Risk assessment for Industrial Action FEB 1st

The school has assessed that it is not able to provide a whole school opening on 1st February during the day of Industrial Action by members of the NEU union. The information below will hopefully inform you of how we arrived at this decision.

Those teachers taking action are following guidance from their union, and from what we know at present, this is likely to be a very high proportion of our teaching staff. When there is a teaching absence at Wellsprings, we do not use support staff to cover whole days of teacher absence and always seek to cover with a supply teacher. As a result, we know from the staffing absence on this day, **cover for all our classes in school is not a realistic option**.

We appreciate that this provides considerable disruption for our school community. As a school **we managed to avoid closing classes for COVID/illness absence of staff** even with higher levels of staff absence in the last year. This was despite the challenges we also have faced with our heating not being fixed in November/December 2022 (which was entirely the fault of Property Services), where we endeavoured to keep all classes running throughout that challenging period. We know other schools, primary and secondary, during this period have not been able to offer that same continuity due to their circumstances.

So in partially closing the school, we are keen for parents/carers to understand **this is something we have been very reluctant to arrive at**, whatever the circumstances behind the decision.

Contingency plan

Previously, the government have identified 'vulnerable learners' and children of critical workers a priority. If we were to prioritise all the pupils on 1st February, then this would be around 2/3 of the school population. In the past when we have had sustained partial closures (e.g. during lockdowns), we have managed to timetable pupils coming into school over the course of a week/term. On a single day, this is not possible-especially when around ¾ of our teaching staff will be taking industrial action. This is before we factor in the following:

- Those children NOT in school **will need to be provided with work to complete at home** (as an option to parents/carers to do with their children, if they wish to).
- The work set for these pupils not in school, cannot be planned or delivered by the teachers taking action on 1st February- unions and the government are clear about this. This responsibility lies with the **leaders and staff working on the day of Industrial Action**.
- There has been a rise in **staff (and pupil) sickness** as the term has progressed so we will need to consider who may be available next week.
- Additionally, we will have **staff who are parents of children** who will be affected by the strike and have parenting responsibilities.

As a result, we have decided to keep the **classes open for those teachers who are not taking industrial action**. Of those classes who will close, we will prioritise those pupils identified on our current SEND register for in-school provision on the day of action.

Notification to parents/carers

While we appreciate that it may become obvious which teachers have taken action (or not) we would appreciate not identifying them individually. As a result, we have decided to notify parents directly on an individual basis, whether their child will be in on 1st February.

Parents/carers will be **notified if their child will be in school on 1st February via ParentMail**. Equally, those pupils who will be not in school, will also be notified by this same method. **This will be confirmed by Thursday 26th January at latest.** If for any reason you cannot access ParentMail, please speak to our office for a hard copy of this confirmation. Alternatively, contact the school office directly by telephone (01823 275556) or email (office@wellsprings.somerset.sch.uk).

Free school meals

Those children entitled to a free school meal who are NOT in on Wednesday 1st February, will be provided a packed lunch to take home the day before.