

Dear Colleague

UNISON and Unite – Strike Action

Following successful ballots, Unison and Unite, representing local authority employees, are calling on their members to take strike action on 16 and 17 July, in response to the employers' "final offer" of a 2.45 per cent pay rise.

The NUT fully supports and has been at the forefront of the public sector pay campaign. The Union has been in discussions with both unions nationally to explore ways in which mutual support can be given to our respective disputes regarding public sector pay. You may wish to send a message of support to your colleagues taking action in your school. You can also show your support by writing to your MP and you can do this through the Union's web site.

LEA establishments, together with most schools could be affected by the strike action. Many non-teaching staff, who are members of these two public sector unions, will be taking official strike action on the day. They could include nursery nurses, teaching assistants, classroom assistants, welfare assistants, administrative and technical staff, cleaners, site managers and caretakers, as well as kitchen staff and staff who transport special educational needs pupils to school. Some support staff may have primary responsibility for first aid.

Visits or activities planned to take place on the days of the strike action may have to be cancelled. Given the imminence of the school holidays alternative arrangements may not be possible before the autumn term.

There is likely to be considerable disruption across the country on the day with many council services closed.

Union members are advised that they should not do any work that is normally done by members of Unison and Unite. **Members should, however, undertake their normal work if their schools remain open.** In abiding by such agreement it will be necessary to have regard to the need to ensure the health and safety of the pupils. It is important that guidelines for adult:pupil ratios are properly observed during any days of industrial action.

A letter to head teachers has been placed on the Union's website, drawing attention to their responsibilities to carry out a risk assessment, under the Management of Health and Safety and Welfare Regulations 1999, and to put in place appropriate measures to remove or reduce those risks if it is decided to keep the school open. In schools, this duty falls to school managers and extends to risks to the health and safety of school students as well as employees.

School representatives are asked to discuss the arrangements for the day with their head teacher.

Your head teacher may decide to close the school on the day on grounds of health and safety. Any such decision should allow adequate notice to be given to parents.

It is possible that schools may be picketed on the day of the strike. Pickets should not prevent members of the NUT from attending work if their schools are open. Members of

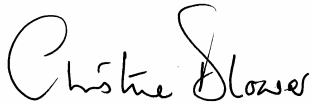
the NUT have not been balloted for action on this day and any refusal on their part to cross picket lines would not be lawful action. The NUT would be legally required to repudiate it.

The purpose of any picket should not be to persuade NUT members not to enter school. Any such persuasion should be directed only at members of Unison and Unite taking lawful action on 16 and 17 July. Some pickets may simply want to inform you of why they are taking action. The NUT fully supports and has been at the forefront of the public sector pay campaign. School representatives should explain this advice to any pickets and explain that members of the NUT will not undertake work, which would have been carried out by members of other unions taking industrial action.

This guidance applies in the event of future strike action organised by Unison and Unite in pursuit of their pay claim.

Similar advice is being given to members of ATL and NASUWT by their unions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Blower". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

CHRISTINE BLOWER
Acting General Secretary