

# Strike FAQs For UTLA Substitutes



## 1. Should we make ourselves unavailable to work using the SmartFind system?

Per our contract, substitutes have the right to make themselves unavailable if they choose to do so. Of course, if UTLA goes on strike, the district will know that all members are on strike, so you don't have to notify LAUSD. If LAUSD calls you at home, you do not have to answer because you will be on strike!

## 2. Is it advisable to take a sick day during the strike?

No, do not take a sick day when on strike; instead, join your colleagues every day on the picket line at one of the schools where you regularly work to show solidarity with your sisters and brothers.

## 3. Should substitute teachers stay home or join a picket line at one of our schools?

Join a picket line at one of your schools! This contract fight affects everyone. We are asking all of our members to be present at the picket lines at 7 a.m. Substitutes should join the picket lines at one of the schools where you normally work and participate in all of the rallies that will be taking place. Make sure to check in with the chapter chair at the school for attendance purposes.

## 4. Will my healthcare be affected if I strike?

Healthcare is incredibly important to all of our members, and it is one of the benefits the district targets the most and threatens to take away from us. Because of this we must stand and fight together. That said, per our contract, all UTLA members (including substitutes) who are eligible for health insurance need to work a minimum of one day per month to keep their current package for that following month. This is why it is so important that we all participate for a successful outcome.

## 5. Could there be any repercussions by the district for not accepting work?

Striking is a legally protected activity. It would be illegal for the district to retaliate against anyone for participating in the strike. You are not striking alone—if there is a strike there will be 34,000 other educators out there with you. A motion reassuring substitutes that UTLA will fight to protect your healthcare and against retaliation was passed this fall at our House of Representatives.

## 6. What is the benefit of being seen on the picket line at a worksite?

Attendance will be taken and it is important for all of us as union members to see that we are all standing up together. It is also critically important that the media and the public see that all educators are united and participating in the strike. The district will lie. They will say that many educators came to work. We have to show the public that we are united.

**7. Why should substitutes who are not getting very many work days join the strike?**

This is an epic moment of shared sacrifice! If we are forced to strike, it will be to get LAUSD to invest more in our schools. Lowering class sizes and hiring more teachers, counselors, and nurses will create more opportunities. More teachers being hired to fill more classrooms as part of an effort to reduce class sizes means that there will be more teachers for substitutes to cover when absent. Fewer teachers, which is the way the district is going, will mean fewer opportunities for substitutes. We will all benefit if we win this struggle, or we will all lose if we don't.

**8. How do we counter any motivating factors such as LAUSD offering substitutes higher pay during a strike?**

That is unlikely to happen, because substitutes' salaries are covered by the UTLA-LAUSD contract, and any extra pay or incentives would be challenged as illegal and UTLA would file a PERB charge. But if the district were to offer incentives, any temporary increase in pay would be more than offset in the long term by losses if we do not win this struggle and reshape the priorities of LAUSD. LAUSD is one of the only districts in the country that provides health benefits to substitute teachers, and UTLA is one of the only unions that includes substitutes. With LAUSD constantly attacking our healthcare, we could easily see ourselves losing benefits in the future if we do not demonstrate our power together.

**9. How will the other LAUSD unions support the strike?**

We are in regular discussion with other LAUSD unions about how they can support the strike if one is necessary. We will be sharing more information as those discussions continue. We encourage all LAUSD employees to join us on the picket lines because this struggle will affect all of our futures.

**10. What are the consequences of crossing a picket line to work?**

The consequences of crossing a picket line are that you would be undermining your colleagues, weakening your union, and contributing to a weaker contract. The district would love to cut our pay and health benefits in the future; the only thing stopping that is a strong union.

**11. How will we be updated during a strike?**

We will be communicating in all possible ways, including on our website, on social media, and through emails, robocalls, and text messages.

**12. Could the school calendar be modified or extended after a strike?**

Such a change would have to be negotiated and a decision like that would include many stakeholders. It would affect parents, students, UTLA members, and members of other unions.