

Frequently asked questions about School Streets

SCHOOL STREETS
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What is a School Street?

A School Streets scheme is a community-based approach, aiming to:

- Cut down on traffic and parking pressures outside schools
- Discourage car journeys to school and encourage walking and cycling
- Make the streets outside schools safer at the start and end of the day
- Improve air quality and create a more pleasant environment for everyone
- Reduce the impact of extra vehicles that may have an impact on local residents living close to the school

Why are we introducing School Streets?

School Streets are part of a district-wide collection of measures being introduced to tackle congestion, and road safety concerns. They will also help to increase physical activity, by increasing confidence to walk or cycle, and may improve air quality around the school.

Where are the current School Streets?

Operational scheme:

- Calcot Infant and Junior School, Calcot (SS1) at Royal Avenue (part), Curtis Road, Gatcombe Road

Scheduled for implementation in September 2023:

- Francis Baily (SS2) at Skillman Drive, Jedburgh Close and Edwin Close

What are the operating hours for School Streets?

Operating hours vary according to the school start and end times. They generally operate for 60 minutes during morning and afternoon school pick up and drop off times during term time only.

Does the Council consult residents and local businesses?

School Streets are normally implemented on a trial basis using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) to enable all aspects of the scheme to be considered. Residents, local businesses, and the school are consulted with before a decision is made on whether to make the scheme permanent. Once a scheme is live, we collect feedback to monitor the scheme and decide if any amendments are required. This information is published on our webpage

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/school-street-schemes>

What legislation can Local Authorities use to implement a School Street?

Local authorities can implement Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) or Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs) to control traffic in their area. The Department for Transport has issued statutory guidance to all local authorities in England to help them adapt their streets to provide safe spaces for walking and cycling, and to apply for Active Travel Funding for such schemes.

Can a School Street Experimental Road Traffic Order (ETRO) be stopped?

The ETRO can be revoked and removed if there are significant issues, however this should be a last resort. Changes to the scheme should be trialled before removal.



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Are there any exemptions to which vehicles can enter during restricted times?

People walking, scooting, using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and cycles (including adapted cycles) are not restricted. All other motor vehicles are restricted during the operating times displayed on the signs, subject to some exemptions.

Though we encourage everyone to support the School Street, where they are able, the following vehicles serving properties within the School Street scheme will be automatically exempt and will not be required to apply for a permit or exemption:

- Emergency Vehicles
- Council waste collections
- Council road maintenance vehicles
- Royal Mail postal vehicles
- Delivery vehicles that are liveried and easily identifiable
- Taxis (Hackney carriages only)
- Local bus services

Can I apply for a Permit/Exemption?

The following, on submission of the required evidence, will be granted a School Streets Permit which will give a legal right to enter during the restricted times:

- All residents within the School Street scheme
- All businesses within the School Street scheme
- Blue badge holders visiting a property or school within the School Street
- All registered school staff (coordinated via the headteacher)
- Council operated home to school transport (coordinated with Transport Service)

If the School Street Permit criteria does not apply to you, you can apply for a School Streets Exemption Permit which will give a legal right to enter during the restricted times:

- Private Hire Taxis serving a property within the School Street (1 day exemption only)
- Healthcare workers including but not limited to Doctors, Nurses, Social Workers, midwives, personal carers, and support workers
- Private delivery vehicles
- People / services supporting a resident to maintain an independent lifestyle
- Emergency utility repairs including but not limited to gas, electric, water and oil
- Emergency structural repairs
- Building and utility related works which cannot avoid the restricted times
- Visitors visiting a property or school which cannot avoid the restricted times

How do I apply for a Permit/Exemption?

Applications should be made in advance and authorisation confirmed before accessing the School Street scheme area during the restricted times.

All applications should be submitted to parking@westberks.gov.uk

To apply please provide the following information:

- Your name and address
- Vehicle Registration Number
- For unforeseen events and emergencies, an application must be made within five working days of entering the School Street
- School Street you entered
- Date you entered
- Vehicle Registration Number that entered
- Reason for entering without exemption
- Proof of eligibility (i.e., service/delivery/job schedule)

This may apply to taxi drivers, delivery drivers, emergency utility call outs, visitors etc. Notifications received by us later than the required five calendar days of entering the School Street scheme area will need to follow the statutory appeals process, if a PCN is issued.

How do I make amendments to a Permit/Exemption?

All amendment requests should be submitted to parking@westberks.gov.uk with the required information, as set out in the 'How do I apply for a Permit/Exemption' section above.

What if I am already parked inside the School Street before the time of operation?

Vehicles already parked in the roads before the times of operation will be able to exit. During the operating times, any vehicles are advised to travel at walking pace.

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

The School Street will make it easier for pupils, parents, and carers with limited mobility to access the school by reducing traffic outside the school gates. Those holding valid Blue Badges will be exempt from the restrictions but should still avoid parking on school keep clear (zigzag) markings. Please discuss specific special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support with the schools' Head Teacher.

Will the School Street cause displacement of traffic?

It is difficult to predict exactly how much traffic will be reduced, and this will vary for different School Streets. However, monitoring data from our original pilot shows that the reduction of vehicles recorded within most School Streets surveyed was greater than the increase in displaced traffic in adjacent roads, where these were monitored.

There is potential for parking to be dispersed over a wider area rather than concentrated outside the school gates. We will be working with the school and local community to identify locations away from the school where parents can park safely without obstructing residents on neighbouring streets. These initiatives are known as Park & Stride or Walking Bus schemes.

Some parents or carers will say it is essential that they drive their child to school; is this scheme designed to penalise them?

The objective of a School Street is to make the school run safer, healthier, and be more enjoyable for the whole community, as well as for children travelling to school; not to penalise parents. For those who need to rely on the car for children to travel to school, they can park slightly further away and walk the last part of the journey.

Some parents may feel frustrated at first, but will, over time, find ways to adjust their daily routines.

How will the scheme be governed or managed?

A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up between the council and the school, detailing the ongoing roles and responsibilities.

How will the School Street be enforced?

How the scheme is enforced will depend on the design of the School Street. Vehicles may be restricted using permits that need to be displayed inside the exempt vehicle, or by use of virtual permits.

An ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) camera may be operational. Vehicles entering School Streets during operational hours, without having applied for an exemption, will receive a Penalty Charge Notice. Please read the 'Are there any exemptions to which vehicles can enter during restricted times?' section for details of which vehicles are exempt.

Some schemes may be managed by signs only.

Is there a penalty charge for entering the School Street?

Where ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras are used, a penalty charge notice (PCN) will be issued for entering the School Street scheme area. Please note EVERY new scheme where an ANPR camera has been introduced will have a six-month period of education as part of the settling in process. This will mean every vehicle that enters a school streets scheme, without having either applied for a permit or exemption, will receive a warning letter for the first offence.

Thereafter the charge will be as follows:

- £70

The cost of the PCN will be reduced under the following conditions:

- Payment is received within 21 days the cost reduced to £35
- One off on-line driver education course. This course must be completed within 14 days of receiving the Penalty Charge Notice. If an individual passes the course this will reduce the PCN cost to £20

How will visitors know about the School Street?

School Street signs will be installed at the entry points of the restricted roads, informing people of the timed closure outside the school.

We ask the school and residents within the School Street to tell their visitors about the restrictions when visits are being planned. Visitors can park on surrounding roads outside the School Street, or they can apply for exemption in advance. We know this is not always possible or you may just simply forget. If so, just follow the instructions in the 'How do I apply for a Permit/Exemption?' section within five working days of entering the School Street.

How will the School Street be monitored?

We will undertake a range of measures to monitor and assess the School Street, which includes:

- Traffic data collection to measure vehicle levels before and after School Street implementation
- Surveys to measure how children are travelling to school before and after implementation.
- Consultation feedback
- PCN data
- School Streets e-learning data

Who do I contact to find out about School Streets?

West Berkshire council can be contacted in the following ways:

Post:

West Berkshire Council Offices, Traffic and Road Safety Team, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD.

Tel: 01635 519080

Email: activetravel@westberks.gov.uk