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10 March 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This is a general letter to all parents/guardians of pupils at NTS. Whilst I had hoped to write to you more regularly than this, events since January have conspired against me.

Indeed, those alert members of our community will have noticed a message on our website referring to understaffing in the Senior Management Team, but we also have some Heads of Department off work at the present time, in addition to other teaching and non-teaching members of staff. Miss S Walker (Head of Business and Psychology) and Mr Walker (Deputy Head) deserve particular mention here. As you may be aware, both are currently very unwell, and we wish them all the very best on their road to recovery.

It would be wrong for me to divulge precisely why some members of staff are not in work, but it is important for you as parents/guardians to understand more generally why it is proving difficult at the moment to deliver the broad programme of activities and quality of service you might normally expect. I can assure you that your children are still being taught by their normal class teacher most of the time and that our ability to safeguard them is not a concern. All this does prompt me to pay tribute to those members of staff currently in school who are stepping up to the plate and going the extra mile, covering lessons for their absent colleagues, in addition to planning and teaching their own lessons. If it were not for these exceptional members of staff, I would almost certainly need to close the school at least partially if not fully. The significant snowfall last night in the south and west of our catchment area did not help, but even today, we managed to run all lessons in school for all pupils largely because of my colleagues' determination to get into work against the odds.

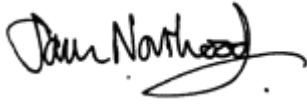
In terms of strike action, I am pleased that we seem to have arrived at a solution to combat staff absence on the days in question, and whilst it is disappointing that I have had to close the school to some year groups, I hope you understand why. The next round of strike action, I remind you, is next week and you will have received details in a separate communication about this.

As for Parents' Evenings, there have been many this term, and whilst there were certainly some teething problems early on with rooming, queuing etc., we again appear to have found solutions. The last two parents' evenings in particular have gone very smoothly, and I should take this opportunity to thank all those parents who attended (as well as those responsible for the organisation). I cannot stress enough how vital it is that parents engage in discussion about their child's education and support us in the work we do.

Important events on the horizon including the submission of Year 9 option forms next week on Friday 17th March (again, those concerned will have received separate details about this) and our Sports Awards Evening for our Year 11 and 13 students (Wednesday 29th March).

Thank you for your continued support of the school.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Northwood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Mr DS Northwood
Headmaster