

The Social School Strike Game (Adapted from the Social Strike Game by Red Plenty Games by NEU Bristol)

Your team represents the NEU and other activist groups in a large market town in a typical area of England on the outskirts of a major metropolitan city. In your town, there is a large secondary school with a 6th form, two primaries and a special school with provision for SEN and behaviour issues. They are all currently 'Good' and are run under the Local Educational Authority.

After devastating the global economy with an ongoing recession and being responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths, Covid-19 has appeared to show signs of a slowdown. The Conservative majority government has decided that it is time to continue with 'business as usual' in September. Many are not happy with this and are still self-isolating, working from home and small but significant numbers of kids are being home-schooled until the WHO gives the all-clear and a routine vaccine and tests are available. The pubs, restaurants and cafes that didn't go under are open but no events over 2,000 people are allowed to take place.

The local council has a small Conservative majority, some Labour and Green and a Lib Dem. Elections are coming up in the spring, delayed from last May. Lots of enthusiastic, young candidates are running, hoping to make significant changes in the balance of power locally. The incumbent councillors are widely seen to be lazy and to not have handled the Corona crisis well.

The national government is struggling to define itself. It is riven by infighting over ideology in response to the pandemic and public spending. Some factions want austerity on steroids and borders so tight that not even a tiny virus could squeeze through, let alone an economic migrant. Other factions just want to do whatever they need to do to be popular in their constituencies, they want to flash the cash and their libertarian sides want to rescind the emergency powers bill as quickly as possible.

Depending on how possible or likely your action is to succeed, the DM will assign you a modifier from -2 to +2. So, if the action is dangerous or illegal, you'd get -2 but if it's well within the scope of what that organisation is good at, you'd get a +2.

See reverse for **resources**.

Resources:

Just under 100 **NEU members in a secondary school**. Teachers, LSAs and support staff. Three trained reps. Member's meetings were well attended, and a successful strike last year saw a huge improvement and a complete change in management personnel and style, however, issues are bubbling away under the surface and meetings are significantly less well attended than they were. The union group has links with the small but passionate student Eco team.

About 10 **NEU members in one of the primary schools** with one untrained rep. Around 5 members in the other with no rep. The primary school with the rep returned a high turnout in the SATs ballot. At both schools the parents have good, close relationships with teachers.

The Special School has just rapidly increased membership to about 10 teachers and 10 LSAs and has a recently trained rep.

Local NEU district committee. Functioning and with large financial reserves, but many officer roles are unfilled, and it struggles to make quorum. Is also a little pale, male and stale.

All the above schools have large and well attended **PTAs** which are focussed on raising money for the schools through car boot sales, raffles etc. This is all organised through Facebook and email lists. When teachers speak to individual parents, they agree with the union's aims on funding etc, but the general consensus is to not make things 'political'.

The People's Assembly Against Austerity– A loose affiliation of activist groups nearby. Many engaged and experienced individuals working on a variety of projects. Good links with various other unions, interest groups, fringe left parties and the sympathetic parts of certain political parties (e.g., SWP, NHS activists, Stand Up to Racism, Hope not Hate Disability rights, Feminist and LGBTQ+ groups, anything you can think of basically)

Extinction Rebellion – Locally, they have staged many eye-catching protests on environmental issues. They have many activists, thriving fb groups and are diverse in terms of age, gender balance and belief system. Very few are people of colour or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

National Food Service – A volunteer-run group which pre-existed the pandemic but rose to prominence in serving free nutritious food to deprived households and building community solidarity and resilience. They bring together other community food projects and are currently based in an anarchist cafe.

Left wing media organisations – Some activists locally have links with growing leftie podcasts which make snappy vids on certain topics as well as doing longer interviews. Some of the presenters are called upon to give left-wing takes in the national press. There is also a cooperatively owned local newspaper which does investigative reporting on local issues.

Covid-19 Mutual Aid groups – Largely autonomous networks of mutual aid which started during the pandemic. Most people on most streets are part of one and many people in the country have either received or given aid during the 2 months of various degrees of lockdown.

The community union **ACORN** are active in the area in campaigning against evictions, bailiffs and unfair practices by letting agencies and landlords, as well as a campaign to bring regional buses back into public ownership. They also provide community organising training to empower working class people to affect change in their communities. They have coordinated some but by no means all of the mutual aid groups.

Round 1: Autumn

The government instruct schools to prepare for summer exams in 2021 as normal. Ofsted are to pick up where they left off with inspections, performance related pay to resume, all academy takeovers are back on.

Disruption to the worldwide supply chain over the last few months has led to some food shortages and price increases. Changes to immigration laws have meant that British fruit and veg rots in the fields.

Round 2: Winter

School leaders are told by the Local Council that the funding which had been promised for new builds by the incoming Conservative government has had to go back to review due to the extra expenses caused by the Covid-19 recession.

Flooding devastates a local housing estate. Many students and some staff are affected. Some local politicians place blame on an increase in the local population due to settling travellers and immigration which they claim has forced them to build new estates on more vulnerable land.

Round 3: Spring

After a few months of delay, the Brexit transition processes have all been completed. The government announce a Festival of Britain Celebration and a bank holiday (just for this year) and encourage schools and communities to hold street parties and events. People who are cynical about proceedings are decried by the press as unpatriotic spoilsports. Local councillors enthusiastically jump on this as the rescheduled council elections are taking place soon.

The results of the Corona Crisis inquiry come out. It's quite clear that the government was underprepared, acted poorly, ignored the best medical advice for political reasons and tried to cover up and obscure their own culpability. It's not really hitting the headlines like you would think.

Round 4: Summer

Iran suffered more than most countries under Covid-19 due to harsh economic sanctions. Significant numbers of refugees have attempted to seek help in the UK through both legal and non-legal routes. Iranian refugees join the other increased numbers of commonwealth migrants who have taken up the offer of moving to a 'Global Brexit Britain'. The government had to increase Immigration rights to many countries in exchange for trade deals. The press report public services as being pushed to breaking point.

In a fumbled attempt to relax the emergency power laws and draw a line under the Covid crisis, the government accidentally mutes the laws on using weaponry for personal protection. This quickly leads to a situation where British style 'Minutemen' (the vigilantes who patrol the Southern US border) on the Southeast coast kill a boatload of refugees from Europe in the name of protecting the British Isles. The Prime Minister is asked to roundly condemn the actions, but he is currently missing, and the country awaits a response.

Ground rules and advice (no particular order)

1. If you want to be in a team with someone, write their name in the chat next to yours.
2. I'm the dungeon master. I'm in charge, but I may be persuadable if you are persuasive enough.
3. Someone from each team needs a set of dice (2d6). Preferably, they will have a way of showing the dice to the camera so they could move their camera to see the result without having to touch them.
4. You can put any questions in the chat to cut down on noise. You can still volunteer to speak by putting your hand up (icon or actual hand) but you know how these big calls can get.
5. If you cheat, the Tories win. Everything. Forever.

6. Obviously, community groups and workplaces exist other than those on the resources list, the left just doesn't have as much of an 'in' with them. So, your action could be "to have x approach the Church/Mosque/Cricket club/allotment association and ask them to y"

7. Make sure that you include views from a variety of your teammates and don't leave anyone out. You could vote or go for consensus or whatever. Just make sure that it's not the same people suggesting everything each time.

8. Vary who delivers the action each time. Let's all practice our political communication skills.