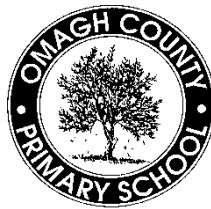


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20<sup>TH</sup> April 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Industrial Action by teachers on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023

You may have seen coverage in the news of the upcoming strike action by teaching unions in Northern Ireland on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023. I wanted to give you a little more information about the impact this is likely to have at Omagh County PS.

#### Why teachers are taking industrial action?

Industrial action is being taken because it has become increasingly difficult for schools to retain experienced staff. Those who are leaving, are doing so because pay has been so significantly reduced, while workload has been so greatly increased. Hence, it is nearly impossible to appoint new staff to replace those who are leaving, as they too can see the disparity between pay and working conditions. This is in part why teachers are currently in dispute with their employers.

However, I am sure you are all also aware of the crisis in basic school funding and how this is directly impacting all schools and will continue to do so over the coming academic years. Sadly, there is a further crisis facing our children who have additional and special educational needs and the failure of the system to properly meet their needs must be highlighted.

Like so many of you in both private sector and government jobs, we too have seen our pay worth less as the cost of living rises dramatically, with pay increases well below the rate of inflation. We know many of you have had to take industrial action as a last resort to have your voices heard and we too are now in that situation.

#### How will strike action affect Omagh County PS and Nursery?

When a strike takes place, those taking strike action stop work and withdraw their labour. Teachers involved in the action will, therefore, not teach their class or undertake any other duties on the strike day.

A detailed risk assessment has been conducted which considers the impact that the action will have on the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors, and whether the school can run a full or amended curriculum, to determine whether it is possible to operate the school safely during the strike.

As the Principal, I and the Board of Governors have determined the school will be:

- **closed on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April**

Clearly this is a difficult situation and taking strike action is a decision we as a staff have not taken lightly. Those on strike will have thought long and hard about their decision and will also lose pay for the period that they are on strike. We are however, fully committed to the children we have in our care and can see on a daily basis the detrimental effect a lack of funding is having on their education. We realise that this action will cause some disruption and would ask you, however, to be understanding.

Kind Regards,

J. Funston  
Principal