



The Taunton Learning Partnership

20th June 2011

Planned Industrial Action by NUT and ATL

Dear Parents and Carers of schools within the Taunton Learning Partnership

Following recent ballots you will have heard in the news that the NUT and ATL (Teacher Unions) plan to take industrial action on June 30th.

Across Taunton we are privileged to have a tremendously dedicated teaching staff and, though all teachers are entitled to take industrial action, I'm sure you understand that our colleagues would only take such action under the most exceptional circumstances. Education is currently going through its greatest period of change in the past 140 years and added to this are now the issues of teachers' pay and conditions, we are indeed in the most exceptional times.

Across the Taunton Learning Partnership we all strive together to provide our children and young people with the very best education and opportunities. Central to achieving this is to have the very best Teaching Staff and I'm sure that you will agree that across our Partnership Schools we do have some excellent, dedicated and inspirational Teachers. Though teaching remains a professional vocation, in order to secure the very best Teachers for our children and young people both now and for the future, pay and conditions, as in any career, are important. Under exceptional circumstances, and only as a last resort, Teachers may feel that they have little option but to use their limited right to take industrial action despite not wanting to leave their classes for this.

Early indications suggest that should the industrial action be carried through by the Unions named above, then many teachers across the country, including Taunton, will participate. Headteachers will follow the County Council's guidelines and undertake a risk assessment regarding the safe operation of the school during any period of industrial action. Several regulations apply including for example, how many Union members will potentially be taking action; whether other staff members, not in the unions taking industrial action, will cover for absent colleagues; the availability of first aid cover for staff and children and that agency staff cannot be brought in to cover for teachers taking industrial action. Each of these factors, and many others, will be considered for each site by the Headteacher, in consultation with Governors and the Local Authority if appropriate, before a decision is made regarding whether all or part of the school will be closed due to the industrial action.

Though this process will be the same in each school the factors will be unique to every school and therefore the outcomes will inevitably differ for schools across the Taunton Learning Partnership.

Please be assured that at present everything is being done to avoid industrial action impacting upon our schools and our children; however, whichever school your child is in, it may be sensible to consider provisional plans for childcare on that day as some or all of the Schools may potentially be closed fully or in part. Each school will confirm with you which classes will be affected and will give as much notice as possible based on the wording from our local authority...

"On 30 June 2011, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) will be taking industrial action. Whilst all efforts are being made to maintain essential services to children and young people, regrettably the industrial action will mean that we will not be open as usual/not be able to provide our usual level of services on that day."

In these exceptional times other teacher unions including NASUWT and NAHT are also strongly considering strike action in the future, although this may not be until the new academic year.

Yours sincerely

Edward Gregory

E. Gregory

Chair of the Taunton Learning Partnership