

7 May 2019

Dear Parents and carers,

We are writing to you to explain why members of the National Education Union (NEU) at John Roan have agreed to take strike action on Tuesday 14 May.

Our industrial action has been sanctioned by the Action Committee of the National Education Union following a lawful ballot. It is in support of our trade dispute with the Secretary of State for Education who we have asked to use his discretionary powers to revoke the Academy Order made for The John Roan School.

As NEU members, we want to continue to be employed through the Royal Borough of Greenwich and not through a Multi Academy Trust as will happen unless the Secretary of State revokes the Academy Order.

We hope that parents and carers will support our stand. We believe that the best way for improvements to continue to be made at The John Roan is by it staying as a community school, rather than being forced to become part of an academy chain.

As NEU Joint General Secretary Mary Bousted said in *The Guardian* on 5 May: "Despite the academy programme supposedly being about choice, parents now realise they actually have no say whatsoever in who runs their schools.

"This has led to a great deal of anger resulting in an increased amount of parent-led campaigns against forced academisation. Parents now fully understand that there is no hard evidence that shows putting a school into a multi-academy trust (MAT) will lead to improvements".

As both teachers and trade unionists that value education, we have considered carefully as to whether and when to take strike action, as we appreciate that it may disrupt you and your children on 14 May. However, we have chosen this date to minimise the effects on timetabled lessons and our action will not disrupt any GCSE exams on 14 May.

As teachers we are mindful of the needs of all the students in our community. Our responsibilities do not include invigilating exams but where there are NEU members who are directly involved with the administration of an exam, we are asking for dispensation by the NEU from the action so that they can support students in this situation. This is also the case with trips (such as the MFL trip taking place on that day) when they have been planned months in advance.

We hope that our dispute with the Secretary of State will convince the DfE to revoke the order so we can continue to move forward as community school. We still have a lot to do and we remain committed to working with our Head Cath Smith and Greenwich Council to move forward. Evidence suggests that schools are more likely to improve with Local Authority support compared to academy chains. We never take the decision to strike lightly, but we feel too much is at stake for both our current students and the future of the school to do nothing. We ask that parents join us.

**Jane Simms and Kirstie Paton** – on behalf of **The John Roan NEU**