# Strike

Who is required to engage in strike action?

All ASTI/TUI members in schools, colleges and centres that offer the Junior Cycle, and who were balloted, are directed to strike.

Has my employer been informed?

Yes

I have no timetabled hours on the 22nd. Am I still on strike?

If a member is not expected to be on the premises on the day for whatever reason e.g. job share, part-time, no classes timetabled s/he is still on strike.

I am the Principal/manager of the workplace. Do I have an obligation to open the school/centre?

No. You are on strike and are protected under the Industrial Relations Act, 1990. Being on strike requires you not to engage in any aspects of your work, including opening the school/centre. Queries in relation to the opening of the school should be referred to your Board of Management/ETB.

I am a grade other than a teacher e.g. Youthreach Co-Ordinator, Resource Person etc. working in a centre that delivers the Junior Cert programme and that was balloted. Am I on strike?

Yes.

My school/ centre provides both mainstream and PLC courses (dual provision school).  Am I on strike?

Yes, irrespective of whether or not you are teaching Junior Cert, your workplace provides the Junior Cycle programme and has been balloted.

What happens if a TUI member does not take strike action?

Breaking a strike is a most serious offence for a member of a union.  It will result in unworthy conduct charges against the member.

Picketing members are obliged to report any member passing a picket or going onto the work place.  Failure to do so is itself a serious offence and is also liable to unworthy conduct charges.

A strike breaker should be reported to the branch officers without delay. Note any member breaking the picket, record time and note witnesses. Also note any member known to be in the workplace who might have gone in unbeknown to the picket.

I am seconded to another organisation. Am I on strike on the 22nd of January?

No. You work as normal for the other organisation on that day.

# Non-Teaching Activities

Do Board of Management meetings go ahead on January 22nd?

Teacher Representatives on BOMs should seek a deferral of any board meeting. They should not attend if it goes ahead; neither should the Principal Teacher nor any other teacher if s/he is an ASTI/ TUI member.

I normally take the school/centre football team for practice/matches after school. Is that ok?

No. Alternative activities (e.g. in-service, extra-curricular activities etc.) are covered by the strike and are prohibited on the day. Even though the pickets will end at normal school/centre closing time, the strike is in place for 24 hours.

I teach night classes in my school/centre after hours. Can I still take those classes?

No. The strike lasts 24 hours.

I am the Principal of a school/Manager of a Centre that hosts night classes. May I open the school/centre to allow those teaching the class to enter?

No. The strike lasts 24 hours.

What if we have a meeting on 22nd of January i.e. Parent-Teacher Meeting/Croke Park hours etc.?

No ASTI or TUI member can be involved in any kind of meeting on 22nd of January.

Can the Parent-Teacher meeting be held on another day instead?

Yes, but if the school does that then some other Croke Park ‘event’ must be dropped i.e. instead of doing 33 Croke Park hours the staff do 30 Croke Park hours in this school year.

I’m supposed to be on a school/centre trip on that day. What should I do?

If the school/centre trip begins and ends within the 24 hours of the 22nd, the strike action prohibits you from participating.

If the school trip extends beyond the 24 hour period, either because it commences on the 1st or earlier or because it concludes on the 3rd or later, then it is not prohibited by the strike action and you may participate in the trip.

If I am on a school/centre trip that is not prohibited, will I be deducted strike pay?

Yes.

# Picketing

When should the picket begin and end?

Picketing should commence 30 minutes before the normal opening time of the school/centre and should remain in place until normal school/centre closing time. However the strike lasts for 24 hours.

Do I have to picket?

Exemptions from picket duty can be sought for genuine reasons only e.g. medical.  Even if exempt from picket duty you are still on strike. You should consult with your School Steward/Workplace committee in relation to this.

Can I enter the school/centre at all during the day?

No, for the duration of the strike, members must remain completely off the premises of the employer – tea breaks or “bathroom breaks” must be taken elsewhere.

Will I lose pay?

There will be a loss of pay for the day – this is 1/7th of the weekly salary or, for an hourly paid person, the pay for the day. There will be a loss of pension credit for the strike day only.

What is the purpose of a picket?

The purpose of the picket is to

* Indicate to members of the union that there is an official strike and that they should not go to work
* Advise other employees that there is a dispute in the workplace
* Advise the general public that there is a dispute involving teachers who are opposed to the changes at Junior Cycle which will cause damage to the education of children in second-level schools in Ireland.

 How many people should be on a picket at any given time?

Mass picketing is illegal. 4 to 6 is normally considered sufficient at an entrance.

Then how will I know when to picket?

Picket duty should be organised by the workplace representative/committee and the Branch should be advised of the arrangements. There must be a picket at all times throughout the day – a roster will be developed locally by the Workplace Committee.

I have no timetabled hours on the 22nd, am I required to attend for picket duty?

You are required to attend for picket duty if, in normal circumstances, you would be in attendance at the school/centre on that day. If you would not normally be in attendance at the school/centre on this day, you are encouraged to attend for picket duty. If this proves difficult due to particular personal circumstances, please consult with your School Steward/Workplace Committee.

My school/centre hosts night classes. Does the picket run into the evening?

No, the pickets end at normal school/centre closing time.

My school is a dual union school. How does that affect picketing?

The Workplace Committee should liaise with the ASTI school steward regarding the roster for picketing. Every effort should be made to ensure that both unions are represented on each slot on the picketing roster and that TUI placards are carried on each slot of the roster.

Where can the picket be placed?

Picketing should be at, not on/in, the place of work.  For example, if schools/colleges/centres have entrances which are shared with primary schools, it is important to remember that the INTO is not in dispute and teachers, children, parents and others must be allowed free access. Do not impede anyone’s entrance or interfere with anyone accessing the building.

Can I picket at an alternative school/centre?

No. You can only picket at your own workplace. An elected branch officer may join any picket line within her/his own branch and a member of the National Executive may join any picket line.

I work in Third Level. Can I join any of the pickets?

No. Picketing must be by members who are employees of the school/college/centre in question and union officials/elected representatives (See above). You may, however, show your support for your colleagues who are on strike by briefly visiting them but you may not join the picket line.

Will there be placards? Yes.  Placards were distributed to schools and centres at the end of November.

*Will there be any Branch meetings held before the strike to organise everything?*

Please check with your Branch Secretary. Where it is possible, following consultation with the local ASTI representatives, a joint TUI/ASTI meeting at school or branch level would be useful.

# Other Unions/Non-Unionised

There are some people who are members of another union in my workplace. What happens them?

In line with standards issued by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, workers in the school who are members of other unions are allowed to pass a picket. If they ask ASTI/TUI representatives for guidance as to what to do on the day of the strike they should be referred to their employer or their own union.

There are non-unionised teachers in my school. What happens then?

Workers in the school/centre who are not in a union are allowed to pass a picket.

The Industrial Relations Act, 1990, allows for members of a union who have been balloted to engage in strike action. Members of the TUI and the ASTI have been balloted for this industrial action and therefore they can engage in strike action without fear of disciplinary action by the employer. Anyone who is not in the TUI or ASTI may be deemed to be in breach of their contract if they do not present for work on the 22nd and their employer may take disciplinary action against them or deem the day to have been a break in service. Non-unionised teachers/employees should be advised of the dispute.  If they ask union representatives for guidance as to what to do on the day of the strike they should be referred to their employer.  If eligible for membership they should be offered an application form for membership.

My colleague now wants to join ASTI/TUI. At what point will they be considered a member?

For the purposes of taking the Industrial Action a person will be considered a member providing s/he has completed and returned an application form either:

* Online
* To their Workplace Representative
* To a Branch Officer

Does this mean they can strike?

Yes it does and they will be required to picket.