

## FAQs - School Streets to support social distancing

### What are School Streets?

School Streets is a scheme where the streets near a school are closed to traffic at school opening and closing times. Closing the streets to school and through traffic helps to achieve a safer, more pleasant environment for everyone using the streets whilst maintaining access for residents, businesses, pedestrians and cyclists.



**Ealing**  
**School Streets**

### How will School Streets support social distancing?

The scheme will provide a low traffic area, making it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to use the road space and enable social distancing. With schools taking various other measures to address social distancing, the additional measure of a School Street will enable more children to safely attend school, especially older more independent pupils who travel on their own and may be fearful of the volumes of traffic and normal congestion at the school gates.

### How will it work?

The streets around school entrances become a pedestrian and cycle-only zone before and after school. Signs at the entrances to the scheme will inform drivers of the restrictions. Non-registered vehicles will not be allowed to enter the scheme during the times of operation and will be reported to police or parking enforcement officers if they do.

### Who will enforce them?

The School Street will be enforced by a physical barrier that is in place for the duration of the agreed times. School representatives will stop unauthorised vehicles from entering the area and will report non-registered vehicles to the police or parking enforcement officers. The penalty for ignoring the prohibition is a fixed penalty notice. Advanced warning signs will be installed and, if feasible, diversion routes will also be signed, giving drivers alternative routes around the closed streets.

### What times are the restrictions in force?

The scheme operates for set periods before entry and after exit times of the school during school term time only. It will not operate in the school holidays or at weekends. The length of each restriction is usually between 30-60 mins, often longer in the afternoon when schools may have staggered finish times. Vehicles will not be able to enter the scheme between these times unless they have been given a dispensation.



### **What if I am already parked inside the scheme when it comes into operation?**

All vehicles already parked in the scheme before the times of operation will be able to exit without incurring a fixed penalty notice.

### **I am a resident of a School Street, what do I need to know? Can I drive in and out of my street during operating times?**

Residents vehicles only will be permitted to enter and leave the designated School Street during operating times. Residents will receive a permit to show to the barrier steward.

### **As a blue badge holder, can I enter the School Street?**

Yes, you are permitted to enter and leave the School Street if you are a Blue Badge holder. The Blue Badges must be displayed.

### **As a parent/carer, can I enter the School Street?**

Parents or carers dropping children at school will not be allowed to enter the School Street in their vehicle. You can enter the School Street if you or your child are a blue badge holder or a resident of the School Street.

### **Will school staff get a permit?**

Yes, staff will be allowed into and out of the temporary School Street. If this becomes a permanent measure, enforced by ANPR cameras, they will **not** have dispensation to enter the school street.

### **What other road users are permitted in the scheme?**

This will vary from scheme to scheme. To ensure that bus routes are not impacted during operating times, public service buses are usually exempt. Other likely dispensations are emergency service vehicles and contract school transport dropping or picking up pupils from the school or their home address if it is within a School Street scheme.

### **This scheme will penalise parents and is a ban on driving to school**

No, it is a ban on driving just on streets around school entrances; parents who feel they need to drive will have to park legally nearby and walk the last part of the journey. If available, information will be provided on locations where parents can park, such as supermarket, leisure centre carparks or Park & Stride areas. In Ealing, 84% of pupils live within 1 mile of their school. This is a 20 minute walk. 62% live within a ten minute walk. At many schools, there are already a high proportion of pupils walking and cycling to school and a significant number of the vehicles are using the streets as a short cut on their journey, rather than school traffic.



**The signage would be unsightly and, because this is such an unusual form of restriction, it would have to be large and prominent.**

The signage will be kept to a minimum, with a pair of signs being erected only at the entrances to the scheme. When the scheme is not in operation, the signs will be closed up or switched off to make them less intrusive.

**Could this create congestion on surrounding streets?**

We will be working with school communities to identify and promote locations away from schools where parents can park; this should disperse the cars over a wider area than at present. Reward schemes could be introduced to encourage use of these 'Park & Stride' as well as pedestrian and cycle training, setting up of walking buses (groups of children accompanied by adults), and provision of additional cycle and scooter parking.

**How long will the scheme last?**

Usually the scheme will last as long as social distancing measures are required by the government to keep communities safe, up to a maximum period of 18 months. During this period, each scheme will be reviewed and, if deemed successful, could be made permanent by the introduction of a permanent Traffic Management/Regulation Order.

**Has the Council have failed to follow the correct legal process in introducing the experimental scheme as I was unable to lodge an objection to the scheme?**

An experimental order is a legal document which imposes traffic and parking restrictions such as road closures, on specific streets, for a short time span of up to 18 months. However, it is not possible to lodge a formal objection to an experimental order until it is in force. This allows Councils to introduce new and innovative schemes and take feedback on the progress of them whilst they are in operation. Once it is in force, objections may be made to the order being made permanent and these must be made within six months of the day that the experimental order comes into force.

**Were other options explored to improve the traffic problem and children's safety before introducing the School Streets scheme?**

Schools chosen to participate in these schemes have already tried other means of improving the road environment around the school gates. One of the selection criteria for this programme is that schools have to have achieved a TfL Stars accreditation. They will have tried publicity, training and promotion activities to improve the situation, often with limited success.

Other traffic management options, like One-Way Systems or extensive parking restrictions, may have been considered, but to introduce them on a permanent 24/7 basis would penalise those residents living in the affected streets based on an issue that occurs only during school term times



at drop-off and pick-up times. It would also not discourage or penalise parking on school zig zag crossings.

The School Streets project provides an opportunity to trial a new way of addressing concerns raised around school parking and congestion, whilst encouraging and enabling alternative and sustainable forms of travel to school.

**How will you know if the pilot has been successful?**

The road should be visibly calmer, safer and cleaner during these times. Mode of travel data will be collected from your STARS Survey and compared before and during the trial period. The school community and local residents can also give their views on the scheme.

**Who is paying for this?**

Ealing Council's transport strategy funding is provided by Transport for London. This School Streets programme has been developed in response to TfL's request to provide measures to enable social distancing.

**Who should I contact for further information?**

Please contact the School Travel Team at [sta@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sta@ealing.gov.uk)

