

Widespread global participation in second school strike against COVID threat to children

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Parents, educators, students and workers throughout the world took part in the second global school strike on Friday, October 15. The strike, organised two weeks after the first highly successful one on October 1, was called by UK parent Lisa Diaz, a member of the parent group SafeEdforAll (Safe Education for All).

The global school strikes have received massive support internationally. The central hashtag for the event, #SchoolStrike2021, has been tweeted nearly 40,000 times over the past three weeks since Lisa's announcement of the first school strike. It was used roughly 11,000 times on October 1 and nearly 7,500 times on October 15, trending in the UK both days.

Support for the October 15 strike came from many countries, including Britain, the United States, Canada, Brazil, Germany, France, Poland, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand. The *World Socialist Web Site* supported the strike and again set up a Global Online Picket Line, posting many social media videos and tweets.

WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North posted the following video summarizing the significance of the second global school strike:

To participate in the strike, parents were asked to shoot a video or post a photo online of their child's uniform hanging up, along with the hashtags #October15th, #SittingDucks, and #SchoolStrike2021.

In a video released ahead of the strike Thursday evening, Lisa asked, "Why support the school strike tomorrow? Easy. Another child in the UK, in Wales, has lost their life in the last 24 hours due to COVID. And that is enough reason to say: make our schools safe, and if they cannot be made safe, you shut them until they can."

In his video statement, Socialist Equality Party (UK) Assistant National Secretary **Thomas Scripps** said the school strikes "indicate the potential for a mass movement which could implement a scientific policy for the saving of health and lives, rather than profits. That potential is suppressed by the trade unions and, in the UK, the Labour Party. But it can be unleashed, if given the right political perspective."

Scripps called for all opponents of "herd immunity" to attend the October 24 *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) global online event, "How to End the Pandemic: The Case for Eradication."

Many SafeEdForAll supporters posted messages throughout the day.

Lucy Garrard, a parent and mental health worker, stated in her video, "Our children cannot be placed in this position. ... Schools are carrying on just as normal like the COVID cases are not rising. Yes, they are rising. ... This situation is torture for parents—we worry day and night—it cannot go on. ... We are sending our children into school, and they are just waiting to catch COVID."

Parent **Leah** posted a photo of two school uniforms hanging up with the comment, "When attendance means infection, what choices must we make?"

Celi tweeted, "My kids will not be part of this government's dangerous #HerdImmunity experiment. With evidence proving that even mild infections can cause long-term brain and organ damage, we need to #MakeSchoolsSafe now with all scientifically recognised mitigations in place."

Tall Paul tweeted, "Schools are still without basic measures that could help prevent unnecessary infections, with at least 53,000 children suffering Long Covid, 11,000 longer than a year, 8,000 orphaned." In reference to the number of children killed by COVID in the UK so far, he added, "#Uk95 Dead #Child."

Parent **Lisa** commented, "So the latest [Imperial College London] React study confirms that Covid prevalence is currently over 3x higher in households WITH children vs those without. Any idea why?"

Louise posted a photo of children's exercise books and pencils on the table at home and tweeted, "Our children's primary school had alpha rip thru when Gov locked down too late & now suffering Delta when Gov didn't bother to mitigate. #ToriesUnfitToGovern
#ChildrenDeserveProtectionFromInfection
#AirFiltersAllSchoolsNOW."

The fact that homicidal pandemic policies have been pursued by governments internationally regardless of political colouration was highlighted in the tweet of a Turkish student, “**Gt var**” who posted, “My little cousin (14) died of Covid, who had no chronic illness and had been vaccinated. How many more people should die?”

David O’Sullivan, a London bus worker who was victimised for fighting for protection against COVID at work, said that sending children into unsafe schools “is the criminal policy not only the Tories … but also the Labour Party, first under Jeremy Corbyn and continued with Kier Starmer. … The policy of the Labour Party was one of ‘constructive criticism.’ What this actually meant was full support for ‘herd immunity,’ opposing lockdowns and demanding children going back into school, ‘no ifs, no buts.’”

He added, “Speaking from bitter personal experience, none of this could have been done without the collaboration of the trade unions.”

Veteran Trotskyist **Helen Halyard** commented in her video, “While politicians everywhere claim to be concerned with children’s mental health, the real purpose of sending kids back to school is to send their parents back to work producing profits for a tiny layer of billionaires. This barbaric experiment, which is being carried out by the ruling elites all over the world, must be opposed through globally-coordinated struggles of the working class like today’s school strike.”

Tom Peters, a leading member of the Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand, spoke on the ending of the elimination strategy by the Labour Party government headed by Jacinda Ardern. He stated, “Scientists and public health experts have expressed shock and alarm at this, and there are warnings that hospitals are soon going to be unable to cope with the number of patients.”

Peters added, “These developments demonstrate that the working class can’t rely on any capitalist party or government, or the trade unions which support them, to treat this pandemic as a public health crisis. They all support the demands of big business for workplaces and schools to reopen, no matter how many people have to die because of this.”

German bus driver **Andy Niklaus** posted a video in support of the global school strike, saying, “The numbers of infected in Britain, Europe, America, Brazil, Australia are a disaster. Every single one is too much. … It’s time for the working class to act worldwide.”

Veteran Trotskyist **Vicky Short** explained in her video, “I have just heard that my grandson, who is just 12, has tested positive for COVID and is now in bed with a sore throat and high temperature. The school sent him an appointment to have a vaccine on the 19th of November, this is more than a month away. This is outrageous. We should not tolerate it.”

Tomas Castanheira, a leading member of the Socialist Equality Group in Brazil, tweeted, “No more children dead or with Long COVID. Stop the pandemic right now!”

Alexandra Greene, a cleaner at a campus in British Columbia, Canada, and a member of the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee, tweeted, “Joining the online picket line because children here in Canada are #SittingDucks thanks to reopening policies across the country. We need to #EradicateCOVID, not mitigate, not reconcile ourselves w/ mass illness & death.”

Parent, retired school teacher and WSWs writer **Margot Miller** commented, “We are not prepared to sacrifice our children and their future health for the immense profits of the few.”

S.Evans747, a teacher of History, Art and Archaeology, said, “It is the responsibility of all to protect and care for the children and keep our teaching colleagues safe.”

Niluka, a Sri Lankan teacher, mother of three children and a member of the Teachers-Parents-Students Safety Committee of Sri Lanka, said in a video, “The government is moving to reopen schools on October 21. It would be a criminal decision as children are going to be exposed to the virus.”

Martin, a kindergarten teacher in Germany said, “While those in power trample on any scientific recommendations, we educators, in alliance with parents and students, must rely on them. I am therefore very much looking forward to the international webinar on October 24 with Lisa Diaz and David North and a host of principled scientists such as Dr. Eric Feigl-Ding and Dr. Małgorzata Gasperowicz. We workers need science, but science also needs the working class to stop the pandemic!”

All those who participated in the school strike should make plans to 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 (IWA-RFC). Register today, invite your coworkers, family and friends, and share the event widely on social media!



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