

UK: Parents, educators and WSWS readers pledge support for Friday's global school strike

Robert Stevens
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Parents, educators and other workers have sent in messages of support for the global school strike being held on Friday.

The strike was called by Lisa Diaz, a parent of two children from Wigan in the northwest of England. Lisa, a member of the SafeEdforAll (Safe Education for All) campaign group, 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 hashtags for the event.

Deaths of children due to COVID continue to increase due to the Conservative government's stay in school policy.

Today, October 14, SafeEdforAll are calling for participation in an online "vigil for all the forgotten children who have lost their lives to Covid." The vigil, beginning 8.00pm GMT, was called by @hivetosurvive, a "Collaboration Network, supporting and campaigning for ALL affected by the COVID-19 pandemic".

Lisa posted a video in support of the vigil stating, "Across the UK and throughout the world children are dying of COVID. Since the pandemic began 94 children have lost their lives to COVID in the UK alone. Eleven children have died since the schools have gone back. In the United States there's an average of three children dying every single day. In Brazil COVID is the leading cause of child death. In Indonesia 700 children lost their lives to COVID in July alone. These children are completely forgotten about. They are not talked about in the media. The reality that children are dying of COVID, that they do get sick, that they do get Long COVID is just pushed under the rug. It's just swept away.

"Because the truth is too painful, and it is too inconvenient. The governments would have to take action if people knew the true extent, the death, the pain that COVID is causing. So, as an initiative from The Hive, which is one

of the groups which I work with, Nikki came up with the idea and I think it's an absolutely wonderful idea, that these children are not forgotten.

"On Thursday 14th of October, we're going to hold a vigil for these children, both in the UK but across the world. So, at 8 o'clock [20:00 UK time], if you could light a candle and film it on either Twitter live or a pre-recorded video for 2 minutes in memory and in remembrance to all the children who have lost their lives to COVID. There is no greater burden. You would never, ever get over the death of a child. And yet they are forgotten about. So, a vigil on Thursday the 14th of October, a 2-minute silence with a candle showing. If you could have the hashtag #child and then a broken heart and also #UK and a broken heart emoji. Thanks so much."

The vigil and school strikes are expressions of growing working class opposition to the homicidal policy of keeping unsafe schools open in the middle of a pandemic. They take place as the details of another tragic death of a child due to COVID were made public. An inquest being held into the death of a 12-year-old girl, Fabiana Zoppelli, heard this week that she died in June 2020, just six days after developing a minor cough.

Fabiana Zoppelli began coughing on June 1, 2020 and fell ill. She was taken to Royal Oldham Hospital and tested positive for coronavirus. On June 3, after the schoolgirl developed a rash and started vomiting, her mother, Itohan Ehiggie, phoned a doctor and Fabiana was taken to the A&E department at the Royal Oldham Hospital. Fabiana's health worsened, and she was referred to Manchester Children's Hospital. On June 7, the girl, who had a rare genetic disorder, floating-harbor syndrome, had a cardiac arrest and died. Fabiana passed away as she was leaving Manchester Children's Hospital on a mobile ventilator to be taken to Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool where she was to be treated on an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) machine.

The death of Fabiana and many others gives the lie to the

propaganda of governments, parroted by the media, that COVID is not really a danger to children who can expect to have only a “mild” reaction.

Kathryn, a WSWWS reader in Australia said, “What you are leading and doing Lisa is vitally important. You are taking a stand against the murderous policy of herd immunity the UK government and every government around the world has adopted. And standing up for working class children, to protect their future. I don’t have children of my own but if I did, I would join the strike and keep them home from school. I applaud you and support you 100 percent and encourage every parent and child in every country to join the strike on the 15th October. I wish you every success.”

Karin Hilpisch wrote to the WSWWS, “I’m a retired social worker in Germany, and I wish to express my unconditional and unequivocal support of the UK school strike called for by Lisa Diaz. In the face of the government’s herd immunity policy, principled non-cooperation is an act of self-defence of the working class in a matter of life and death. The situation in Germany is essentially no better than in the UK.

“As long as schools remain unsafe, children must have access to remote learning by default, and working parents who need to stay at home with their kids must be given full financial compensation.

“The school strike is an important part of workers’ increasing opposition to being made to pay, in a number of ways, for the pandemic by the ruling class via intensified exploitation leading to maximized profits.”

Peter Bentley, a retired teacher and former official of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said, “I write in support of those parents who are refusing to send their children to school on Friday, 15th October.

“The Tory Government has failed to protect the population from Covid and, in particular, it has ignored the issue of making schools safe from Covid.

“This is the sequence of events: [Prime Minister Boris] Johnson appointed [his main advisor Dominic] Cummings. Cummings called for ‘weirdos and misfits’ to apply for advisers’ jobs. He appointed Andrew Sabisky who was (and, presumably, still is) an advocate of Hitler’s ‘Untermensch’—a blanket label for Subhumans, for non-Aryan inferior people—the Jews, Roma and Slavs, (Russians, Poles and Serbs, etc.), Mulatto and Black People, the physically and mentally disabled. All were to be exterminated in the Holocaust. Sabisky’s so-called ‘herd immunity’ was the policy embraced by the Johnson Government.

“Care homes were denied Personal Protective Equipment. Patients and staff died of Covid. The old were abandoned because they were going to die soon anyway. Even the

‘respectable’ press exposed Sabisky, so he was sacked—alas too late! ‘Profit before people’ Johnson sacked Cummings thanks to the persuasion of Carrie, his partner, then wife. Alas, too late to save the lives of the elderly in Care Homes!

“All we need to know about any form of Covid is that it kills! That is sufficient information to implement measures to assist the people of every country in the world, regardless of its form of government and its geographical location. And why the necessity for strike action? To inform and, hopefully to effect change!

“More recently, 11 children died of Covid in September alone; this was absolutely preventable. 1 in 7 who catch Covid will have debilitating symptoms 15 weeks later.

“Contrary to scientific evidence, Covid-deniers still claim that children do not catch Covid, that they cannot pass on Covid to others... and so on.

“We cannot sit around and wait for politicians to have meetings whilst our children get sick and die. Nothing is being done to make schools safe. Sadly, the Labour Party, despite Keir’s [leader Sir Keir Starmer’s] ritual jousting in Parliament, has done little to advocate protective measures to counter the Tory Party’s murderous policies.”

We urge the widest support for the school strike. Follow Lisa Diaz on Twitter: @Sandyboots2020. Send messages of support for Friday’s strike to the WSWWS here. Messages of solidarity on Twitter should be sent using the hashtag #SchoolStrike2021 and should tag the World Socialist Web Site (@WSWS_Updates).

All those participating in the school strike should attend the October 24 webinar ‘How to end the Pandemic: The case for Eradication’ called by the World Socialist Web Site and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.



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wsws.org/contact