



20<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of this half term, we want to acknowledge what a frustrating and difficult time this has been for you and your families. We are truly sorry for the ongoing disruption to your child's education and the impact this is having.

You will likely have seen in the news this week that the dispute involving the NASUWT and NEU is continuing. At its heart, this is about proposed changes to the structure of the school, with the aim of ensuring that, in the longer term, all pupils benefit from a better learning experience and environment. It is deeply saddening that, despite multiple attempts over the past three months to adjust and improve these proposals, we are still in this position. Once again, we sincerely apologise.

Further information was shared with you last Friday to give greater context about the work underway in school. Since taking up post in November, Mrs Keenan has begun to implement a range of changes to improve the school, with new routines at the start of the school day being one example already beginning to have a positive effect. However, the stop-start nature of recent months has made it more difficult for some changes to have the consistent impact we would expect. Even so, these foundations are important, and we remain committed to building on them as stability returns.

Meanwhile, our Year 11 pupils are now well into their GCSE examinations. They have shown remarkable resilience and maturity during what has been an unsettled time, and we are incredibly proud of how they are approaching their exams. Mrs Keenan will share details of the leavers assembly that will take place once exams have finished. This celebration will give students the opportunity to come together and mark the end of their time at school.

We are also aware that a number of parents met recently to share their views and concerns, and we recognise the strength of feeling behind this. Thank you for the invitation for representatives of the school and Trust to attend. We gave this careful consideration; however, given that discussions with union representatives are ongoing, we did not feel that attending a wider meeting at this stage would allow for the constructive and meaningful dialogue that parents deserve. It is important to us that when we do meet, we are able to listen carefully and respond openly. We remain fully committed to meeting with parents and will look to arrange this when greater clarity can be provided.

Many parents have understandably been asking: when will this end? While we cannot give a definite timeline at this stage, discussions with union representatives, the diocese and the Department for Education are ongoing and focused on finding a way forward. We will update you as soon as there is any meaningful progress.



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There is also understandable concern about what happens if further strike action takes place, and how pupils will recover any learning that has been lost. These are priorities for us. School leaders are planning how we can have more pupils in school more consistently, even if disruption continues, and how we will support all pupils to catch up and move forward with confidence. We will share fuller details after the half term break.

We recognise how difficult this has been, and we are genuinely sorry that it is continuing. We remain determined to improve the situation and will keep you updated as things progress. We have also updated the FAQs section on the school website to reflect the most recent information and respond to the questions parents are asking. These can be found here: [Industrial Action Updates - St Cuthbert's RC High School](#) and below for information.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Foley  
Trust CEO

John McAuley  
Chair of the Trust Board

Peter Riley  
Chair Trust Intervention Committee





## **Frequently Asked Questions - Updated - 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

### **Is the Trust planning to close the school and sell the land?**

No. There are no plans to close the school or sell the land. The Trust does not own the land or buildings, which are held by the Diocese, and therefore cannot sell the site. Our focus remains on strengthening the school and improving outcomes for pupils.

### **Why can't the school use supply teachers or move lessons online during strike days?**

There are legal restrictions on how schools can respond to strike action.

Schools are not permitted to use agency (supply) staff to cover the work of teachers who are on strike. This is set out in employment and trade union law and applies to all schools.

Similarly, staff who are not on strike cannot be directed to provide additional cover or take on roles that are not normally part of their duties in order to replace striking colleagues.

In relation to online learning, while this can be used in some limited circumstances, it still requires staff to plan, deliver and supervise lessons. Where teachers are on strike, this capacity is significantly reduced, meaning it is not always possible to provide full or live online lessons.

Because of these constraints, schools have to prioritise safety and supervision, which can mean that not all pupils are able to be on site during strike days.

### **What is the timeline for ending strike action?**

We understand how frustrating it is not to have a clear answer on this, and why you want to know when the disruption will end. At this stage, we are not able to give a definite timeline, as this depends on reaching agreement with union representatives. Discussions are ongoing and we will update you as soon as there is any confirmed progress.

### **Can the school apply for dispensation or special arrangements with exam boards due to the disruption?**

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), which represents the UK's biggest exam boards does not make provisions for industrial action. Consequently, it states that candidates will not be eligible for extra marks if their exam preparation or performance is hampered by "staff shortages"

All FAQs can be accessed on the school website here; [Industrial Action Updates - St Cuthbert's RC High School](#)



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