

RoSPA's quick guide to school streets

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School Streets are a traffic management measure implemented in the UK to reduce the volume of motor vehicles around school entrances, during drop-off and pick-up times. These streets are closed to through traffic during specific times of the day, typically during the morning and afternoon on weekdays, to create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment around schools. School Streets are currently implemented in various locations around the UK, including London, Manchester, and Bristol

This quick guide outlines the benefits and disadvantages of School Streets, as well as what to do to try and get a School Street at your child's school. Your first port of call should be your school and local authority, who can work together to see if having a School Street at your school is feasible and work with the school and local communities to make it happen.

There are definite benefits to implementing School Streets:

- **Enhanced air quality:** Reducing the number of cars on the road during drop-off and pick-up times can improve air quality in the immediate area around the school. A study conducted in a number of School Streets areas found that [nitrogen dioxide levels around participating schools decreased by an average of 43%](#) after implementing School Streets (Transport for London, 2018).
- **Increased physical activity:** By making it safer and more convenient for children to walk or bike to school, School Streets can encourage more physical activity among students and improve their health. Evidence from the campaign group Mums for Lungs found that [a School Streets trial at a primary school in Eltham resulted in a 27% increase in cycling and 9% increase in scooting](#).
- **Reduced traffic congestion:** Closing streets to through traffic has helped to alleviate traffic congestion around schools, making it easier for parents to drop off and pick up their children. Sustrans conducted some work to review School Streets and found [a significant drop in traffic levels after School Streets had been implemented](#) at several locations across the UK.

There are also some potential disadvantages to consider when implementing School Streets:

- **Inconvenience for drivers:** Closing streets to through traffic can be inconvenient for drivers, particularly those who use these streets as a shortcut or as a way to avoid main roads. It is essential to carefully consider the potential impact on local residents and businesses and provide alternative routes where possible.
- **Potential loss of parking:** Closing streets to through traffic may result in the loss of parking spaces in the immediate area around the school. It is crucial to consider the needs of parents, staff, and other

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stakeholders and to provide alternative parking options where necessary.

- **Implementation costs:** Setting up a School Street may involve significant upfront costs, including signage, traffic barriers, and public outreach efforts. It is essential to consider the cost-benefit of implementing a School Street and to secure the necessary funding and support from local authorities and other partners.

To get a School Street, it is vital to consider the following key considerations:

- **Support from the local community:** It is important to engage with and obtain the support of local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders before implementing a School Street. This may involve conducting surveys, holding public meetings, and working with local groups and organisations.
- **Support from the school:** It is essential to obtain the support of the school community, including parents and children. This may involve conducting surveys, holding meetings, and providing information and resources to help promote the benefits of School Streets.
- **Support from the local authority:** It is crucial to work with the local authority to secure the necessary approvals, funding, and resources to implement a School Street. This may involve working with local transportation departments and consulting with the police and other agencies.

Overall, School Streets can effectively improve safety and air quality around schools and encourage more physical activity among students. However, it is essential to carefully consider the potential disadvantages and ensure that any implementation plans take the needs of all stakeholders into account.

Further information on School Streets can be found at the following online sources:

- Birmingham City Council Car Free School Streets Phase 2 evaluation - downloadable from https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/22284/cfss_phase_2_evaluation_report
- Transport for London (2022). Getting to Know School Streets: Case Studies 2022. Retrieved from <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/getting-to-know-school-streets-case-studies-2022.pdf>
- London Borough of Wandsworth: FAQs about School Streets - <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport/current-schemes/school-streets-scheme/school-streets-faq/>