

5<sup>th</sup> February 2020



THE GRANGE SCHOOL  
Live your Education

Dear Parents,

I am writing to give you a further update on the situation regarding the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and our ongoing discussions with colleagues.

Some of you may already be aware that a tweet was sent out by the North West Regional Secretary of the National Education Union (NEU) today regarding the School. The tweet stated that the NEU have issued notice to the School of six days of strike action on dates between 25 February and 12 March 2020, over the School's "proposals to attack teachers' pensions".

I can confirm that both NEU and the NASUWT unions have issued the School with a notice of strike action. However, the School believes very strongly that the strike action is misconceived and extremely premature. Indeed, we remain confident that it can be avoided. The NEU ballot for strike action was based on the fact that the School was proposing to exit the TPS. This proposal was taken off the table several weeks ago, which is why we believe the NEU's notification of strike action is misconceived.

Pressure from the unions at this time is a distraction in a process that we never intended to be confrontational. At the same time, our proposal remains a proposal – no decisions have been taken and for this reason we also consider the threat of strike action to be wholly unjustified.

The Board is determined to continue with this process in the professional and courteous manner in which we embarked on it several months ago and bring the consultation to its natural conclusion according to the timeline we set. Throughout the consultation process, we have remained committed to open and constructive dialogue, preferring to communicate directly with our staff to reach a solution to this difficult issue; and that remains our position.

I have explained before some of the significant financial pressures faced by independent schools, even those like The Grange which have enjoyed healthy balance sheets up to this point. Those challenges will not go away and we need to fund the considerably increased cost of pensions, as well as other cost increases on the horizon. The School has made an Alternative Proposal to teachers in relation to pensions which we believe is extremely fair and continues to give them access to very valuable pension benefits. We did this only after looking long and hard at other options, including additional fee increases and changes to our educational offer.

The Alternative Proposal that the School has offered to teachers would mean that they would have the choice of remaining in the TPS if they wished, but with a slight increase in cost to them individually if they chose to do so. After tax and National Insurance adjustments, the employee cost is approx. 3.27% of salary. Within the Alternative proposal made to staff is a further 2% pay award and increases to some pay scales to maintain a consistent variation across all scales compared to the state sector which would reduce this cost to the employee even further.

Last week, the governors asked staff to decide on an individual basis whether they accept the Alternative Proposal and they have until 7<sup>th</sup> February to respond. The governors will only decide on next steps once we know the outcome and at that point, I will write to parents again with a further update.

Yours faithfully,

**Karen Williams**  
**Chair of Governors**