

15-year-old British schoolgirl Jorja Halliday dies of Covid-19 on day she was to be vaccinated

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Jorja Halliday, a 15-year-old girl from Portsmouth in southern England, tragically died due to COVID on September 28 at the Queen Alexandra hospital. Jorja had tested positive for the virus just four days earlier. The day she died Jorja was due to have her COVID vaccination.

Tracey Halliday, Jorja's mother, told the press that her daughter did not have any underlying health conditions and had developed flu-like symptoms before she took the PCR test that gave a positive result, leading to her isolating at home. A matter of hours later Jorja was struggling to eat on Sunday (September 26) and by Monday September 27, she was unable to eat at all due to her throat hurting.

After being given antibiotics for her worsening condition, Jorja was admitted to hospital due to her heart rate being double what it should have been.

Tracey told the *Portsmouth News*, "They realised how serious it was and I was still allowed to touch her, hold her hand, hug her and everything else. They did allow me that. I'm at the point where I can't comprehend that it's happened. I was with her the whole time. They tried to put her on a ventilator to give her body a chance to recover. Her heart rate didn't stabilise. Her heart couldn't take the strain. They worked as well as I think they could medically but were unable to save her."

Preliminary results found that Jorja had myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscle. Symptoms associated with the diagnosis include chest pain, shortness of breath and the feeling of a rapid heart rate or pounding in the chest.

Tracey explained, 'She was going to have the jab on Tuesday [September 28]. But because she tested positive on Saturday she was isolating. When her isolation period was over she was going to get it. The day that she passed away was the day that she would have had it done.'

Jorja's death leaves a mother and father without a daughter and four young children, Daisie, Kallum, Julie and Oscar, without a sister. Tracey said Jorja was "loved all round, she was a loving girl and she had lots of friends. She was very active, she liked to go out and spend time with her friends and loved spending time with her brothers and sisters. Growing up she turned into a beautiful young lady, always wanting to help others, always there for everybody when they needed them. It's heart wrenching because your kids are always meant to outlive you, and that's the one thing I can't get over."

Jorja was a talented kickboxer and an aspiring musician. Hers was the 10th known child death in September in the UK, under conditions in which cases among 12-17 year olds are at their highest in England since the pandemic began. At least one in every 20 children are infected, equivalent to at least one in every classroom in the country. Despite the deaths which have taken place in the few weeks since the reopening of schools from mid-August in Scotland early September in England and Wales, schools remain fully open with no mitigation in place and a slow implementation of the vaccine.

Portsmouth Academy School which Jorja attended had 102 positive cases in September. According to the SafeEdForAll campaigning group, 86 students, 10 teachers and six non-teaching staff confirmed positive. In the last academic year from September 2020 to May 2021, 30 students, four teachers and 5 non-teaching staff tested positive.

With virtually no mitigations in place in any school, that so many cases have ripped through Portsmouth Academy school in just a few weeks is not surprising. In November 2020, after the school informed parents that it was going to ensure that children were safe, they were forced—due to the spread of COVID among children and staff—to send

home the entire Year 10 on November 19/20 and then had to also send home Year 8 from November 23 for the week.

The massive increase in cases is entirely the responsibility of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government and its herd immunity policy pursued from day one of the pandemic, resulting in the mass infection of over 7.6 million people and the deaths over 160,000.

By the end of September, child UK Covid fatalities stood at 88. To the Johnson government they are just collateral damage as they demand schools stay open so that their parents can go to work and create profits for the corporations.

In a COVID advice letter dated September 22 and posted on the Portsmouth Academy website it states, "Please be reassured that for most children, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. The setting remains open and your child should continue to attend as normal if they remain well."

Many children and young people are asymptomatic and by the time symptoms have developed they will have infected dozens of others.

The principal of the school sent out a letter stating, "Our school community is united in our grief and in deep shock."

With the preventable death of another child, what is truly shocking is that with cases so high in all education settings is that the school remains open.

The loss of a popular student in a secondary school, where a sibling attends, will be heartfelt by many. But as government officials bombard the public with feigned concern over young people's mental health, little or no consideration is given to the impact of covid on families such as Jorja's and their communities. The school is situated in one of the most deprived areas of Portsmouth.

Jorja's death has impacted on hundreds of parents, doctors and educators who tweeted their concern. Twitter user "Hadenuff" said, "Jorja Halliday was 15 and healthy. Mass infection is never the way forward. Who's child will be next in covid Russian roulette?"

Many have congratulated Jorja's mum for speaking out and encouraging children to get vaccinated. Senior doctors have expressed their concerns that the vaccination roll out is going far too slowly. The *Guardian* reported Dr Helen Salisbury, a GP in Oxford and a member of the Independent Sage committee, which has criticised aspects of the government COVID policy, saying that while it made sense to deliver COVID vaccinations through

schools, the programme started late compared with other countries and that many schools could struggle given recent cuts to school nursing and medical services.

Salisbury said the combination of "half-hearted endorsement" of the vaccine in the age group and "stretched services" risked further delaying vaccinations in teenagers. Sending children back to school without masks, extra ventilation, bubbles and isolation policies was "a total recipe for ensuring everybody gets exposed", she added. "I don't understand why we are not getting on with it. It seems urgent. Urgent to protect these children, and to protect their families, and to protect their education. We should have started this in the summer."

The vaccination programme is being carried out by NHS Community Teams who are already overwhelmed with current COVID demand and flu vaccinations. In August a school nurse wrote to the *Nursing Times* to sound the alarm over planned cuts to Hampshire nursing services of £2.09 million a year, meaning a cut of 47 nurses or 12.5 percent of the workforce.

Selena Brash, a clinical team leader with the East Hampshire school nursing team, launched a petition earlier in the summer calling for increased funding "to protect the provision of school nurses". She warned that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic had "intensified" the need for support, with the petition stressing that services needed increased funding, not cuts.

Health workers and educators who have been on the frontline of the pandemic, including parents and grandparents, have been thrust into intolerable circumstances.

Jorja's death and the outpouring of sympathy for her case is evidence of widespread opposition to unsafe schools. To ensure that that there are no more deaths among children, educators and in the wider population, a struggle must be conducted for the ending of the pandemic through the eradication of COVID.



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