

UK parents and educators support call for October 1 school strike

Our reporters

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Parents and educators have spoken out in support of British parent Lisa Diaz's proposal for a school strike in the UK and internationally on October 1.

Claire Cozler is a former teacher/lecturer and parent of an adult daughter and an eight-year-old son. She is a founding member of the SafeEdforAll (Safe Education for All group).

She said, "I think that Lisa's call for a School Strike is a call for parents who have simply had enough. Our children are sitting ducks in schools with no ventilation improvements and no mitigations. It's the only way we have left to protest. We have tried to liaise with schools, Local Education Authorities, Academy Trusts, MPs, anyone, and everyone, but no one is helping and no one is listening.

"Withdrawing our children from harm's way is all we have left. We would love parents across the globe to join in, as we in the UK aren't the only ones suffering the same issues. So far, we know parents in America, Spain, and the Netherlands amongst others are joining us, and to be honest, we need to use our parent power to stand up and say, enough!

"I think [Chief Medical Officer of England Chris] Whitty's comments [that the infection of every child with COVID is inevitable] are shameful. This is largely avoidable, yet they are inflicting COVID and future damage on our children, families and staff without a second thought. 88 children are dead, around 34,000 now suffering from Long COVID. How many more children do they want to kill and disable? They have hung Clinically Vulnerable and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable children, families and staff out to dry. Organisations such as ShieldUs are overwhelmed by calls from desperate families being put at risk.

"The government also sneaked out last night [Sunday] that neurological issues give an increased

cause of death, with no precision, which is extremely worrying for families like ours. And all that [Education Secretary] Nadhim Zahawi can talk about is prosecuting families for non-attendance. It's not 'non-attendance' if you are trying to keep your children safe from a government that won't spend even £20 a head on them to improve ventilation, or reintroduce mask mandates, and isolation of close contacts, which costs them nothing. I have already heard of three close friends being infected this week by their children returning to school, friends with serious health problems, but they were too afraid not to send them.

"I don't think it's inevitable at all that we should live and die with the virus. We need a global plan, for vaccines, lockdowns, mitigations, temporary travel restrictions etc, until we have a hold over the virus.

"Greed is the only reason it has had such a chance to propagate. Companies scared of losing money have been prioritised over Public Health. This needs to stop, or it will keep mutating and could be the end of life as we know it. Waive the vaccine patents and work together.

"I think Lisa's call, and the work done by grassroots organisations is symptomatic of change. We would love to work with the unions too. We are groups of very ordinary people, parents, young people, grandmas, who are sick of being done to and have started doing for themselves. I think this is symptomatic of real change in the world. We have had enough of herd immunity, whether overt or covert and we are making a stand. We don't benefit from any kind of funding or support from major organisations. Our strength is our voice, the voice of personal experience, authentic, real, raw experience. We are not experimental subjects, we are not their playthings, we are real people, with real families, real lives, real suffering and real pain.

“This needs to stop, now. It is inhumane and smacks of the eugenicist policies this government has been forcing on poor, disabled, and BAME communities throughout austerity.

“When we say that our lives depend on this, we aren't joking. The future of this country also depends on it. We have gone overnight from a democracy to a country that is killing its most vulnerable citizens. If we don't put a stop to this inhumane treatment now, we are giving this government carte blanche to continue with their extreme right-wing agenda, in which we stop being people, and start being 'profit centres'. Enough is enough, we have to stand up. Our lives, our children's lives, and ultimately their children's lives and life experiences depend on it.”

Primary school teacher **Lucia** endorsed the school strike and said, “I am horrified at the lack of COVID safety measures in schools. I have temporarily removed my son from school, as there is a Covid outbreak and new rules mean that children who are close contacts don't have to isolate.

My daughter has just started secondary school and they are not even informing parents of cases. I oppose the policy of deliberately infecting children, their families and school staff with a dangerous virus that has long term debilitating consequences. It can cause cognitive impairment and multiple organ damage even if the initial infection is mild. The government and the media is lying when it says children are not at serious risk from COVID.”

Ruth, a teacher from the Isle of Wight, said, “There are no safety measures whatsoever in the majority of UK schools. In January, Public Health England stated its intention to spread COVID-19 through young people and this is exactly what it is doing. This is shocking and surreal but explains why schools with large outbreaks who contact PHE for advice are told not to close or take any action. Just ‘keep calm and carry on’.

“What is happening in the UK is a breach of human rights. We have a right to life, to health, and to education. Yet families are being denied these things, and those who choose to keep their children away from unsafe schools either permanently or even for short periods are being harassed and threatened with prosecution.

“Parents and families keeping their children away from school on Friday will send a strong message of

solidarity with educators in unsafe schools and a strong message to government that we demand our human rights to life, health, and education. Not to be herded into unsafe schools and workplaces for compulsory infection.”

Brian, a parent and former teacher from Merseyside, said, “We think it's really important to take part in the parent strike, to make a stand and tell this government that what they're doing is not okay.

“The government has put the lives and long-term health of our children at risk for the sake of maintaining profits for the rich.

“The Conservative government, with the support of all parties in Westminster have forced parents to send their children into unsafe schools. It's mandatory infection for our children and I do not consent to putting them through the government's mass infection experiment.

“We are in the very fortunate position to have been able to keep our children at home and participate in home education. Now we are being threatened with the prospect of being part of a ‘fast track’ to prosecution process, unless we deregister our kids or throw them into a school environment where current transmission figures are soaring and nothing is being done to protect their health.

“I am really grateful to Lisa Diaz and the WSWS for calling for the school strike and urge all parents, teachers and teaching staff to join us.”

Please contact the WSWS or the Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee with your comments in support of the October 1 school strike.



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