

Support the October 15 global school strike to protest unsafe schools!

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UK parent Lisa Diaz has called a second school strike to protest unsafe schools. The strike will be held on Friday October 15 and is supported by the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) and Socialist Equality Parties internationally.

Lisa, from Wigan in the northwest of England, is the mother of two children and a member of the SafeEdforAll (Safe Education for All) campaign group. She called the first global school strike on October 1.

That strike, supported by the WSWS, won support internationally from parents, educators and other workers. Thousands registered their support on social media, with many making short videos and sharing the hashtags #SchoolStrike2021, #SittingDucks and #October1st.

In an October 9 tweet announcing the second strike, Lisa posted stark statistics emphasising the global character of the pandemic and how serious the disease is for children. She wrote, “Average of 3 children/day dying from covid in the US. Leading cause of death among kids in Brazil. In July alone, 700 children died in Indonesia. Time for another global #SchoolStrike2021 with @SafeEdForAll_UK on #October15th. No more #SittingDucks!!”

Lisa has posted a series of short videos expressing her concerns over unsafe schools. Collectively, these have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times. The video calling for Friday’s strike has already been viewed over 50,000 times, liked over 1,200 times and retweeted more than 600 times, reflecting the widespread sentiment in the working class opposed to the mass infection of children.

Lisa said in the latest video, “COVID is being left to let rip through schools in the UK and the results are completely devastating. So, on average one in 14 secondary school children now has COVID. And it’s

not a benign illness in children. 94 children have lost their lives due to COVID throughout the course of the pandemic. 94 kids are dead because of COVID. Over 1,000 children every month in July, August and September were hospitalized with COVID. 53,000 children are now living with Long COVID in the UK. 11,000 of these children have been poorly for more than a year. 8,000 children have been orphaned due to COVID.”

Among the most recent tragic deaths was that of Jorja Halliday, a 15-year-old girl from Portsmouth, who died September 28, the day she was due to have her COVID vaccination.

Lisa continued, “What is our government doing about it? Nothing whatsoever.”

She concluded, “Given that our politicians are doing nothing to protect us, I propose another school strike. On the 15th of October, if you can keep your child off school as a protest against this barbaric herd immunity experiment, then please do so. I will be as well. Post a picture online of your child’s uniform, or the shoes, the bag, whatever you want, hanging up.

“Let’s send a powerful message, a global message, that we will not let our children be collateral damage. They shouldn’t be sitting ducks.

“If you can’t partake in the actual strike any kind of words of solidarity mean a lot and if you’ve not got children you can still leave a message and tell us why it’s important. That our children, are unnecessarily and willingly exposed to a novel virus that we have absolutely no idea of the long-term effects. So, I’ll see you on the 15th of October and let’s make it big success like the last one.”

Posts in response to the video pledged their support for the upcoming strike.

One person wrote, “Hello from Brazil. My son and I

will join you on #October15th #SchoolStrike2021. I'm so scared and sad about the way people are normalizing the deaths. We need to protect our children."

Another from Australia replied, "Lisa thanks for all you are doing. I'm British born, lived in Australia since childhood. Have watched what has been happening there in horror, now Delta is spreading in Oz and our govt are following the UK lead. Sending you and all UK parents fighting this insanity solidarity."

Eric Feigl-Ding, an epidemiologist in the United States, replied, "Indeed... kids need to be vaccinated also ASAP."

Others supporting the strike have contacted the WSWs. Chris Porter, a university lecturer in Britain wrote, "As a parent and educator, I'm offering my support for the School Strike on October 15. This is, as far as I can see, the only organised action aimed at challenging the herd immunity policy that is systematically putting at risk the health and lives of children and adults. There seems little challenge to the dominant, dangerous message that the vaccine on its own is protection enough, not even from unions who you might think via their rhetoric and supposed aims would put social and human need ahead of economic imperatives."

The call for the strike comes as COVID cases among the youngest in society surge. Last week one in 14 secondary school children in England were infected with COVID, up from an estimated one in 20 pupils the previous week, with 270,000 children infected. Office for National Statistics data show that the infection rate has more than doubled in two weeks for those in Year 7 to Year 11, from 2.8 percent to 6.9 percent of that total age group. Based on previous incidence rates, the scale of the virus in schools could mean 13,500 children may go on to have long Covid symptoms.

The WSWs urges the widest support for the October 15 strike. We wrote that the October 1 action "articulates the strivings of the working class for a policy based on saving lives, not profit" and represents a significant step forward in its fight against the pandemic. The school strike initiative is also developing as an international movement. The WSWs noted of October 1, "While the call for the parents strike began in the UK, it has attracted the support of workers throughout the world. In addition to the individual statements of solidarity, the action has been

endorsed by teachers' groups and rank-and-file committees in many countries."

Critically, both strikes have been organised independently of the trade unions which, in every country, have collaborated with governments to implement the homicidal policies of the ruling elite. Last week, in a Twitter exchange with parents and teachers, Kevin Courtney, the joint leader of the UK's National Education Union repeatedly opposed calls from his own members for the union to ballot for industrial action over unsafe schools.

Five education unions have now written to Nadhim Zahawi, the Conservative government's education secretary, asking him to consider tightening safety measures in schools but only to insist they are kept open. Unison's assistant general secretary Jon Richards said, "Pupils have faced more than a year and a half of disruption to their education and ministers must pull out all the stops to keep children in classrooms."

Lisa's calls for strike action are one expression of the widespread opposition that exists against the policy of mass infection which finds itself paralysed by these policing efforts of the trade union bureaucracy.

On October 24, Lisa will be appearing on the platform of the online meeting, "How to end the pandemic: The case for eradication", hosted by the WSWs and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

The meeting will provide the working class with the necessary scientific knowledge to confront the pandemic and fight for a programme of elimination and eradication, combined with a political perspective for the international mobilisation of workers, independently of the trade unions, through rank-and-file committees.

Follow Lisa Diaz on Twitter: @Sandyboots2020. Send messages of support for Friday's strike to the WSWs here. Message of solidarity on Twitter should be sent using the hashtag #SchoolStrike2021 and should tag the World Socialist Web Site (@WSWS_Updates).



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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