



Rochdale Borough Council

School Streets Guide



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A Guide to School Streets!

We are pleased that you are interested in implementing a school street outside your school. Implementing a scheme will bring many benefits to the children of your school and across our Borough.

This guidance has been developed by the Council's Public Health, Highways and Road Safety teams in collaboration with participating pilot schools. It is designed to support school staff considering setting up and implementing a School Street scheme.

Links to further useful resources are provided at the end of this document. At the time of preparing this local guidance in spring 2024, there is no national guidance from the Department for Transport published.

The introductory section of this guidance is intended to help you explain to your school community and neighbours why implementing a school street can help to reduce traffic congestion and traffic-related problems and the wider benefits a scheme can bring.

1. Introduction

A School Street is where vehicle access is restricted near to a school during the pick up and drop off period at the start and end of the school day. To many parents, driving children to school may seem the safest, easiest and quickest option however its results in a lot of vehicles at or near the entrances to schools, indiscriminate parking, poor or even dangerous driving. These can include,, vehicles reversing and turning unsafely, hastily dropping children off at roadside, or even in the road, aggression between drivers, towards neighbours and school staff in front of children.

The desire to complete the whole journey by car causes a concentration of vehicles in the vicinity of the school increasing pollution in the local area and the risk it poses to peoples' health. Children and families also miss out on the opportunity to walk together and socialised with friends, for at least part of the journey.

These factors combine to create an unsafe environment for children and a potentially upsetting start or end to the school day. It can also make it more difficult for families who already walk, cycle or wheel to and from school.

The aim of a School Street is to help:

1. Reduce avoidable short car journeys
2. Prevent unsafe parking close to school
3. Reduce noise and the potential for arguments relating to traffic and parking reduce pollution around the school
4. Encourage more active form of travel such as walking, cycling, and wheeling to school
5. Create a safer and more pleasant journey to school



6. Give children a calm, safe and happy start to their school day.
7. School Streets can provide benefits for pupils, families, school staff, and for residents living near to the school.

Not everyone can make the whole school journey an active one every day, but reducing the traffic, and asking those who do need to drive to park safely a little further away, will help reduce pollution when a large number of children would otherwise be breathing it in.

A School Street restriction will not remove all traffic. Some vehicles e.g. those belonging to residents and businesses within the School Street will be given a permit to enter and leave the area and some special groups of vehicles such as emergency vehicles, visiting carers are exempt. In practice people within the zone will probably try to avoid moving their vehicle at the restricted times. So, even though the scheme won't eliminate all traffic, the scheme should help to make the area feel quieter, safer and more pleasant for everyone. It will be important to plan how and when to talk to your pupils and their families about the scheme. Key messages to communicate include:

- Why a school street is needed and the benefits
- Why a school street is wanted by the children of your school
- The benefits of switching all or part of their journey to an active one
- That parking a bit further away and walking the last bit to school will make a difference
- That walking on some days, even on one day a week, can help

All of this can all add up to health, fitness and educational benefits for the children - your pupils, and for the families, school staff and local residents.

1.1 Benefits of School Streets

Though we're all at risk of developing health conditions as a result of poor air, children are particularly vulnerable as they are still developing, and breathe in more air than adults, relative to their size. Making the journey to school an active one can help keep children fit and healthy and means they arrive at school feeling more alert and ready to learn. Nearly 6 in 10 children in Borough of Rochdale are not getting the hour (60 minutes) of physical activity a day they need to stay healthy. Restricting and reducing traffic around a school can help to encourage more walking, cycling and scooting to school. Physical activity has a positive impact on mental wellbeing, boosting self-esteem and lowering stress for all of us. Building a short walk into the journeys we have to make every day can help people to fit physical activity into their lives. Walking cycling and scooting are simple ways to stay healthy, which most children enjoy doing. Just half an hour of walking a day can increase heart and lung fitness, and also reduce the risk of developing many health conditions. Cycling in towns using safe cycle lanes can even be faster than using public transport or driving a private vehicle. People need to feel safe in order to take more active journeys to school. Though School Streets cannot completely eliminate traffic, established schemes have shown that they can help to:

- Reduce congestion and vehicles around the school
- Reduce air and noise pollution close to school with fewer engines running
- Reduce inconsiderate parking and dangerous manoeuvres such as reversing in small spaces
- Enable children and their parents/carers to have the confidence to walk to school safely



1.2 Process of Establishing a School Street

To implement the School Street, the council will put an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) in place. This is a legal order which will prohibit traffic at drop of and pick up times, during term time. This creates a School Street (see map). The Council's Highways team will install 'Restricted Access' Signs with details of the timings at each edge of the School Street zone. As the restrictions are designed to make a safer, calmer environment for children, they will only be in place during term time and at times linked to the start and end of the school day.

The access restrictions imposed using the ETRO can be modified within the first six months of the order as a result of feedback and monitoring. ETROs have a maximum lifespan of 18 months. A decision will be needed before the order comes to an end as to whether to make the order permanent, this will be a conversation between the Council and your School.

1.3 Signage

To ensure that the School Street is legal and operational, formal signage - which has to be compliant with the Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) - is required. The Council's Highways team will install these signs with details of the timings of the restrictions at each entry point to the scheme. An example of the signs that the Highways team will install is shown below.

Entry



Exit



(Example only). Appropriate timings for your school will be agreed with you Schools taking part in School Streets will also be provided by the Council with portable 'Road Closed' signs and traffic cones. These are for stewards to place out at each entry point to the School Street area at the start of the timed traffic restriction. Training will be provided so that stewards are aware of how signs should be located, the school will also need to consider how and where to store these portable signs. Placing out the 'Road Closed' signs is one example of the commitment needed from the school.

As well as the formal signage, informal posters, banners or leaflets can also help communicate the importance and benefits of the school street to children, families and the local community- you may wish to get pupils and the school community involved in designing these resources.

Any designs or messages should be clear, simple and visual to ensure they can be easily understood by a wide range of people, including those who are visually impaired or whose first language is not English. See British Standards Institution guidance BS 8300-2018 for further information on accessible signage.

Any informal signage, posters or banners that you wish to develop or buy should be displayed on school premises, for example, attached to school fences/gates/railings, and if placed on private land, only with the landowner's permission (written permission is advisable). In general, informal signage should not be placed on the highway (which includes the pavement) as this would need to be compliant with legal restrictions. Please contact us on highways@rochdale.gov.uk if you are unsure about this.

The Council's Road Safety team have a selection of resources and school railing banners aimed at helping schools tackle school gate parking issues. These resources are not specific to School Streets but Schools taking part in the initiative may find them useful. Additionally, if schools are interested in getting pupils to designing their own signs or banners – to be placed on school railings - the road safety team also have guidance about how to do this.

For more information on School Gate Parking banners and resources and/or advice on designing your own railing banners or signs please contact highways@rochdale.gov.uk

1.4 Wider support and enforcement

The success of schemes will depend on a range of factors. School streets tend to be successful when children, families and the wider community understand the benefits. This helps to build wider support for the scheme. Even though the school cannot legally enforce the School Street, you have a critical and ongoing role to play in regularly communicating its purpose and benefits to pupils, families and the wider school community. Visible support from respected community and faith organisations and individuals can also play a vital role.

The School Street is implemented using a legal traffic order. This means that drivers who enter the School Street (without a permit) during the times when access is restricted are committing a 'moving traffic' offence. However, it is only the Police who have the power to enforce this traffic offence. The school (including staff, volunteer stewards or the wider community) is not expected and should not attempt to enforce its School Street. Realistically, given reduced resources in most services, legal enforcement by the police can only ever be intermittent. For example, if issues start to build up, as with enforcing no parking on the 'yellow zig-zags' outside schools, these should be reported, working with your existing contacts in the police or neighbourhood services.

The school's commitment to putting out the portable 'Road closed' signs and cones as often as possible is also crucial to the success of the scheme. Having a steward or a member of staff standing at the closure point(s), meeting and greeting children and families and thanking those who comply really helps to establish the scheme and maintain its impact.



1.5 Stewarding the scheme

Stewards can be a combination staff and volunteers e.g. parents/ carers, residents or members of local community projects or faith settings.

School Street Stewards, whether school staff or volunteers, are asked to:

- ✓ Set out the portable 'Road Closed' signs as often as possible;
- ✓ Politely remind parents/carers about the School Street and point / direct people to the displayed signs as necessary;
- ✓ Talk positively about the scheme and its wider benefits and encourage people to comply.

Stewards should not engage with someone who is being aggressive. No one should physically try to confront a driver or block a vehicle if they insist on entering, but should alert people to the danger by shouting or using a whistle if available.

Any complaints from parents and the wider community that the school cannot or does not wish to address should be forwarded to highways@rochdale.gov.uk

The commitment of volunteer stewards on long term projects can be difficult to maintain.

Suggestions to encourage and enable stewarding of the scheme can be found below:

- A member of school staff needs to be the lead role (as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding) for example someone who usually or frequently does meet & greet and end of day farewell at the school gate. This can be a pivotal role in liaising between the volunteers, local authority and the school.
- Consider a recruitment plan and rota.
- Be clear with volunteers about the expectations.
- Use the communications provided in this toolkit to support recruitment of volunteers via social media posts, contacting local community groups for help, etc.
- To encourage more parents to become volunteer stewards, schools could consider access to activities within the school, such as a club or supervised activity.

1.6 Steward Training

An initial roadside training demonstration for school staff and stewards will be provided by the Council's Highways team followed, if wished, by a wider discussion. Train the trainer materials will then be provided to the school lead, to enable this to be repeated, and provided to any new stewards. The council will also provide a plan of the scheme and a risk assessment. These will be included in the appendices pack which accompanies this toolkit.

All stewards should undergo basic training to be clear on what is expected of the role, details about the scheme and how to manage conflict.

1.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Council will count traffic levels before the scheme starts and repeat these at least once, after a few weeks to measure change in vehicle levels.



There would be a survey for parents/carers and one for children, to better understand how they feel about the local area before and after the School Street scheme. The parent's survey can be completed online via a link sent via the school. The children's survey can both be done via a link, or in class before the launch of the scheme and will be repeated after 12 months of the scheme being in place. We will require your support to help disseminate any surveys/information to parents and children as part of monitoring and evaluation to better understand the impact of the scheme. Depending on resource, focus groups may also be offered to the school community.

Observations and feedback are also invited from members of the school community and public at any time, and can be made via higwhays@rochdale.gov.uk

1.9 Further available support

1.9.1 Identifying a Park and Stride area

Park and Stride arrangements have helped to support some schemes. This is an agreed place a few minutes' walk from school, where it is easy and free of charge for parents/carers to park and walk the last bit of the journey to school. For example, the car park of a business or community organisation that has capacity at the right times, and gives permission for it to be used in this way. The Council will work with schools to identify a suitable location and support the conversation.

1.9.2 Road Safety

The Council's Road Safety team can offer schools road safety sessions for all age groups, covering a range of relevant issues and supporting safer walking and cycling. These can be adapted and tailored to suit the needs of the school.

They also have resources available (banners, leaflets, letters, assembly plans and ideas for additional activities) to support schools when tackling the issue of parking at the start and end of the school day. The team may also be able to offer parent/carers talks or road safety stalls if there are particular road safety issues or behaviours that you are keen to address.

1.9.3 Living Well

The District's Living Well website has relevant campaigns, health offers, training and services

<https://mylivingwell.co.uk/https://mylivingwell.co.uk/campaigns/20-minute-movement/>

The Living Well Schools pages are a growing source of information and advice for schools:

<https://schools.mylivingwell.co.uk/>

Living Streets are a charity that have a number of initiatives to support schools, families and communities:

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk>

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school>



2. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) For Schools

2.1 Impact of the School Streets Scheme

Will the School Street cause more traffic on other roads?

Reducing traffic depends on how many people switch to walking, cycling & scooting. Over time a School Street will help to reduce traffic near to the school. People may still drive and park at the edge of the scheme or on nearby roads, dispersing traffic over a wider area rather driving and parking or dropping off as close as possible to the school gates. If you receive complaints please use the material in this guidance to explain why the scheme is needed, and direct anyone who is still unhappy to email the Council at Higwhays@rochdale.gov.uk

Where else can parents park? Nearby roads, Park and Stride locations use local knowledge to direct your school community to where else they can park for a short time e.g. if there is a local supermarket car park with free short-stay parking, or to your 'Park & Stride' location if you have agreed access to parking with a local business for example.

Please let us know if need support to identify potential 'Park & Stride' locations within walking distance of school, for households who have no other option but to drive. If more traffic does occur on other roads, will this be unsafe?

New School Streets are piloted for 12 – 18 months whilst the Council monitors, evaluates and reviews the impact before considering whether to make it permanent. Our first Pilot scheme in Bradford indicated that the traffic displacement did not cause road safety issues of any significance.

Are School Streets Permanent?

School Streets are usually introduced using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) for a trial period of 12-18 months to allow for monitoring, evaluation and feedback from the school community and local residents. Depending on whether it has had a positive impact, we will discuss with each school whether they wish to make their School Street permanent.

How will parents, carers and children with limited mobility be affected by the School Street?

Blue badge holders and families with Council-organised transport to school will be exempt from the School Street restrictions, but should still avoid parking on school 'keep clear' (yellow zigzag) markings. A School Street scheme should make it easier and safer for pupils, parents and carers with limited mobility to access the school, by reducing the volume of traffic close to school.

Are School Streets legal?

Yes. Councils frequently use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) or Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs) to control traffic in an area. These measures will only be in place during term time at the school's opening and closing times. Also, they will only be introduced if safe and possible to do so. A new School Street can take a few months for everyone to adjust to the changes, but the result when the school community supports it is a safer and healthier environment for everyone.



Does the Council consult with local residents and businesses?

Yes. The Council will consult with the school and with local residents and businesses when a new scheme is being considered. We will also work with our evaluation partners to gather further feedback from children, parents, residents and other local organisations e.g. businesses.

Can everyone in school help?

Yes! Everyone can help by:

- Undertaking any steward training and supporting to set up and/or steward the scheme.
- Promoting the benefits of School Streets to parents, children and your wider school community.
- Encouraging your local community to be volunteer stewards if
- Being mindful of the potential impact of the time and mode of staff journeys to and from school or in school time, and where you park, on children and parents who may observe this.
- Leading by example if and when possible. Perhaps switching part of your journey to an active mode - walking, cycling, using public transport to school or where possible.
- This will not be feasible for staff who need to transport books or equipment or live at distance, but may be possible for others, or on short work-related journeys.
- Supporting the monitoring processes such as enabling children to complete surveys in school time, circulating the link to the parent and staff survey, and providing feedback through evaluation.

Can I comment on School Streets?

Yes, we would love to hear from you. Please contact higwhays@rochdale.gov.uk

2.2. Setting out the School Street equipment on a school day

How does a School Street work?

To implement a School Street, the Council use an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) to legally restrict access to traffic at school drop off and pick up times. Official signs with the times of the restricted access are put up by the Council Highways Team at the entry points to each School Street Scheme. This creates a School Street and means that the street is closed to most vehicles at the busy start and end of the school day.

Portable 'Road Closed' signs and cones should be set out by staff or volunteers at the start, and removed at the end of the restricted time, to act as a further visual and physical reminder to drivers.

Permitted residents and businesses within the School Street zone as well as special groups (blue badge holders, children with Council transport, emergency vehicles) are allowed to enter or leave the School Street during the restricted time, and will be issued with a permit before the scheme starts. In practice you may find that people try to avoid moving through the restricted area when it is in operation.

What if the signs break or are vandalised?

Report any faulty signs as soon as possible to highways@rochdale.gov.uk where you can also request replacement signs.



Can we put up our own signs to promote School Streets?

Yes, schools can put up additional informal signs, banners or posters but these must not conflict with the information on the legally-mandated signs and must be on school property e.g. on fences/railings belonging to the school. They cannot be affixed to official Highways posts or lampposts. In the future, the Council hopes to make banners available to schools that can be personalised with the school logo.

Who will be allowed to pass through the School Street when it is operating?

Anyone who is walking, scooting, using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and cycles (including adapted cycles) will be allowed access to the area inside the zone. Residents will have been issued permits that give them permission to move their vehicle during the operating times displayed on the signs. Public transport including school transport and blue badge holders are exempt. Legitimate service and delivery vehicles who need to deliver within the zone are allowed to enter- but not just to pass through. Please refer to your appendices pack for more information and a list of which type of vehicle is exempt. Any permitted motorised vehicle or pedal cycle must travel at walking pace if passing through at a restricted time and should ideally try to use a different route.

Are school staff allowed access?

Yes, but they are encouraged to follow Schools Streets operational times to show support to the scheme.

If I am in an exempt category, how can I apply for a School Street permit?

The Council will contact households and other properties within the restricted area to apply for a permit. Anyone else who believes they should be exempt should contact highways@rochdale.gov.uk to apply for a permit.

What if I am already parked inside the School Street zone before the operating time?

Vehicles already parked in the roads before the times of operation will be able to remain there, but will not be allowed to exit until after the finish time of the School Street, unless they hold a permit. During the operating times all vehicles are required, and should be advised, to travel at walking pace.

Why aren't cameras or bollards being used to enforce the scheme?

The Council does not currently have the legislative powers to use cameras for enforcement of Experimental Traffic Orders. Whilst Bradford District may be given these powers in the future, it will then take time to bring a scheme into operation, meaning that it is not a quick fix. The high cost of cameras may still make this prohibitive, unless the powers are accompanied by funding, or funding can be secured.

Measures such as removable, semi-permanent or automated bollards have been trialled for other highway closure purposes. They have not proved to be sustainable due to the cost of long-term operational and maintenance requirements. As such these are not supported for use in School Street schemes in the Rochdale District.



Penalties issued by Greater Manchester Police/Parking Enforcement Officers during intermittent or reactive enforcement visits log of incidents that cause concern in respect of road safety or personal safety

Funding

The funding of this pilot and associated costs will be provided by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) from funds received for this purpose from the Department of Transport's Active Travel Fund programme.

The closure will be delivered through the application of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) under Sections 9 & 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

No financial contribution is required from the school. However, there is a requirement for the commitment of sufficient staff time to support this pilot either directly or through recruiting and managing adult volunteers e.g. parents, governors, residents or other community members.

Duration

A pilot School Streets scheme will run for up to 18 months. A review will be carried out with the school after the closure has been in place for a minimum period of six months. The review will consider whether the scheme and the associated ETRO should be made permanent, with further consultation and approval process to follow as required. Amendments to the timing and boundary of the scheme can be agreed and put in place during this process.

Once a School Streets scheme has been made permanent, any further amendments to the timing and boundary of the scheme will be dependent on the availability of funding for a revised legal order, new signage etc.

Roles and Responsibilities

Rochdale Borough Council will:

- Project manage the establishment of the School Streets pilot, overseeing the necessary planning, delivery and review activity for this intervention to result in the time-limited restriction of access by motorised traffic to sections of or streets whole streets identified in your School Street scheme, at the start and end of the school day.
- Fund the cost of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to allow this closure to be implemented, install legally-compliant signage and provide other resources such as traffic signs, banners and cones to support the scheme.
- Dedicate the required staff time to oversee the initial delivery of a School Streets pilot in defined locations, including technical expertise and support for local engagement.
- Provide a toolkit of information and resources to allow schools to engage with whole school community including staff, pupils, parents / carers, local residents and neighbouring businesses/organisations.
- Manage the delivery of a permit scheme for local residents for example those who live on a street included in the scheme, and other authorised users.
- Supply relevant information to support the monitoring activities of this intervention as stated above



- Enable access to other activities and initiatives to promote safer, greener, healthier travel to school, including:
- training sessions for school staff and pupils, covering themes such as road safety;
- provision of resources to reduce problematic car use such as school gate parking and anti-idling campaign materials;
- Identifying opportunities for Park & Stride locations to provide alternative places for parents to park.
- Work with partner organisations such as the national walking charity Living Streets to help encourage more walking, scooting and cycling to school.
- Work with regional and local partners to provide appropriate guidance and training around street closures.

The school will:

- Arrange for the times of the street closure to be emphasised and supported through:
- Ensuring regular and ongoing communications about the scheme for parents, staff and other school stakeholders.
- The placement of the portable 'Road Closed' signs and cones at the start time and removing and storing them at the end time
- Organise stewards for the scheme as often as possible. In order to achieve greatest compliance stewarding should take place for at least the early stages of the scheme, with regular reminder activity taking place at the start of and intervals throughout every term, particularly until the scheme becomes embedded as standard practice.
- Actively promote the School Streets pilot scheme, both in advance and during delivery, to ensure the whole school community are aware of the scheme, its aim and benefits, and how their journey to school might be affected.

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- Ensure the lead member of staff and stewards involved at the start of the scheme complete brief roadside training to be provided by the Council and are fully aware of what the role of a steward entails.
- Report any issues or incidents that may affect the effective running of the scheme

Help to identify and promote any potential park and stride locations in the local area.

- Lead by example by ensuring that school staff observe the restriction as much as is possible and where appropriate and work with providers to restrict deliveries to times outside of the agreed road closure as far as is possible.

Assist evaluation partners with data collection for the monitoring of this intervention.

- Work with Public Health and Air Quality Teams to organise events, activities and initiatives to promote cleaner air and active travel.
- Look for opportunities across the whole school community to promote safe road user behaviour, the benefits of walking, cycling and scooting to school and reducing car use.
- Consider adding the School Street to their Safeguarding Policy as the intervention is intended to reduce and manage traffic, creating a safer more pleasant environment for children, families and the overall school community at the start and end of the school day.

