



LORDSWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

learning, achievement, transformation

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Dear Parents and Carers,

1st July 2022

The National Education Union (NEU) has announced that, following a ballot of members, there will be three days of industrial action at the school this month, on 12th, 13th and 14th July. We are very sad about this. We would therefore like to apologise to you if this industrial action goes ahead as the education of your children will be disrupted and your lives will be extremely inconvenienced. We do, however, sincerely hope that the NEU will call off the strike and we will continue to negotiate with them.

The NEU ballot paper made three claims which it said supported strike action: 1. Forced transfer of employment to King Edward VI Academy Trust; 2. Lack of meaningful consultation; and 3. Unreasonable management practices. The first two are demonstrably false. The third is a list of grievances (many supported by only one person) which are disputed and which were not presented to the school leadership before the ballot. The premise for strike action, which will damage our young people's education, is therefore false.

The trustees took the decision for the school to join what is a strong academy trust because they are clear that the school's future and our students' education are best served by joining King Edward VI Academy Trust. Not only that, but not joining the new academy trust will in fact actively damage our school because the improvements required will be delayed. Therefore Lordswood Girls' School will join the new academy trust at the start of September.

But while the young people we serve are always, rightly, our focus, the transfer will also significantly benefit all of our valued staff. The transfer will present many opportunities to share best practice and collaborate with new colleagues across King Edward VI Academy Trust's 10 schools. All of this will help raise standards, which is so important following the recent disappointing Ofsted report. Staff contracts will transfer without change to the new employer.

The opportunity to join King Edward VI Academy Trust is exciting. Lordswood Girls' School is already receiving informal support from the Trust. This includes curriculum development, mentoring support, and negotiation of contracts with external suppliers (e.g. we secured a better energy tariff than we could secure independently), while students attended a careers day at King Edward's School. This will extend from September when the transfer goes through and will include in-school support of two days per week, networking for departments to further the sharing of best practice and resources, savings via collective purchasing powers, centralised policies to reduce pressure and workload on staff, centralised CPD, an Employee Assistance Programme, and leadership development opportunities.

However, at this stage, we must respectfully plan for the likelihood that the strike action will go ahead on those three dates, and that the school will be closed. I am therefore writing to you to give you as much notice as possible to make preparations for this. I will of course write to you again nearer the time, if there are any updates on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Julie Lennon
Chair of Trustees