information graphic](#) summarises what parents and carers need to know about planned strike action in schools. This graphic can be shared on WhatsApp and through other parent forums (including email bulletins and newsletters)
- The DfE [Education Hub](#) provides accessible information for parents, pupils and education professionals, including these blogs on [Everything you need to know about strike action in schools](#) and [Why teaching is a rewarding career](#).
- Information for school leaders on **how to manage the impact of strike action** in their school is outlined in [Guidance for schools on handling strike action](#)



- Information on how schools should **prioritise vulnerable children, children of critical workers and those taking exams or formal assessments this year** is in [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings](#)
- DfE [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) will also provide information which you can share on your channels.

Frequently asked questions for pupils, parents and carers

When are strikes planned in schools and colleges?

The National Education Union has announced **national strike action in schools in England on Wednesday 1 February, Wednesday 15 March and Thursday 16 March** and regional strike action on:

- Tuesday 28 February (Northern, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- Wednesday 1 March (East Midlands, Western and Eastern)
- Thursday 2 March (London, South East and South West)

What do teacher strikes mean for pupils and parents?

If planned strike action goes ahead, school leaders or the local authority that manages a school will take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible. We have produced updated guidance to help schools leaders do this and to minimise disruption to children and families.

In some schools there may be little or no impact from strike action but in others it may mean that changes are made to the way they operate.

For example, lessons might be taught by other members of staff or classes might be brought together. If large numbers of staff strike, schools may need to restrict attendance for some pupils or close.

How will schools make decisions about who can attend?

If schools need to restrict attendance, we have asked schools to prioritise vulnerable children, children of critical workers and pupils who are due to take exams or formal assessments. Where schools are not able to provide



face-to-face education for all pupils, we encourage them to provide remote education to ensure every child has access to learning.

Vulnerable children include those with a child in need plan or a child protection plan and children who are looked-after by the local authority, as well as those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. This group also includes any children identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities. A full definition is available [here](#).

Will vulnerable children, children of critical workers and children taking exams or formal assessments this year be guaranteed a place?

We have asked headteachers to prioritise these groups when making decisions. Headteachers are responsible for deciding how many pupils they can provide a place for and who to prioritise depending on the numbers of staff available. Schools will communicate this to parents and carers.

Should parents and carers send their child to school on strike days?

Unless your child's school leader informs you that the school is closed or cannot provide a place for your child on strike days, you should send your children to school unless they are unwell.

What happens for children who receive free school meals if they can't attend school?

If your child's school is unable to provide a normal lunch service due to strike action, the school is required to put suitable alternative arrangements in place for pupils entitled to free school meals. This could mean arranging temporary cover to prepare meals on-site, providing packed lunches in place of hot meals, or arranging for meals to be delivered-in.

Will breakfast clubs and after-school clubs be disrupted?

This is a decision for your child's school. Providing there are enough suitably qualified staff present to meet the legally required staffing ratios for your child's age group, headteachers do not have to suspend breakfast or after-school clubs. More information on staff ratios for different age groups is available [here](#).



What are my employment rights if I need to take time off work to look after my children?

If your child's school is closed or restricting attendance for your child and you need to take time off to care for them, you should discuss this with your employer. You may be able to take annual leave or flexi leave, or you may be entitled to statutory time off to care for dependants. Your employer may pay you for this time off but they don't have to. You should check your contract, company handbook or intranet site to see your employer's policy on this.

You can read further guidance on this [here](#).