



Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union
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For immediate release

School cleaners face redundancy — Striking on February 6th to defend jobs — Campaigning for London Living Wage

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Cleaners at a south London Catholic school are planning to strike to defend their jobs.

Cleaners at the Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School are planning to go on strike on February 6th in opposition to proposed job cuts. The cuts are being proposed by the cleaners' employer, ZING Environments, who took over the cleaning contract at the school in August 2018.

ZING is proposing to reduce the number of cleaners at Virgo Fidelis from ten to seven or eight. It has offered a pay increase to the remaining cleaners.

The cleaners are determined to resist the cuts, and are campaigning for the London Living Wage. They currently earn just the national minimum wage of £7.83 per hour.

The cleaners say they will struggle to manage the extra work if their numbers are reduced. 'We are already working as hard as we can,' a workers' representative told us. 'We will be worked to the point of exhaustion if these cuts go ahead,' he continued. 'They could easily afford to keep us all on and pay us properly, they just don't want to spend the money.'

The Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union (CAIWU), which represents the majority of the Virgo Fidelis cleaners, is offering its full support to the campaign. 'We've tried to negotiate with both the school and the employer,' says CAIWU organizer Danbert Vanzetti. 'Zing have offered one or two concessions, but they haven't budged on the redundancies or the London Living Wage. No proper business case has been made for these cuts, which are all about trying to save money.'

The strike will be accompanied by a protest and rally outside the school. The cleaners are hoping for a large turnout to show that they have the support of the community.

Strike: February 6th 2019

Rally: From 1pm to 5pm at Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School, 147 Central Hill, Upper Norwood, London SE19 1RS

END

Notes to editor:

For more information, please contact Alberto Durango, CAIWU national organiser, on 075 900 98084 or Bruce Coker, CAIWU London organiser, at bruce@caiwu.org.uk

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