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Dear staff at Rosshall Academy

I am taking the unusual step of writing to you to explain and update you on the position around the proposed strike at your school by members of the NASUWT next week.

Normally, in the case of a dispute, negotiations would take place between the employer and the trade union. Meetings would be scheduled where negotiations take place and where we would work towards a solution.

However, in this case, there are no further meetings scheduled. I wrote to the Acting General Secretary on 24 September outlining my concerns about the proposed action and asking for examples of bullying and intimidation their members have raised as we have had none presented to us. At time of writing I have not received a response.

The NASUWT has advised that this is a national dispute not a local one. I met with the Acting General Secretary in August and she told me then that this was the responsibility of national government. However, there are no meetings scheduled with national government either to negotiate a solution.

I want to stress that the industrial action being carried out is lawful. It is the right of every trade union to campaign on behalf of their members and to ballot them for industrial action.

As a result of the ballots arising from individual schools, the NASUWT has drawn up notices of action. Members over the last couple of weeks have been advised not to participate in activities out with the pupil day. However, in June the NASUWT representatives in schools across the city and the country agreed with their respective headteachers the school's working time agreement.

Each school's working time agreement includes the provision for parents' meetings and professional learning events, including departmental meetings, some of which take place at the end of the pupil day. The working time agreement is part of teachers' contractual arrangements. Therefore, similar to a strike, if teachers choose not to participate due to industrial action then they are deemed to be in breach of contract.

The Acting General Secretary has advised that the NASUWT will withdraw the strike action if the threat of pay deductions and other adverse action against members are removed and if the bullying and intimidation of members stops. However, as noted above, we've not been presented with any examples of bullying and intimidation despite asking repeatedly for examples.

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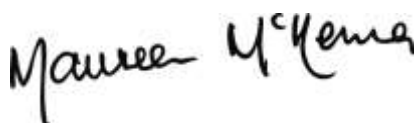
I wrote again to the union on Tuesday 1 October asking for a meeting to negotiate a resolution and advising that the Council would put on hold any pay deductions for the non-attendance of members at planned activities (ie part of the WTA) while negotiations took place. I also asked if they would consider putting in abeyance the two planned strike days for next week. Disappointingly, I have received no response and given that parents need to plan their arrangements for next week, we have to inform them as soon as possible about the potential strike days on 8 and 9 October.

We support the NASUWT in their drive for reducing teachers' workload and we are keen to work with them on this and the other issues they raise that we are able to influence locally. However, NASUWT has made it clear that their argument is with the national government and, given that we have received no response to our communications, we can only assume that they do not wish to negotiate a solution.

I know that this is a very difficult time for staff at Rosshall Academy and that the level of commitment and dedication of school staff results in a very conducive learning environment for the young people.

However, despite our best efforts to reach out to NASUWT senior officers and agree a satisfactory resolution for all members, they remain determined to take strike action which will undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the learning and teaching of our pupils.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen McKenna". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MAUREEN McKENNA
Executive Director of Education