

Appendix 8: School Streets Guidance

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1. About this guidance

This guidance is designed to support Boroughs with the delivery of School Streets across London. School Streets will play an important role in London's recovery from coronavirus by encouraging sustainable and active journeys to school. The emphasis of this document is on how School Streets will help reduce unnecessary car journeys, help encourage active travel and also to use School Streets as places to improve the spaces outside schools.

The guidance is intended for use by borough transport officers, public health teams, schools, school community groups and elected members. It should be read alongside the 'LSP Case Making data for Boroughs' (LSP IGB), '[School Streets timed access restrictions, Toolkit for professionals](#)' and '[The Planning for Walking Toolkit](#)'. Links to further useful resources are provided at the end of this document.

2. Background

As early years, school and further education settings have reopened government guidance on social distancing remains in place. Advice on school travel is that parents/carers, children and young people should be encouraged to walk or cycle where possible.

Boroughs need to consider the options that can help facilitate social distancing outside schools and support travel to school by walking, cycling or scooting.

'School Streets' (timed road closures) reduce levels of traffic around schools and should be implemented wherever possible. Alternative measures such as footway widening should be considered on streets where timed closures are not feasible e.g. on the strategic road network.

School Streets are usually implemented to encourage walking, scooting or cycling, improve air quality and reduce road danger outside of schools. This will also have the additional purpose during the coronavirus recovery to provide additional space outside of schools, enabling parents/carers to drop off and collect their children whilst safely social distancing. Schools can also help to ensure social distancing with staggered start and end times, widening their entrances as much as possible and potentially using additional entrances and/or one-way systems.

While many parents/carers for whom it is an option may see driving as the safest or easiest option, we know that lots of cars at school gates, with drivers trying to park or practice 'fly past' drop offs will limit the scope for social distancing, increase road danger, pollution and reduce physical activity. Action now to encourage active travel will have short and long term health benefits and also provide benefits for residents in the area.

School Streets can enable children and their parents/carers to have the confidence to go to school safely. School Streets could be combined with planting or art to bring joy and help revive spirits. Engaging children in the ownership of their School Street can help create an uplifting environment for them to start and end their school day.

3. What are School Streets?

A School Street is where vehicle access is restricted outside a school during drop off and pick up times.

Most School Streets use Experimental Traffic Orders to close the carriageway to traffic at set times. This will typically be for 1 hour at the start, and 2 hours at the end of the school day. Signage is used to communicate the closure to road users and ensure the closure is enforceable. The closure is usually enforced using either physical barriers or automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras.

Permission to access School Streets during their hours of operation can be granted to residents, local businesses, blue badge holders and transport for SEND (special educational needs and disabilities), school trips and activities – these are known as exemptions. However, where physical measures are used to enforce the closure, they may need to be staffed or monitored to grant exempted access.

Schools streets provide a solution for additional space outside primary and secondary schools. They have been successfully implemented in London on a range of street types, including bus routes (with buses exempt from the closure). A series of case studies can be found in [Hackney's School Streets Toolkit for professionals](#).



Entrance to Jessop Primary School, Lambeth. Formal and informal signage provides information about the School Street.

While School Streets will provide an ideal solution for social distancing outside many schools, additional or alternative Streetspace interventions (referred to as 'School Space') may be appropriate in some locations. These are covered in section 5.

A template for opening conversations with schools about School Streets is provided in Appendix 1.

4. Implementing School Streets as an emergency measure

4.1 Identifying appropriate sites for School Streets

Priority should be given to schools where additional space is needed most for social distancing. Borough Officers should work with schools to identify priority locations. These could include:

- Where there are two or more schools in close proximity to one another.
- Schools with narrow footways.
- Schools with large intake/multi form entry, so that even with staggered start/finish times crowding outside is still likely.
- Where there is a recognised and significant problem with crowding outside school prior to the coronavirus outbreak.
- Where road danger was a recognised and significant issue prior to the coronavirus outbreak.
- Where plans are already progressing to deliver a School Street and can be fast tracked.
- Where other Streetspace interventions such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are planned, and a school street could be integrated as part of these plans.

Transport for London can provide a bespoke map for each borough, upon request, showing footway widths outside primary schools. This may help boroughs visualise which schools to prioritise for School Street and School Space interventions. Please email your request to LSPApplications@tfl.gov.uk with 'School Streets map' as the title.

This checklist can help indicate the best approach for any school:

- Consider the type of buildings and activities that face and use the street and potentially the type and size of school.
- Consider traffic levels and whether there are alternative routes for traffic and bus use when deciding if timed or full closures will be appropriate.
- Consider the likelihood of drivers adhering to closure when deciding if closure reinforcing carriageway equipment (e.g. bollards) and/or people stopping traffic will be needed as well as signs.
- Consider the space available for waiting outside the school gates when deciding if more space should be marked off for this use from the carriageway.
- Consider the width and condition of paths/pavements/routes to the school entrance when deciding if these need to be cleared, decluttered and/or widening using extra space marked off from the carriageway.
- Consider how friendly, welcoming and safe the wider school area will feel for both pupils and parents/carers when deciding if art, bunting or similar should be used to make the area feel brighter and friendly.

All schemes must comply with equalities, accessibility, security and inclusion duties. Please refer to page 29 of the London Streetspace Plan – Interim Guidance to Boroughs.

4.2 Making the case for School Streets

School Streets will allow people to physically distance outside schools. TfL data shows that traffic volumes have returned to pre coronavirus levels, and there is a risk they will continue to increase.

School Streets are an important intervention to discourage unnecessary car trips, particularly amongst parents/carers, by providing a safe and inviting space for active travel.

Additional benefits of School Streets include increased physical activity, improved air quality¹, reduced road danger, improved community cohesion and reduced traffic related noise. More detailed information on the case for School Streets is provided in Appendix 2. This can be used to help communicate the benefits of School Streets and to support the development of Traffic Management Orders.

4.3 Traffic Orders

Legal orders will be necessary where access is restricted, or carriageway reallocated as part of the scheme.

An Experimental Traffic Order (ETO)² can be implemented quickly. In many cases, the time taken to issue a notice will be no longer than the time needed to design the scheme and procure the materials needed. Case making information to support the development of an ETO is provided in Appendix 2 of the main Streetspace for London borough guidance. It is important to note that most School Streets in London delivered prior to coronavirus used an ETO, therefore solutions for School Streets as an emergency measure need not be radically different.

The access restrictions imposed using an ETO can be modified within the first six months of the order. This should be considered when designing the scheme as the operational times for School Streets may need to adapt over time. ETOs have a maximum lifespan and a decision will be needed before that as to whether to make the order permanent.

4.4 Signage

Formal Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) compliant signage is required to ensure that the School Street is enforceable. Compliant signs are usually readily available and can be procured quickly.

In addition to regulatory signage, informal signage is frequently used to communicate further details about the School Street to the school and local community. Banners on school fencing are a useful solution as they avoid adding unnecessary clutter and reducing space on the footway. A-frames should be avoided as they constrain space and can be a hazard to visually impaired pedestrians. Informal signage can be added to physical barriers used to close off the street and can be produced using various types of material.

¹ School Streets have been introduced at a number of schools as part of the Mayor's school air quality audits programme and advice should be sought from Borough Air Quality Officers.

² ETOs will be appropriate for almost all School Street schemes. However, as discussed on page seven of the [LSP IGB](#) the DfT has updated the Traffic Management Act 2004 and provided local authorities with new powers that allow street space to be relocated and school streets to be installed as an emergency measure. This provides a feasible alternative where needed.

Informal signage should be clear and simple to ensure it can be easily read 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.



Formal signage: no vehicle access during School Street hours of operation.



Informal signage: Providing information on the school street mounted on a pole. An alternative solution is a banner on the school fencing.



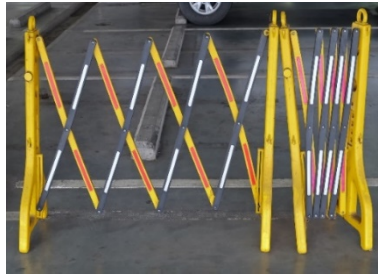
Schools may need to introduce signage to physically direct people outside of the school to guide parents/carers to wait in appropriate places. These symbols could be generic stick-down floor graphics with an appropriate skid resistance (available from several suppliers), or they could be customised versions (e.g. using pupils' designs) or simple spray, tape or chalk markings.



Floor stickers and tape used to guide social distancing (Images by John Dales)

4.5 Enforcement

Legally, traffic can be restricted from the street with the appropriate traffic order and signage, however in many cases without physical barriers or camera enforcement motor vehicles are still likely to enter the School Street.



Expandable Safety Barriers

To roll out schemes quickly without camera enforcement, moveable physical barriers can be placed at each end of the restricted access zone. Expandable safety barriers or retractable barriers may be useful as their positioning can be adjusted to accommodate commercial vehicles, deliveries etc. Storage will need to be considered.

Planters are a popular way of defining space in road narrowing or closure schemes. Quick, temporary equivalents could include a planted wheelbarrow, wheel-able bike parking, or even wheelie bins with colourful school street branding could be used. Rope, tape or even bunting can be used to reinforce no entry messages. The best approach for any school will depend on who is available to manage the street, and how much the street needs to be used for non-school access. For timed closures, any physical barriers will need to be moved and removed at the start and end of each restricted access period and to allow access for exempted vehicles. This could be done by school staff, or volunteers from the school community in order to support the School Street as an emergency measure. The model used for stewarding Play Streets (timed road closures for play), could potentially be replicated to steward a School Street. More information including information on briefing of stewards can be found at in the [Playing Out Manual](#). This is only recommended as a short term solution to enable an emergency response.

Once the local community has become familiar with the School Street it may be that such barriers are no-longer necessary or that physical barriers are replaced with more suitable long-term-solutions for enforcement e.g. through a change in layout of the street, positioning of permanent street furniture, full street closures or ANPR cameras.

Schemes put in now may need to be able to adapt to staggered start/finish times meaning they may need to be in operation for longer periods than the normal closures. Times might also vary between neighbouring schools, or even change for an individual school. For these reasons, and to support socially distanced play within quieter streets, there may be merit in some street closures being operational 24/7. Barriers or filters can be positioned to provide access but also give a strong message that vehicles are entering a space that is not primarily for them.



Everyone will be clear that this carriageway is for people on foot or cycle, allowing enough space for physical distancing.

ANPR cameras are widely used to enforce School Streets however procurement and cost may prohibit use for the immediate delivery of schemes. Schemes can be launched using 'light enforcement' with stewards for a temporary period whilst cameras are introduced. Where multiple schemes are introduced in a borough, cameras can be rotated between schemes to reduce costs, and over time costs can be recouped from the payment of penalty notices.

4.6 Engagement and Consultation

The process of consultation for School Streets will need to be expedited in the case of emergency School Streets³.

Formal consultation does not need to be undertaken prior to implementing a School Street using the ETO process, however close engagement with the school authorities is essential.

In addition to the usual reasons, schemes implemented during the coronavirus recovery period need to be designed and adapted in the light of detailed consideration of the circumstances of each school. Additionally, during this period, the school authorities will be by far the most effective (and perhaps only practicable) channel for communicating with parents/carers and seeking and conveying feedback on any proposals. Some schemes can be considered for deployment as soon as they have been discussed and agreed (at least as trial measures) with the school authorities. Additional engagement can follow, as deemed necessary on a case-by-case basis.

Engagement with residents and businesses is recommended to identify exemptions to a restricted access zone. However, where schemes are delivered as emergency School Streets it is likely that only

³ The consultation process is covered in detail in [Hackney's School Streets Toolkit for professionals](#).

'light enforcement' will be in place initially. This will give residents and businesses time to submit applications for formal exemptions and for Boroughs to process these requests.

It is good practise to liaise with local police and emergency services and this should be considered in the context of local circumstances. Boroughs should engage with any local groups, care homes or facilities for older and disabled people, in case of any access issues that need considering. This can be done through the most appropriate methods and feedback should be captured and considered.

Boroughs may want to consider how Sustrans and the Healthy Streets Officers can support with local engagement. All schemes will be improved with close engagement with local communities at the earliest opportunity. This may not have been possible prior to the delivery of emergency schemes. However, community engagement should be a priority at the earliest opportunity.

4.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of emergency School Streets should be monitored against the four key objectives; a) providing space for social distancing, b) encouraging active journeys to schools, c) reducing private vehicle use and d) air quality improvements (where possible).

The first objective can be monitored by observing behaviour outside school gates to understand whether social distancing is being observed. This is likely to be something that all schools will be observing regardless of whether they have a School Street.

The second and third can be monitored using quick 'hands up' surveys, as is already used to assess travel behaviours as part of the TfL school STARS programme⁴. Schools with or that are applying for STARS accreditation will be encouraged to submit hands up survey results in the Autumn term 2020. It is recommended that all schools carry out 'hands up' surveys, regardless of whether or not School Streets and other School Space interventions have been introduced. Data can be compared between groups of schools with and without School Streets to assess the impact of the School Street programme on changes to mode share.

Where available, pre-coronavirus hands up survey data can also be used to explore how behaviour is changing, but this should not be used to judge the success (or otherwise) of the School Street in terms of mode shift from car journeys to school given the exceptional circumstances and particularly as students and parents/carers may limit their own use of public transport.

The fourth monitoring objective is air quality. At some schools it will be possible to monitor the improvement in air quality from the School Street. Greater London Authority Officers are monitoring a sample of School Streets using sensors from the Breathe London network. The biggest improvements in air quality will be delivered at schools on busier roads with ambitious closures. City Hall also encourages boroughs to use their own monitors to measure the air quality impact of School Streets and will work with boroughs wishing to do so. For further information please contact: airqualitylondon@london.gov.uk.

⁴ STARS (short for Sustainable Travel Active Responsible Safe) is TfL's School Travel Plan accreditation scheme for London schools and nurseries. Visit www.stars.tfl.gov.uk for more info

Road danger reduction is fundamental to these schemes as the environment is improved for people on foot or bike. The School should alert the Borough to any reports of conflict so that if necessary, designs or procedures can be finessed.

In addition to monitoring the scheme against the key objectives, it will be useful to collect data to inform decisions about temporary measures becoming permanent (see section 7). Changes made as part of the emergency response may help cement or create changes in school travel behaviours which could lead to more active travel. To understand the potential, it will be useful to monitor how temporary measures work. This might include asking users how safe they feel the street is, if it is supporting their community and supporting active travel and whether they want the changes to be made permanent.

Sustrans have produced guidance on monitoring for Healthy Streets Officers, this provides more details about suggested user surveys. TfL are conducting an evaluation of School Streets across London. More information about this study and the parent/carer survey template is provided in Appendix I 9 of the main LSP guidance for boroughs.

4.8 Creating a welcoming place

Good design will help to ensure that the School Street works well and is accepted locally. Measures should create an appealing environment, making going to school an exciting prospect. Community art projects, street banners in school colours, even bunting can make the street more colourful and interesting to children. Simple opportunities for greening e.g. planters add colour and interest. It can also create opportunities for engagement and a sense of ownership with school staff, students and parents when developing, applying and maintaining design measures. For example, school staff and students can get involved by designing street banners and decorations or help with the upkeep and maintenance of planters. While social distancing is in place, schools will want students to disperse as rapidly as possible therefore play on the way measures are not recommended as part of the School Streets emergency response. However, the opportunity to make the school street as appealing as possible to children should be taken.

5. 'School Space' – for social distancing

Busy, non-residential streets which have important movement functions (e.g. as bus routes, core cycle routes or more strategic general traffic routes) may not be appropriate for closures, timed or otherwise. Where timed access restrictions (School Streets) are not possible, other measures can be used to provide space for social distancing. This could include reallocating carriageway space from vehicle parking or movement to widen footways.

Where legal orders are necessary, ETOs will be suitable and can be delivered rapidly. To expedite further where necessary, the DfT has updated the Traffic Management Act 2004 and provided local authorities with new powers that allows the reallocation of street space as an emergency measure. The LSP IGB also recognises that TfL's current Traffic Management Act Notifications (TMAN) process is not suitable for notification of emergency, temporary or short-term measures to support physical distancing, due to the speed at which they need to be installed. Therefore, where schemes involve parts of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) or Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), the guidance proposes a simpler and more expedient process, although engagement with TfL is still

required. For streets that are not part of the SRN or TLRN, Councils are the sole highway authority and do not need to involve TfL in the order-making process.

Once the legal order is in place, physical equipment should clearly show where people can safely wait, walk and wheel. Barriers, tape, cones, paint, planters or any other feature can separate distanced waiting spots from walking routes and make it clear to all, including drivers that pedestrians are meant to use the carriageway. Consider marking off no parking zones that already exist in front of the school gates.

Deciding which materials and equipment to use will depend on the circumstances of each individual school, street and community. Cost and procurement may be important factors for early use, but options to replace initial interventions with more robust and appropriate longer-term features should be considered. For example, standard, light-weight traffic or 'No Parking' cones may be a good option for streets which need to convert to non-school use for part of the day but may not work well without street stewards to ensure they stay in place as they can be easily (re)moved.

It is important to ensure the equipment used:

- Minimises the loss of effective space available for social distancing.
- Cannot be easily moved around, accidentally or by those who want to change the way the street is used.
- Does not prevent cross movement and easy access to the school gate from all directions.
- Caters to the needs of those with disabled access requirements.
- Is affordable.
- Is safe and visible to all street users.
- Creates as appealing and child friendly environment as possible.
- Can be removed and stored if needs be.

Pedestrian 'guard' railings are common outside many schools. However, their safety effects are unevicenced, and they constrain pedestrian space and may force people to pass one another closer than is necessary. Their removal, if only temporarily, should therefore be considered so that the additional space provided can be accessed.

While each scheme should be designed in the light of the local context, there will be merit in seeking to understand what packages of measures work best in different broad categories of location with similar characteristics in terms of street and school types. Boroughs should seek to share any learning of this nature and TfL officers will help to facilitate this.

6. Integration with wider London Streetspace Plan proposals

While the case for each School Street should stand on its own merits, Boroughs should ensure that all schemes are planned within the context of a wider strategy for the management of their highway network and delivery of other Streetspace for London initiatives. For example, the case for School Streets may be stronger near busy interchanges or near strategic cycling corridors where lanes of traffic are being removed and there is a risk that some traffic may be displaced onto adjacent streets.

School Streets should also be considered as part of the development of Borough-wide networks of temporary or experimental Low Traffic Neighbourhoods that can offer safe and attractive

environments for children to walk, cycle or scoot to schools located in areas bounded by busier roads. Boroughs should also consider the need for additional measures in wider areas around schools to support children and families, including additional space for queuing and social distancing at bus stops used for school travel. Further guidance on other Streetspace measures is provided in the [Streetspace for London Plan – Interim guidance for Boroughs](#).

7. Transitioning to longer term solutions

School Streets as emergency measures are intended to be rolled out rapidly, to help schools facilitate social distancing and to reduce the risk of a car-based recovery from coronavirus. If implemented using ETOs, emergency School Streets can be in place for 18 months whilst a decision is made over their permanence.

In the short to medium term, footways should be de-cluttered and necessary street furniture re-ordered to make walking and wheeling more convenient and safer. Green infrastructure such as planters and street trees can also be incorporated to define changes to the street layout and create attractive walking environment. This is established good practice under any circumstances (see [TfL's Streetscape Guidance](#), [The Planning for Walking Toolkit](#) and [Appendix 10 Streetspace Planter and Parklet Guidance](#)). The principle of achieving clutter-free streets needs also to be born in mind when deploying the poles and signs for all schemes.

When considering options for permanent changes it is important to be clear on what changes aim to achieve. To do this the design team need to understand the wider context, problems and opportunities. For example, if the scheme wishes to support more walking to school, it is useful to understand the main routes to school people are using and make sure there are no significant barriers to walking or wheeling anywhere along these, not just by the school gates.

Design options that might help embed a temporary scheme as a permanent improvement could include raising carriageway levels so they are flush with pavements and users where there is little or no traffic, particularly children can move freely from one space to another; using retractable bollards that provide emergency access or access to exempt users or creating a community garden next to the school including play areas and seating which the school itself may use at times.



Hillbrook primary school: Carriageway levels are flush with pavement

Opportunities to add green infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage are recommended when possible, as these can make the interventions more attractive and bring other additional benefits such as creating pollution barriers, providing shade and supporting wildlife. Various guidance is available on approaches (see section 8).

Whether an emergency school street is removed after the pandemic, becomes a permanent timed closure or transforms into a much more dramatic change for the street depends on local aspirations, conditions and priorities. Keeping in mind the potential for permanent change from an as early a stage as possible will help keep options open.



Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre entrance approach – before and after. A temporary School Street closure could in some cases lead to this kind of transformation if a temporary scheme moves to being permanent.

8. Useful training, resources and links

Training and design advice

LB Hackney run one-day School Street Workshops. These are designed for transport professionals who want to learn more about how to set up and deliver a School Streets project in their area. Further information can be provided by emailing Doolin O'Reilly at movegreener@hackney.gov.uk

Alongside this training, LB Hackney are also offering free editable templates of key School Streets design materials. The design materials include; School Streets logo, Vinyl Banner, Postcard Flyers and Lamppost Wraps. Design guidance on how to use the materials will also be included. Further information can be provided by emailing Doolin O'Reilly at movegreener@hackney.gov.uk

UDL run design surgeries to provide independent advice on scheme design. Boroughs are welcome to request these for any temporary to permanent changes they are planning. Email info@urbandesignlondon.com to arrange a session.

Guidance

Hackney School Streets: School Streets Timed traffic restrictions Toolkit for professionals, London Borough of Hackney:

<https://hackney.gov.uk/school-streets>

Playing Out Manual and Briefing for Stewards: <https://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Playing-Out-manual-2018-smaller.pdf>

Streetspace for London Plan, interim guidance for Boroughs, TfL 2020: <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lsp-interim-borough-guidance-main-doc.pdf>

TfL's Streets Toolkit: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/streets-toolkit>

The Planning for walking toolkit, TfL, 2020: <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/the-planning-for-walking-toolkit.pdf>

When considering permanent changes, the following reports may be useful:

Trees in hard landscapes: http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_trees-in-hard-landscapes_september_2014_colour.pdf

Green infrastructure:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/green_infrastruture_air_pollution_may_19.pdf

Useful links

London Borough of Hackney School Streets video and information: <https://hackney.gov.uk/school-streets>

Streetspace for London webpage: <https://tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/streetspace-for-london>

www.schoolstreets.org.uk provides additional useful links and resources

Appendix I - Information for Schools

Boroughs can adapt this information for Schools.

School Streets – Information for Schools

A School Street will provide safe space outside of your school to enable social distancing, encourage active travel, reduce road danger and improve air quality.

What is a School Street?

A school street is when the road outside of your school becomes a pedestrian and cycle only zone during drop off and collection times. This can help provide additional space so that parents/carers and children can adhere to social distancing guidelines outside school. School Streets promote active journeys and discourage unnecessary car trips. They can also provide a welcoming and appealing environment for children at the start and end of the school day.

School Streets are being delivered as temporary/emergency measures, however where successful they may be made permanent.

How does it work?

A legal order will be used to close the street at set times and signage will inform drivers and the local community. In the short term, barriers and/or stewards will be needed to enforce the closure, though in some cases these can be replaced with cameras. Residents and businesses can be exempted from vehicle access restrictions. This will be a limited number of vehicles and the number of vehicles using the street will reduce over time, as travel patterns are reshaped to avoid the timed closure.

My school is on a busy road or bus route

School Streets have been implemented on many different types of road in London, including bus routes. Your borough Transport Team can provide advice about the best solution for your street. Where it is not possible to close the road outside of your school, it may be possible to safely reallocate parking spaces or a traffic lane for use by pedestrians when queuing/passing.

How can I find out more?

For further information or to enquire about a School Street for your school, contact your **borough Transport Team**.



Appendix 2 - Making the case for School Streets

Purpose

This template has been designed to be used by Borough Officers when making the case for School Streets, including as part of the ETO process.

Background

Schools are expected to develop plans to enable students and parents to social distance at drop off and pick up times and School Streets can form part of these plans. Travel to school by car is likely to become more attractive in the recovery from coronavirus. School Streets can encourage more parents and children to walk and cycle to school instead of using the car.

The risks of a car-based recovery for Schools

The risks of a car-based recovery for schools are significant:

- Road danger increases impacting those who travel by all modes
- Increase in travel times, road traffic and congestion around schools.
- Decrease in physical activity levels for pupils, staff and parents as car use increases.
- Air pollution in London increases overall; additionally, car passengers are exposed to higher levels of air pollution than those who walk or cycle.
- Increased noise and severance.
- Increase in poor health outcomes and mortality associated with decreased physical activity, air pollution, road danger, noise, and severance.
- Increased inequality and poor health outcomes for those living in the most deprived areas who are less likely to have access to a car.
- Increased transport related emissions from cars contributing to climate change

School Streets will allow people to physically distance

The pandemic means people need to be able to physically distance while waiting at the 'school gate'. By removing traffic from around schools, carriageway space can be used for waiting, walking, scooting and cycling. Creating this additional space will be essential to enable physical distancing around schools, and avoid the risk from road danger that would occur if pupils, parents/carers and staff are forced to make space for others by stepping into the carriageway while it is still in use by motor traffic.

In the short-term School Streets will provide:

- Space for physical distancing when travelling to school, and decreased rates of new coronavirus infections as a result.
- Confidence amongst school staff that it is safe to return to work (and amongst parents that it is safe for their children to travel to school).

In the longer-term School streets will provide:

- Multiple benefits including: health, equity, environment and economic discussed in more detail below.

Co- benefits of School streets

Health

Physical inactivity

In London, only 46 per cent of children and young people and 67 per cent of adults meet the Chief Medical Officers' minimum physical activity guidelines. Furthermore, only 39 per cent of London residents aged 20+ met the Mayor's 20 minute per day target in 2018/19 School Streets will help facilitate more physical activity and active travel amongst pupils, staff and parents by encouraging more walking and cycling.

Physical inactivity contributes to childhood obesity

Childhood obesity is more prevalent in London than England overall. Nearly 40 per cent of all London's children are overweight or obese, with the highest rates occurring in the areas of greatest deprivation. Introducing school streets would help to tackle childhood obesity by encouraging more physical activity. In response to the childhood obesity crisis the London Child Obesity Taskforce published 10 ambitions for London to action. Within this, there are two built environment related calls to action which directly relate to school streets from the London Child Obesity taskforce including:

- Calling on the Mayor, the London boroughs, housing associations, landowners and developers to dramatically increase timed closures of streets to motor traffic and other public realm improvements that reduce traffic and support children's health, wellbeing and mobility.
- Calling on the Mayor and the London boroughs to make children's health, wellbeing and mobility required criteria for public funding and authorisation of regeneration and transport schemes.

X school is situated in the borough of X where the prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst reception children was X% in 2018/19 (look up [here](#)) and for year 6 children the prevalence is X% in 2018/19 (look up [here](#)).

The national average for the prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst reception children was 9.7% in 2018/19. The national average for the prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst year 6 children was 20.2% in 2018/19.

Air quality

Londoners are concerned about poor air quality around London's schools. Breathing in dirty air can affect children's health and wellbeing. That's why the Mayor previously audited 50 primary schools in the city's most polluted areas.

The audits made recommendations to reduce emissions and exposure. Two of the recommendations are directly relevant to implementing School Streets including:

- Local road changes including better road layouts, restricting the most polluting vehicles around schools and pedestrianisation by school entrances
- Encouraging students to walk and cycle to school along less polluted routes.

Implementing School Streets will improve local air quality around schools and improve the health of pupils, teachers and parents.

Air Quality during lockdown

There was been a dramatic change in air quality particularly in central London as a result of the spring lockdown. Levels of NO₂ have more than halved in some areas of Central London, with a mean reduction of 21% across the whole of London⁵. However, this is already changing as we see increases in car use. To ensure the best air quality for Londoners; mode shift to active travel is essential.

Reduction in collisions

In 2018 there were nearly 2000 child casualties from road traffic collisions in London, There are also inequalities relating to impacts from road danger, with those living in more deprived areas and BAME Londoners being at greater risk, with children in this group being on average 1.5 times as likely to be killed or seriously injured on the roads than non-BAME children. Reducing car traffic directly outside schools would reduce the risk of collisions occurring if those walking, cycling or scooting are forced to step into the carriageway to try and socially distance.

Noise

The lockdown has greatly decreased noise levels in London. Road traffic is the largest cause of noise pollution in London: it is estimated that before lockdown, almost 2.4 million people were exposed to road traffic noise levels that are above WHO guidelines (55dB) (GLA). School Streets would help to reduce noise levels around schools which has been shown to improve cognitive performance in students.

Community connections

Motorised transport can act as a physical or psychological barrier to the movement of pedestrians known as severance. Severance may influence social capital, that is, the ability to develop and maintain familial and friendship networks, and feelings of community cohesion and social isolation. There is evidence to suggest that decreased social capital may be associated with worse self-reported health, higher blood pressure, and higher rates of death.

Equity

Coronavirus has disproportionately affected vulnerable populations, including BAME and those living in more deprived areas. Many inner London boroughs have seen the highest mortality rates in the country. Inner Londoners are already more likely to be impacted by exposure to air pollution and road danger. An active travel-based approach allows for physical distancing with the additional co-benefits of better health and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable Londoners.

It is however important that any interventions to support walking and cycling are designed holistically to ensure that all Londoners can move around safely, and provision must be put in place to ensure accessibility and inclusion requirements are met.

⁵ The effect of coronavirus lockdown measures on air quality in London 2020, Kings College London, 2020: https://assets.ctfassets.net/9qe8184l2nz4/2TM8WJU2w1cHecdkjVIRQ/2e5a91667d676b3c63f1e748156b68c4/ERG_response_to_Defra.pdf

Environmental

In London, transport is responsible for 24% of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions - 19% from road transport and 3% from rail and shipping). GHGs warm the planet and lead to a change in climate: hotter drier summers with more heatwaves and droughts, and wetter winters, with more flooding and severe storms. School Streets would help mitigate increased GHG from road transport.

Economic

In the shorter term:

The safe reopening of schools, including safe provision for travel to school will give parents/carers the confidence to allow children to return to school, thereby enabling family members to go back to return to work which will help to rebuild the economy.

In the longer term:

School streets will encourage pupils, teachers and parents to be more physically active as well as reducing exposure to poor air quality, noise, severance and collisions, all of which will improve health and wellbeing and reduce costs for health and social care services.

Summary

School streets are essential in order to provide safe space for social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic as well as having long term benefits including health, equity, the environment and the economy.