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Dear Colleagues

Industrial action – NAHT/NUT Proposed boycott of SATs at Key Stage 2

You are probably aware from the media coverage that the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) have held ballots for industrial action short of a strike to frustrate the administration of National Curriculum Tests in English and Mathematics at KS2 in 2010. The majority of members of both unions have voted in favour of this action, which will therefore take place in the week beginning 10 May 2010.

We have had a discussion with the Primary Headteacher Forum and made the County Council position on this clear:

1. Key Stage 2 SATs are a vital benchmark for children and parents at the end of the primary phase, and also a guide to entry to secondary education.
2. Unless and until the DCSF provide something better, SATs are the current method for assessing primary pupil progress in Year 6, and schools should support and implement them.
3. SATs are a statutory requirement and as such form part of Headteacher and teacher contracts. Similarly the requirement on Governing Bodies to implement SATs is statutory, and we ask Governors to encourage their staff to implement them.

Action Required

1. The response from NAHT and NUT members is likely to be varied. Some NAHT/NUT members will decide to implement SATs as normal; some will implement the SATs but refuse to send off the papers, some will issue last year's papers. However, Governing Bodies and Headteachers need to be clear that the requirement is to implement the 2010 SATs process in full.

Any member of staff refusing to do this should be told in writing that they are in breach of their contracts, and that this could result in disciplinary action.

2. No further action should be taken, because this is a national dispute with the DCSF, and also because this industrial action currently has legal protection.
3. Other non-NAHT/NUT staff can be asked to cover the work of staff taking industrial action, but should not be coerced in this, as it could have a serious impact on school employee relations.

4. Getting external people to do the work will be difficult because of the need for supervision of the process, so is not generally advisable. In addition, schools cannot employ agency staff to cover work resulting from industrial action.

If you require any further information please contact your personnel provider or Kerena Hunter on 01622 696337.

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