

UK: “Much loved” teacher, Nick Stone, dies of COVID-19

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Nick Stone, described by those who knew him as a “much-loved” and “dedicated” teacher, died from COVID on January 2.

Nick, 55, taught modern languages at City of Norwich School (CNS) for more than 30 years. His sister, Helen Pentelow, said her brother became unwell on December 13 and was taken to James Paget Hospital, Gorleston, on December 20. Diagnosed with COVID, he was admitted to intensive care and placed on a ventilator but died a few days later.

Helen described her brother as someone who “lived and breathed CNS.”

Tributes poured in. CNS head teacher Jo Philpott said staff, students and parents were “deeply saddened by the passing of a highly respected and much-loved teacher, colleague and friend.”

Nick was the longest serving teacher at CNS. Many took to social media to pass on their memories of him as a “wonderful teacher” with a “great sense of humour.”

Nick, who had diabetes, was doubled jabbed and waiting to get his booster when he was taken ill. It is reported that he had no obvious COVID symptoms but was initially stricken by what he thought was a stomach bug. Days later he was admitted to intensive care with COVID-19 and died in hospital soon after.

Helen said that the “day before he was put on a ventilator he was asking when he could go back to work. He was ringing us all from intensive care saying how wonderful the staff had been and was telling us he wanted to make a donation to the ward. He was so positive.

“He was double jabbed and planned on getting his booster but was already in hospital before the appointment.

“It happened so quickly. He had pneumonia, kidney failure, heart failure, a collapsed lung, the whole works.

“Anyone who thinks that this virus doesn’t exist just needs to look at the people who are dying. He had

diabetes but he was double jabbed and was young and healthy.”

The Omicron variant of COVID-19 was first reported by South Africa to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on November 24. Two days later, the WHO designated it a “variant of concern”. But the Johnson government, in keeping with capitalist governments across the globe, dismissed any concerns.

Continuing their policy of herd immunity for the deliberate mass infection of the population, they insisted schools and workplaces remain open. Having abandoned all mitigation measures, including social distancing and face masks, and relying on vaccination alone, the UK was still recording more than 45,000 new infections a day from Delta in October and more than 800 deaths in a single week. Globally, the official death toll stood at almost five million, although measured by excess deaths, it was already at 10 million.

This was legitimised through a well-funded campaign of fake news and disinformation aimed at normalising mass death. Many of those involved have links to the Great Barrington Declaration (GBD), an international proposal in defence of herd immunity written and signed at the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER) in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, on October 4, 2020.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with GBD co-author Professor Sunetra Gupta, along with Oxford University’s Carl Heneghan and Sweden’s state epidemiologist Anders Tegnell, in September 2020, just before he declared “no more f**king lockdowns, let the bodies pile high in their thousands.”

Advocates of herd immunity have concentrated their efforts on ensuring schools remain open at all costs, to force parents into unsafe workplaces. Under the cynical and lying claim that this was necessary to protect children’s education, these right-wing forces who have systematically defunded and privatised education while

throwing millions of children into poverty, have vetoed any public health measures in schools.

Gloating over their success, Conservative MPs Andrew Lewer and Miriam Cates tweeted a picture from their meeting with Education Minister Nadhim Zahawi, also in October. Lewer and Cates are supporters of the “parents’ lobby” group UsforThem, which has ties to the GBD and its numerous spin-offs. Their meeting was political choreography to justify ending wearing face masks in schools, supposedly as a response to “parental concerns” at their impact on children. Real and widespread parental concerns over allowing COVID to run rampant in schools were dismissed.

That the fascistic proponents of mass death have been able to hold sway despite mass opposition to this policy is due to the Labour Party and the trade unions. It was Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer who, in August 2020, told Johnson he had a “moral responsibility” to ensure schools were open, insisting, “I don’t just want all children back at school next month, I expect them back at school. No ifs, no buts, no equivocation.”

The teachers’ unions have enforced this policy, herding thousands of their members into COVID infested schools. Their mantra is that nothing must “disrupt” in-person education, even if it results in the mass infection, long-term illness and even deaths of education workers, students and their families.

With the emergence of Omicron, schools are a danger zone. It was not until mid-December that Johnson admitted the new variant posed any real and present danger. But while calling on people to take up their vaccine boosters, the government, media, Labour and the trade unions have maintained that it is “mild.”

By the time the government said it would ramp up its booster campaign, Nick Stone was already ill.

Still, in its latest statement, the National Education Union (NEU) claims the situation in schools is “very different” to the start of the pandemic due to vaccinations. Nick’s death proves that is a lie. Being double jabbed was not enough to protect him.

At least 570 education workers have lost their lives to COVID-19 in the UK to date. The infection rate amongst children under the age of 17, most of whom have not received any jab at all and are not entitled to, has spiralled. So too have deaths.

The total number of child hospitalisations since the beginning of the pandemic is 14,533, and 130 children have died. In the seven days to the weekend, 867 children were hospitalised in England alone with COVID, the

worse figure in almost three years.

More than 77,000 children are suffering Long COVID symptoms, while teachers and educators account for the fastest increase in Long COVID among professional workers, with the second-highest rate of the condition overall at 3.1 percent, just behind the 3.4 percent of social care sector staff.

A letter to the Secretary of State from the NEU Councillors and Governors continues to speak of the “disruption” to schools solely in terms of keeping schools open, without any reference to the toll on health and lives.

Working people must take matters into their own hands, in a rebellion against the entire political establishment and the unions.

The Educators Rank-and-File-Safety Committee (UK) has called an emergency meeting, “Close All Schools To Stop the Spread of Omicron!” for Tuesday, January 11 at 7 p.m. to discuss a fightback against the rampant spread of COVID-19 throughout schools.

Its January 3 statement, “No Return to Schools! Children’s Lives Matter!”, insists, “Schools must shut in favour of online learning, as part of an urgent programme of lockdowns and other public health measures to eliminate the virus.”

Calling for the meeting, the Committee wrote, “The situation facing teachers and support staff in the UK and internationally is intolerable, with complete disregard shown for the health and lives of children. This has to stop now! We urge teachers and school staff to take matters into their own hands. Mass walkouts from unsafe schools must be organised! Independent rank-and-file committees must be formed to lead this fight and impose the necessary restrictions to bring the virus under control.”

We urge all teachers, parents and students to register now for this important event.



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