

SCHOOL STREETS

A CAMPAIGNING GUIDE

WHY SCHOOL STREETS?

- School Streets [reduce traffic](#), and therefore pollution.
- They create a safer environment for those travelling to school.
- They encourage active travel, which improves health and [can improve](#) learning outcomes.
- School Streets delivered with bollards can prevent crowding at the school gates. People can safely spill over into the road (social distancing).

WHAT ARE SCHOOL STREETS? AND HOW DO THEY WORK?

- School Streets are temporary road closures around schools at drop-off and pick-up times, on weekdays in term-time. Only pedestrians and cyclists are allowed to use the roads at these times.
- Residents, local businesses, and blue badge holders are able to apply for exemptions.
- Signs are put up to inform drivers of the road closures.
- Enforcement is by physical bollards, usually manned by school staff, or automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL STREETS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Covid-19 provides us with major challenges in how we get around. Reduced public transport, narrow pavements and a lack of safe cycle lanes may mean more people decide to drive, causing extra congestion.
- A School Street can enable social distancing, and help to ensure that everyone who can travel actively to school, does so.
- The Government's new statutory [guidance](#) is encouraging their implementation.
- In London, TfL published their Streetspace London [guidance](#) in May 2020, which suggests all primary schools across London should be considered for School Streets.

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Our School Street has changed the whole experience of taking my children to and from school. From grim, polluted, motor traffic hell to fun, safe, quiet walk or cycle in clean air.

PARENT

”



HOW TO CAMPAIGN FOR A SCHOOL STREET

- Mobilise parents to create a working group. Talk to your PTA and ask them to help raise awareness of the scheme amongst other parents, and to allay any concerns. Understand any opposition, and try to find solutions for the issues raised – knowing your community and bringing them on board with you will help make the scheme a success.
- Talk to your headteacher and governors. Ask your headteacher to approach the council about the scheme.
- Contact local residents – explain how they might benefit from a School Street, for example, because there will be less traffic in the road at peak times.
- Contact your local councillors and the relevant portfolio holder/cabinet member for Environment/Transport/Clean Air in your borough, stating your support for a School Street.

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We have found it to be a very positive change for our school community. The air is cleaner, there are no near misses with cars and children, and the atmosphere is more positive.

HEADTEACHER

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MAIN ROAD MEASURES

Not all schools are suitable for School Streets. For those on main roads, [other measures](#) are needed to reduce traffic and therefore pollution at the school gate and in the school.

GENERAL TRAFFIC REDUCTION MEASURES:

- Protected cycle lanes (recently a lot of “pop-up” cycle lanes have been delivered across the country).
- Speed reductions eg 20mph (needs to be coupled with enforcement/traffic calming).
- More safe crossings.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

- Last resort (for more info contact mumsforlungs@gmail.com)
- Moving school entrances and playgrounds.
 - Green screens.
 - Air purification filters in classrooms.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q: ARE THERE FORMAL CRITERIA FOR THE SCHEME?

Councils say that they look first to the schools with road safety issues, and high air pollution levels. Some also say that schools with a good record of active travel in the school community, eg Gold TfL Stars/ Modeshift Stars ratings will be prioritised.

Q: MY COUNCIL IS ON BOARD, BUT MY HEADTEACHER ISN'T. WHAT CAN I DO?

Show them there's appetite. Create a working group of concerned parents, start a WhatsApp group and have as many conversations with people as you can, including the children, PTA and Governors. For information to help build your case, see our [flyer](#) and emergency school street [template letter](#). Get different supportive parents to approach them individually in person or by email. Then approach them for a meeting to discuss it further. You could also try to arrange a visit to a school with an existing School Street, (please join our [Facebook group](#) to see a constantly updated spreadsheet of existing and planned schemes across London), to show them how it works. It may also be worth showing them the [evidence of the links](#) between active travel and academic attainment. You could also try showing them this [video](#) from Hackney Cycling Campaign.

Q: MY HEADTEACHER IS AGAINST A SCHOOL STREET, AS THEY SAY THE TEACHERS NEED TO DRIVE?

This is not an uncommon reaction. School Street closures happen around drop-off and pick-up times. Many teachers will not be affected, as they will drive to school before and leave school after the School Street ends. Otherwise park & stride – arranging for teachers to park near but outside the School Street is usually feasible. And lastly it might be worth reminding the teachers that they too benefit from active travel to work, better air and more exercise.

Q: ARE SOME COUNCILS MORE SUPPORTIVE THAN OTHERS? WHAT DO I DO IF MINE ISN'T INTERESTED?

Yes, some councils have much more progressive council leaders and cabinet members for Environment. If yours is not, ask to meet them, be constructive, present the health evidence and ask them to escalate School Streets up their agenda. Don't give up! Ask other parents, friends and neighbours to email them as well. Contact different councillors, and other relevant cabinet members (eg health, education and transport). Visit them in their open hours to talk to them about it. You can also try contacting them via social media, many councillors are active on Twitter.

Q: WHAT'S THE AVERAGE COST OF A SCHOOL STREET (IN LONDON), AND HOW ARE THEY FUNDED?

The scheme is funded by your council, and the cost depends on what you use to block the street/enforce: bollards or cameras (cameras being more expensive). It can vary from about £5k-£40k, sometimes more.

Q: HOW ARE SCHOOL STREETS ENFORCED?

Either through the use of manual bollards, which would need to be moved out of the way for exempted vehicles to be allowed through, or by automatic number plate recognition cameras (ANPR).

Q: DO RESIDENTS DISLIKE THE IDEA OF THE SCHEME?

There have been concerns raised by local residents before schemes begin, but the evidence shows that once the scheme has begun, the opposition fades. See the Edinburgh Napier/Sustrans evidence review [here](#). We also know of School Streets where residents are very keen, as they can no longer stand the many cars or overcrowding in their road at drop-off and pick-up times.

Q: DO YOU FIND RESISTANCE FROM NEARBY STREETS WHO SAY THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE OF TRAFFIC, IDLING AND POLLUTION ON THEIR STREETS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF PEOPLE DRIVING AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE SCHOOL?

Yes, there can be resistance when the scheme is announced, and the perception that traffic displacement will cause issues. In practice, this is often found not to be the case, partly due to parents realising they didn't need to drive and beginning to walk, cycle or scoot to school as a result of the new School Street. Where it has caused issues, mitigation measures have been put in, eg Perth and Kinross council have put in a park and stride scheme to mitigate displacement (parents can park their cars eg on a supermarket car park and walk the last bit with their kids). This Sustrans/Edinburgh Napier University evidence [review](#) provides a lot of useful information on traffic displacement issues.

Q: HOW DO WE BRING PEOPLE ON BOARD WHO SAY THAT THIS WILL ADD TO PARENTS' WOES WHEN THEY'RE ALREADY UNABLE TO TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT OR HAVE NO TIME TO SPARE IN THE MORNINGS, OR HAVE TO DO MULTIPLE DROP OFFS?

These are very complex issues and we need to be respectful of the fact that everyone's situation is different. If someone has no alternative but to drive then that can be accommodated with walking or cycling buses, sharing pick-ups and drop offs, or setting up a park and stride scheme from a nearby location. It can help to show the evidence of the [effects of air pollution on children](#), and to think back to how busy the road outside your school was before lockdown. With reduced public transport, if everyone drives that could walk or cycle, there will be complete gridlock, and the roads could become (more) dangerous. Air pollution is a global public health crisis, and emissions can be [higher inside a car](#) than outside, so by not driving, you're improving not just your child's health but your own as well.

Q: MY SCHOOL IS ON A MAIN ROAD – CAN I HAVE A SCHOOL STREET?

Unfortunately that is unlikely. You will need measures to reduce traffic overall, which means calming the road, for instance using wider pavements, cycle lanes, losing parking spaces to make it less convenient to drive. Read more about main road measures in this Living Streets [blog](#).

Q: BUT I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?!

Get in touch with us mumsforlungs@gmail.com – we want to help you by email or on the phone!

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Hackney's [toolkit](#)
- Our [website](#) has our emergency template letter and our School Streets flyers on it
- Join our [Facebook group](#)
- Sustrans [website](#)
- Sustrans/Edinburgh Napier [evidence review](#)
- Friends of the Earth [briefing](#)
- School Streets Initiative [website](#)
- Living Streets [resources](#)

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