

Friday 8th April 2022

Dear Principal,

RE: Planned Industrial Action

Translink Service Update

We have been notified by Translink that their bus drivers who are members of the Unite and GMB trade unions have voted to take industrial action in relation to a pay offer from Translink.

Translink are continuing to engage with Trade Unions to avert the action, however, if it does proceed it would result in all Translink bus services being withdrawn from Monday 25th April to Sunday 1st May and Friday 6th May (one day).

Schools should therefore advise parents to follow Translink's social media and website and if the action proceeds the following advice applies:

- Pupils who use any Translink bus service for any element of their journey are likely to be impacted and schools should advise parents to make other transport arrangements for these dates.
- Pupils who connect with a Translink bus service via an Education Authority (EA) yellow bus should not commence their journey on the EA bus, even if it is running. EA cannot guarantee pupils would be able to complete their journey, so parents should make alternative arrangements for the whole of their child's journey to and from school.
- Train services will not be affected by the industrial action, however, it remains the case that bus passes will not be accepted for use on the rail network during this period.

Schools are asked to advise parents of the potential disruption and the need to put in place alternative arrangements on these dates where appropriate.

The EA are concerned that this industrial action will once again impact pupils' learning, particularly for those year groups taking key examinations over the coming weeks. We would therefore ask you to consider how you might provide additional support for pupils who may be unable to arrange alternative transport. This may include, for example, providing remote learning materials for pupils to access, either on-line or through learning packs. This arrangement should only be considered for those individual pupils who are unable to attend school, and should not be used for whole classes. Similarly, a whole school decision to move to remote learning should be avoided.

Education Authority Industrial Action Update

You will be aware that Unite the Union members across EA recently took part in periods of industrial action. Unfortunately, this caused disruption to some schools, and transport and school meals services.

Whilst we have not yet been formally notified of further action, we are aware that this is a possibility over coming weeks and are working hard to ensure plans are in place during any such periods to minimise disruption to schools and our children and young people in particular.

“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”

Education Authority

40 Academy Street, Belfast, BT1 2NQ

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EA remains very concerned about the disproportionate impact the industrial action is having on children and young people, particularly those children with special educational needs and fully recognise the concern this is causing parents and schools. We continue to engage with Unite to try and to minimise the impacts as far as possible, including requesting exemptions where appropriate.

We encourage parents to check the EA website for regular updates and details of any planned disruption here: www.eani.org.uk/industrialactionupdates and also EA social media channels.

Social Media Message for Parents

We recognise the need to ensure parents are kept informed of any impacts as a result of the industrial action. Please see below a message that you can share on your digital communication channels.

We kindly request that this message is not issued on any school digital communications channels until next week.

The Education Authority (EA) has been notified by Translink that their bus drivers who are members of the Unite and GMB trade unions have voted to take industrial action in relation to a pay offer from Translink.

Translink are continuing to engage with Trade Unions to avert the action, however, if it does proceed it would result in all Translink bus services being withdrawn from Monday 25th April to Sunday 1st May and Friday 6th May (one day).

Pupils who use any Translink bus service for any element of their journey are likely to be impacted and parents should make other transport arrangements for these dates.

This includes pupils who connect with Translink buses using an EA yellow bus. As EA cannot guarantee pupils could complete their journey to and from school, even if the EA yellow bus is running, parents should make alternative arrangements for the whole of their child's journey.

Parents should follow Translink's social media channels and website over the coming weeks and start to plan now for their alternative transport arrangements.

Translink train services will not be affected by the industrial action.

We also encourage parents to check the EA website for regular updates and details of any planned disruption at: www.eani.org.uk/industrialactionupdates and also EA social media channels.

We will continue to keep you updated in relation to this and communicate any further updates. Thank you in advance for your understanding and support.

Yours Sincerely,

Robbie McGreevy
EA Assistant Director, Corporate HR and Business Partnering, Human Resources

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