

October 1 school strike wins global support

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The October 1 school strike called by UK parent Lisa Diaz, a member of the SafeEdforAll (Safe Education for All) parent group, met a broad response yesterday.

Thousands registered their support on social media, with many making short videos and sharing the hashtags #SchoolStrike2021, #SittingDucks and #October1st.

Given the widespread pledges of support from parents, workers and students all over the globe, Lisa posted a video on the eve of the strike, saying, “Tomorrow is #SchoolStrike2021! I’m humbled & overwhelmed by the support—both here in the U.K. & globally—we may be miles apart, but we’re united in our fight for justice. Thank you from all of us from @SafeEdForAll_UK.”

Backing for the strike came from the UK, United States, France, Germany, Spain, Israel, Sri Lanka, Japan, Australia and other countries. A number of those participating posted photos of their children’s school uniform, hung up alongside a mask, to indicate their opposition to sending children into unsafe schools.

One of the most shared tweets from the day came from a parent in the UK who reported that her daughter has been sick for 18 months from an infection that she caught in school. She posted a drawing comparing the reopening of schools to sending soldiers over the trenches in World War I.

Summarizing the significance of the global event, *World Socialist Web Site* International Editorial Board Chairman David North stated:

October 1, 2021 is a date that will live in history. The thousands of workers who have responded to Lisa Diaz’s call to action and joined today’s Global Online Picket Line are acting on behalf of countless millions across the globe.

While governments and the rich are concerned only with the impact of the pandemic on the stock markets and corporate profits, the working class is concerned with the cost to human life. COVID-19 cannot be lived with. It must be eradicated.

Today’s action is a great step forward in the fight against the pandemic. But it is the beginning, not the end, of the struggle. We must build on today’s achievement, and increase our efforts to mobilize the

working class on a global scale in action.

Numerous video statements were posted from all over the world, many of which were compiled by the WSWS throughout the day.

Lucy Garrard, a member of SafeEdforAll, said in her video, “The media and the government are downplaying the effect of COVID in children, trying to persuade everyone it’s over, everything’s okay. It isn’t.”

Parent **Fran** tweeted, “I support #SchoolStrike2021 because it is frankly sociopathic to send innocent children into schools with no mitigations with a highly infectious, potentially fatal virus circulating. Children cannot protect themselves; it is up to adults to do so. Solidarity.”

Twitter user “**Little Hoppy Saul**” said, “Children are being infected in schools daily, in large numbers. It’s not inevitable that they would contract COVID. It was a choice. A choice that was made by the Department for Education.”

Barbara Slaughter, a veteran of the Trotskyist movement in the UK, stated, “Lisa’s initiative in calling for today’s action is a brave act of defiance. She speaks on behalf of millions of working-class families all over the world. And that’s why her call has had an international response, because she’s telling the truth.”

A UK teacher, **Ruth**, warned in her video, “COVID is absolutely ripping through our schools, through our children and then through our families too... We have the right to be safe, the right to health and the right to an education. And our children can’t have all of those things at the moment.”

Parent **Sarah** said, “I’m doing this recording in my garage because I don’t want my children to know that ten children have already died of COVID this month. There are no mitigations in schools, they’re an unvaccinated population. It’s completely unacceptable.”

Hemantha Welihena, a teacher and member of the Teachers-Students-Parents Safety Committee of Sri Lanka, posted a video saying, “Around the world, everyone should support the fight against the reopening of schools and the herd immunity policy. Children are the future generation of society.”

Martin Mauer, a teacher in the state of Saxony, Germany, and a member of the Network of Action Committees for Safe Education, said in support of the strike, “All the establishment

parties are implementing a policy of mass infection. They are sabotaging the simplest measures such as quarantining, sacrificing the health of millions of children, in the economic interests of the banks and the corporations.”

Cheryl Crisp, the national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in Australia, gave the party’s wholehearted support for the school strike, stating, “To force unvaccinated children into schools with no protections has nothing to do with their education but everything to do with the demand that their parents are free to go to work to produce, to make profits for their employees.”

She added, “The working class, the only force which stands for the interests of science, life and society, must now take matters into his own hands. This strike is the beginning of that stand.”

UK retired teacher and WWSW writer **Margot Miller** said, “I think I can speak for the profession. We care passionately about the health, the education and the happiness of our children. But what happiness is there if children catch COVID, become ill, develop long COVID, pass the virus to families and lose loved ones?”

Adam, from London, explained, “I work in the accommodation environment of a well-known university... It’s immoral to send children back to schools under misinformation and lies while the government suppresses the truth in relation to COVID and the pandemic.

David O’Sullivan, a bus driver from London and a founding member of the London Bus Rank-and-File Committee, said, “Lisa’s call should be shouted from the rooftops to oppose the government’s herd immunity experiment on children... It is only through the intervention of the mass of the working class that things are going change.”

The support of the Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand was expressed by leading member **Tom Peters**, who said the strike was “setting an example for workers across the world who are seeking to fight back against the murderous policies that are causing COVID-19 to spread out of control.”

Parent **Kelly Taylor** tweeted, “I support the school strike and am keeping my child at home today. 59,000 children were infected in the 1st two weeks of school.”

A **National Health Service worker** in southern England posted a video stating, “As a health worker, I fully support the school strike today called by Lisa @Sandyboots2020. I cannot agree more with this courageous action in safeguarding children from COVID-19.”

A **38-year-old mother** of three from Chicago said, “Our politicians are failing us and we are saying enough is enough... We can’t pretend away a virus that has already infected almost six million children in our country alone... Our children are not expendable. And I refuse to put mine in harm’s way so that the economy can recover.”

Phyllis, a public-school teacher in Detroit of 25 years and member of the Michigan Educators Rank-and-File Safety

Committee, posted, “I support your #SchoolStrike2021 movement 100 percent... Schools are no longer schools. They have become cesspools of a deadly yet preventable infections. This has to end.”

Laurent Lafrance, an educator and member of the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee, said in a video, “The situation in Canada is the same as in every country... We’re now in the fourth wave of the pandemic, people are continuing to die, and kids are being massively infected in schools.”

Sergi Ginebrera tweeted, “I support @Sandyboots2020 for her brave initiative #SchoolStrike2021 #SittingDucks #October1st, especially when Germany is lifting today most of restrictions like allowing big parties, full sport events, no mask mandate at primary schools. All the effort now for nothing?”

Socialist Equality Party (UK) supporter **Jude** said in her video, “Parents supporting this action are doing a right thing, and teachers too. They must break, totally, with those that oppose them, and build this wonderful international movement so that we can eradicate covid together across the world.”

Significantly, the school strike was supported by a number of scientists. **Malgorzata Gasperowicz**, a developmental biologist and a researcher at the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary, tweeted a statement from ZeroCovidCanada declaring, “We encourage all Canadian parents to participate in the strike on October 1.”

Professor Colin Davis from the University of Bristol in England tweeted, “Solidarity with all those who are striking. My children are not attending school today. My daughter commented that she feels for the teachers who are having to teach despite a current Covid outbreak in her year.”

Professor **Deepti Gurdasani**, an epidemiologist who is a senior lecturer at Queen Mary University of London, tweeted, “I wasn’t able to participate in this, but I fully support parents who are protesting the lack of basic mitigations in schools that have essentially meant >160,000 children with COVID-19 in just the last *2 weeks*. This is reckless endangerment of our young.”

Yesterday’s strike was the result of initiatives carried out by workers independently of the trade unions and “left” political parties, which at every stage have worked to implement the homicidal policies of the ruling class. It marked an important step forward in the struggle of the international working class against the pandemic, articulating its striving for a policy based on saving lives, not private profit.



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