

## **Key points regarding the NEU actions being taken re the Corona virus**

### **Information for members and schools**

- No one should be providing lesson activities for pupils during the Easter holidays as students are on holiday.
- Not every school will need to open over Easter. Staffing should be the minimum needed for safety and supervision. Staffing rotas agreed with staff should give everyone a two-week break and be based on a weekly, or ideally fortnightly, pattern to minimise infection.
- The NEU advice on exam grading is clear: teachers should not be setting work or exams for students in Y11 and Y13 in order to decide their grades as this can not be done equitably in these circumstances.
- The DfE has made it clear that existing budgets will be provided to schools regardless of closure status. Schools are awaiting clarification of the process for additional costs due to Coronavirus to be recouped and confirmation that this will cover all unexpected expenditure and loss of income they are facing. Schools and Local Authorities should spend what they need to, in order to protect public health and safeguard student and staff well-being.
- The joint NEU NAHT ASCL advice prioritises the focus on maintaining safety on education sites and hubs and is being used cooperatively in the majority of schools up and down the country.
- The NEU is working with the DfE to work out what teaching and learning should look like during the summer term for students at home. There are significant levels of inequality around internet access, mobile devices, musical equipment, access to outside space, books and tutors. The majority of heads are working co-operatively with their staff to negotiate what is reasonable but some heads are still expecting timetables which are too rigid. The NEU advice on students' home learning is intended to help parents to support their child's learning in ways which are realistic for teachers and reasonable for children and young people. Teachers should not be teaching a full timetable, or routinely marking work. Remote learning should include some online learning which uses platforms that teachers and pupils are familiar with but not comprise online learning only.

### **Information for supply members and members in independent schools**

- The NEU continues to support supply members who want to continue in existing engagements, or otherwise need to secure furloughs from their agencies. We will seek to remove all obstacles to them getting the support they need and deserve, whether these are due to obstructive employers or technical issues with the regulations. A document with regard to supply furlough information can be found on the Calderdale NEU website
- The NEU is actively supporting and defending members in independent schools. Financial fears are prompting premature threats to pay and employment in many

schools, to add to the pressures around remote working or providing for students who remain in school.

### **Information for parents**

- The NEU launched a parent website on Monday which signposts parents and pupils to fun and educational activities that can be done at home, and we will support schools to share helpful information.

### **Supporting Vulnerable families**

Our members are working flat out to support vulnerable children and families during school closures. The NEU has issued advice about how to stay in touch and provide ongoing support in safe and appropriate ways. We are working with Government to scope out what it might be feasible for local authorities to provide, in terms of respite arrangements, social care arrangements scaled up by volunteers or other options. Getting more vulnerable children back onto school sites should not be the goal at this stage of the pandemic in the UK.

### **Information re exams**

- Following Ofqual's announcement of the system for awarding grades for GCSE and A levels this summer, the NEU is pushing for advice on vocational qualifications to now be made available quickly. Ofqual listened to NEU when determining that GCSE and A Level grades will be set based only using pupils' work **before** school closure, as anything after that would unfairly reflect the inequality in home circumstances, much more than pupil ability. We also called for the teacher assessment grades to be kept confidential, in order to limit parent/pupil pressure on teachers; and for a commitment that evidence gathering would not be necessary. While we highlighted concerns about rank ordering and argued against rationing grades based on prior attainment, Ofqual has decided to use these as part of the standardisation process. Exam boards will provide further detailed guidance after the Easter break, but we know that grades will not have to be submitted until 29th May at the earliest.

### **Coronavirus testing for staff**

- The NEU wants Coronavirus testing for education staff, as soon as possible. Staff members who are vulnerable, health-wise, or live with a partner or other family member who is more vulnerable to the impacts of the virus must be at home, and socially distancing.