

# Third global school strike against dangerous reopenings draws support from thousands worldwide

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The third global school strike was held yesterday to fight against the deadly reopening of schools as the COVID-19 pandemic rages. Two previous strikes were held on October 15 and October 1, called by Lisa Diaz, a parent of two children from Wigan, England.

The strikes won international support, with parents, educators, workers and students sending messages of support on social media, including short videos, from the UK, United States, France, Germany, Australia and other countries. The main hashtag for the event, #SchoolStrike2021, has been tweeted nearly 50,000 times in the past month since Lisa first announced the October 1 school strike.

The *World Socialist Web Site* supported the global online picket line, compiling messages of support throughout the day.

Prior to the latest action, Lisa announced that the school strike will take place every Friday. In a video posted Thursday evening and viewed over 17,000 times, she said, “I support the school strike tomorrow because the unfettered and dangerous reopening of schools is not only infecting 20,000 children each day with a novel virus of which we’ve no idea of the long-term consequences, it’s fuelling in the pandemic.

“We’ve had 52,000 new cases today of COVID. The Health Secretary Sajid Javid said that hospitals are okay. Well, they’re not okay... We’ve got the worst COVID rates in the world. The UK accounted for 20 percent of the world’s COVID yesterday. It’s an absolute farce. It’s disgusting.”

Speaking from the United States, Socialist Equality Party (US) National Secretary Joseph Kishore commented at the end of the school strike, “Today’s school strike again reflects a growing movement of workers throughout the world to demand an end to the deadly reopening of schools and for a policy to finally put an end to the pandemic.”

Kishore added, “The demands of workers, however, are

falling on deaf ears. Governments, far from implementing measures to save lives, are reversing whatever measures had previously been in place. The universal line is that workers must learn to ‘live with the virus.’”

Noting the growth of the class struggle in the US and globally, both in response to the pandemic and the extreme exploitation of capitalism, Kishore urged all those participating in the global school strike to attend the upcoming webinar this Sunday hosted by the WSWS and International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, titled “How to end the pandemic.”

The latest strike took place as the UK recorded another 49,298 COVID-19 cases and 180 deaths Friday. In the last week, Britain has recorded 324,483 new cases, a rise of almost 20 percent on the previous week. The Office for National Statistics reported that one in 55 people had COVID-19 in England last week. In Wales, it was one in 45, Scotland one in 90, and in Northern Ireland it was one in 130.

The surge of COVID-19 is being propelled by the millions of unprotected children in schools who returned to classrooms in August and September. The ONS found that the highest rate of infection was among secondary school-aged children. Among 11 to 16 year olds, the infection rate was 7.8 percent.

Among those supporting the strike was Malcolm Bray, a former miner who fought in the yearlong 1984–85 miners’ strike against Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government. In his video, Malcolm said, “As a former miner who went through the 84–85 strike, I have some experience standing up to vindictive governments... I fear for the safety of my own grandchildren and other parents’ children... This is why I fully support the brave and courageous efforts waged by Lisa Diaz and the call for school strike action. The government has shown complete indifference in pursuing its dangerous and criminal herd immunity perspective.”

Malcolm also called on those involved in the school strike

to attend this Sunday's WSWs webinar, stating, "None of these questions can or will be addressed by parties like the Labour Party and trade unions. The webinar is an independent response to these outmoded organisations. The time to act on this is now. Join Lisa Diaz, the WSWs and the webinar on October 24."

Charlie, a father of three, said in his video, "My family and I will be taking part in the school strike today. Our children are sitting ducks. I have a CV Brittle Type 1 diabetic son who is only 10 years old and too young for a vaccine.

"My family is currently being threatened with fines and prosecution by my eldest son's secondary school... Our children are sitting ducks. Enough is enough. Children are dying, children are being hospitalized, children are suffering from Long COVID. Schools are not safe, our children are not safe and my children will not be returning to school until they are vaccinated and schools are adequately mitigated like many others across the world. Enough is enough."

Tall Paul, a supporter of SafeEdforAll, tweeted, "Another 19,181 confirmed positives in under 19s accounting for 43.2% of today's total 43,363 cases in England. It's clear schools are unsafe & driving transmission into older age groups."

Mother Sally Bourliakas tweeted, "Make our voices heard. We will not sit in silence as children & school staff face more harm."

SafeEdforAll supporter Lucy Garrard, a National Health Service worker, posted a message along with her video reading, "Children are getting ill and dying. The NHS is overwhelmed."

Also speaking from the US was WSWs writer Evan Blake, who commented, "The fact that these strikes have been organized globally, and independently of the trade unions and political parties which have enforced the reopening of schools, gives them tremendous strength."

Calling on school strike participants to join Sunday's meeting, Blake stated, "In order for the working class to protect children, stop the pandemic and save millions of lives worldwide, we must be armed with a scientific understanding of COVID-19 and the measures necessary to stop viral transmission once and for all." He added, "The event will provide a comprehensive overview of the state of the pandemic, and make clear how the virus spreads, its impact on children and adults, the role that schools play in spreading COVID, and what measures must be taken for the global elimination of COVID-19 in every country."

James, an educator in Michigan, stated in his video, "The school conditions in Michigan are horrible. Two weeks ago, there were over 375 children under the age of 12 years old infected each day with COVID-19, while hospitalizations

have doubled from a month ago. It's not safe to go back into the building, even if we have mitigation measures."

Andy Thompson, a member of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Chicago, commented, "By putting forward a scientific program and plan, and by mobilizing the world working class to make it happen, there's nothing we can't achieve. Whether it's defeating COVID and eliminating it from the population, or other issues such as climate change, ending wars, and ending poverty and inequality, these are all things we can achieve. But we must put forward a plan to do it and mobilize the working class."

Several German students registered their support. Tamino said, "Like many others around the world, I support the third school strike for safe education. Even though there has been a positive Covid case in our class, classes are continuing at full capacity. In Germany last week, the number of infections exploded with a 7-day incidence increase from 66 to 86."

Florian said, "The elimination of the virus is never talked about in the media, even though it would save many thousands of lives. Together with scientists, students and workers must now fight for the global elimination of the virus."

Jane, an unpaid carer in Edinburgh, tweeted, "I support the global parent strike on October 22 because the infection rates in Britain are some of the worst in Europe. Governments publish death statistics for COVID, but none publishes 'long COVID' statistics. Neurological damage from post-viral illness can last a lifetime. Children can and do die from COVID, but politicians never mention the many more who will suffer with 'long COVID'... No one is fit to hold a seat in government who decides to condemn a significant percentage of children to long-term and potentially life-long suffering through the living hell of post-viral illness."

The WSWs urges all of our readers and supporters to register and attend Sunday's meeting, which will arm the working class with a scientific understanding of the pandemic and what measures must be taken to stop the spread of COVID-19 worldwide. Invite your coworkers, family and friends to attend, and share the event widely on social media.



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