

PRESS BRIEFING

PROPOSED STRIKE ACTION AT DARLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Tuesday 6th July 2010

The purpose of this briefing is to explain the background and the rationale to the current situation at the school.

Following the declaration of a collective dispute “over the adverse impact of restructuring and potential job loss” and in accordance with due process, members of the NASUWT took strike action on 20th May 2010. Since that date, a number of individuals have continued to take action short of strike action, which includes non-attendance at staff meetings, a refusal to carry out supervision duties, etc.

During the interim period, significant and substantial efforts have been made to avoid any compulsory redundancies. Those efforts have been particularly successful. One member of staff has been granted a voluntary redundancy and one member of staff has accepted a voluntary reduction in their contract from 0.7 to 0.5. All other staff nominated for redeployment / redundancy remain in employment – either at Darland, in other Wrexham schools or with the Local Authority itself.

On 10th June, the Headteacher wrote to the General Secretary of the NASUWT, explaining that none of the NASUWT members had been made redundant and seeking an end to the dispute and its associated industrial action. There has been no acknowledgement or response to that letter. When pressed to provide a reason for the continued industrial action, local NASUWT officials have indicated that two of their concerns have yet to be addressed:

- 1) A member of the teaching staff’s application for a voluntary redundancy payment was declined.
- 2) The need to delete a paragraph from the Local Authority’s current documentation regarding the Policy and Procedures for Redeployment / Redundancy.

It is clear, however, that neither of the above constitutes justification for continued industrial action at Darland High School. The request for voluntary redundancy was declined because the post remains in the staffing structure and is currently subject to a recruitment exercise.

With regard to the Local Authority’s documentation, at a recent meeting of the Wrexham Teachers’ Joint Negotiating Committee, it was agreed that the current document would be reviewed during the Autumn Term of 2010 and nominations were invited from the union representatives to be involved in that process.

Following advice from the Local Authority, the Headteacher exercised his legal right to write to those individual members of staff who were not fully complying with the terms and conditions of their contract. They were informed that, in the event of them continuing with only partial performance of their contract beyond Monday 28th June, there would be financial consequences.

The NASUWT response has been to advise its members to take further strike action.

It is most regrettable that, once again, pupils’ education and family arrangements are being disrupted at a time when everyone at the school and in the Local Authority is working so hard to secure improvements in pupil performance and to regain the

confidence of the communities served by the school. This is particularly unfortunate, given that one of the organised activities that has had to be cancelled is the scheduled visit by prospective Year 7 pupils on Thursday 8th July.

The Headteacher has written to the parents, informing them of the proposed strike action and its consequences upon the school's ability to accommodate pupils on the affected days. Feeder primary schools have also been informed of the cancellation of the planned visit by their Year 6 pupils.

The Headteacher, Governors and the Local Authority remain committed to working in partnership to secure the best possible educational standards and provision for the pupils of Darland High School within the available resources.