

# PlayStreets for Schools

## Guidance for Ealing Schools

Last updated: March 2023



### DID YOU KNOW?

Some 80 per cent of public space in London is made up of streets.<sup>1</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

71% of adults played outside in the street every day when they were children, compared with only 21% of children today.<sup>2</sup>



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# What are PlayStreets for Schools?

A PlayStreet for Schools is simply a PlayStreet hosted by a school. PlayStreets are regular, short road closures that enable children to play in the street more safely, bringing adults and the local community together too. They are organised by volunteer residents living in the street, or in the case of schools, parents and/or staff. The organisers carry out consultations with the residents, and where there is a majority agreement, Ealing Council raises a Traffic Management Order to close the road during set times (costs £1500). Requesting a PlayStreet is completely free.



It was a lovely afternoon. The children had a wonderful time.\*

I was delighted the event took place. I'd love more like this.\*

Community events are really important to me and I was delighted to help.\*

In Ealing, sessions can run in the afternoon, for up to three hours. You can hold them monthly during school term times, or less frequently, such as half termly or termly. Some PlayStreets operate all year round; it's up to your school and the local residents to decide.

## History of PlayStreets for Schools

Hackney schools were the first in the UK to run school hosted PlayStreets; Thomas Fairchild School in Hoxton trailblazed the idea back in 2013. Since then the idea spread to other London boroughs such as Islington, Camden, and now Ealing!

## Acknowledgements

This guidance takes inspiration from Hackney Playstreets' 'Guidance on running a school PlayStreet', Ealing Council's own PlayStreets guide, and Playing Out's Step by Step Manual.

*\* Comments from the 2019 Ealing PlayStreets for Schools Stewarding online survey*



## Why run a PlayStreet at your school?

- Shutting the street prevents parents driving and parking outside the school. This in turn encourages families to walk, cycle or scoot to school, improving the air quality too.
- Coming together as a community to organise a fun, celebratory and inclusive event such as a PlayStreet can improve relations with families, staff and especially residents, with whom it can sometimes be difficult to engage positively due to common issues, such as parking on driveways.
- Playing outside makes children (and parents) happy! This is of increasing importance for families that may have little space to play, as it allows them to reclaim public space.
- Street play increases the activity level of children, which in an era of historically high rates of childhood obesity, is more and more important. Keep it simple too with chalk and skipping ropes!
- PlayStreets are low to no cost and relatively easy to run, with instant paybacks. Once established, they are hugely popular and allow schools to offer a fun event on a regular basis.

## How to start a PlayStreet at your school

We process applications four times a year; please see Ealing Council's [PlayStreets page](#) for these deadlines. A successful consultation must have been run by these dates to be included in a Traffic Management Order (TMO). We encourage schools to start applications 6 weeks before the deadline, to allow time for enough residents to respond to consultations (we need a minimum response rate of 30%). It can be done much quicker though if you do door knocking instead/as well as letters. Please note that in total it normally takes up to 12 weeks from starting the application to the first PlayStreet. Don't be put off though, the numerous benefits make it all worthwhile!

### The process (approximate timings)

Getting people on side, deciding on the details	1 week
Contact the council to express interest, council responds	1 week
Resident consultations	Up to 4 weeks <b>(plus no. of weeks until next deadline)</b>
Rejection/TMO raised by council (subject to consultation results)	4 weeks
Approval of application (subject to results of Traffic Management Order), Traffic Management Plan sent to applicant	1 week
School to order barriers from council and plan PlayStreet(s)	1 week





## Step 1: Getting people on side

There are several groups of people that you need to speak to before getting started. You may want to send them all the [FAQs for schools](#) as well.

- **Senior Leadership Team** - It's crucial that the head teacher and/or Senior Leadership Team is engaged and supportive as this sets the tone for the rest of the school.
- **Staff** - Get their views and try to build enthusiasm, e.g. via a staff meeting. The School PlayStreets may impact staff personally, especially if they drive, so they may have questions.
- **Parents** – You will need the support of parents to make an event like this work, so testing their enthusiasm is important. Explain the idea to them, answer questions, and galvanize support. Ideally do this both face to face and in writing, for example via coffee mornings, parent committee meetings and letters or email.
- **Children** - Pupils are key in raising enthusiasm and support for such an event. There are short, fun videos you could show in assemblies e.g. at [www.hackneyplay.org/playstreets](http://www.hackneyplay.org/playstreets) and [www.playingout.net](http://www.playingout.net). You could also float the idea with the school council/Junior Travel Ambassadors to see if they have any input or are keen to organise any promotional activities.

## Step 2: Deciding on the details

### Frequency

Consider how often you want to run your PlayStreets – the most frequent you are permitted to run them is once a month, but it could be once a term if you wish. We advise applying for a (realistic) regularly recurring date, such as the 1st Friday of the month, or the last Friday of each half term. Choose the frequency carefully, as changes to the schedule cannot be made once the Traffic Management Order has been implemented by the council.

### Timings

Most schools opt for Fridays directly after pick-up time e.g. 3.15-5.45pm, but you could do it on other days. We advise applying for the closure to start 15-30 minutes before the school day ends, to give stewards time to set up the closures and be in position well in advance of the children coming out. Please note that there is a maximum of three hours per session and this includes the buffer before and after.

### Location

If your school is accessible via several streets, choose the street with the least traffic movement. It may not be necessary to shut the entire street; shorter sections of about 30-40 metres are often all that is needed, depending on the size of your school. Whatever the size, make sure you utilise the space to its fullest extent. Also, don't be afraid to use the road; you have all year to use the playground, so make the most of having the street to yourselves!



Not all kinds of street are appropriate for applications for PlayStreets, for example busy A and B roads, roads with bus stops or routes on them, or roads with an incline.

## Helpers

The more help you get the better, and the more fun it'll be! Doing the door knock and collecting residents' signatures is a key role, but there are jobs for everyone including chatting to parents in the playground informally, organising publicity, putting up flyers in the run-up to the event, as well as stewarding on the day. We have found it is best to ask people directly, rather than just sending out a general request. In addition, try putting up a sign-up sheet somewhere in the staff room or the main entrance for example, that way people can commit in writing.

## Step 3: Express interest with the council

Once you have gotten people on side and decided on the finer details, get in touch with us at Ealing Council at [sta@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sta@ealing.gov.uk) and fill out our initial PlayStreets application form. We will either approve your proposed street closure in principle, or give feedback. There is also an Ealing Council webpage set up for PlayStreets but currently this does not cater for PlayStreets for schools, so please do use the above system instead.

## Step 4: Resident Consultations

After approving your application in principle, **the council** will then set up an **online survey** and **provide template resident consultations letters** with a link to the aforementioned online survey. It is then the **school's responsibility** to consult with all residents in the street that is being closed, or those who are being affected (for example it might affect residents in a street that is joined to your street, if one of them is one way and therefore the only access point). The school must notify the council when they have consulted with all the residents – please email [sta@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sta@ealing.gov.uk).



The council then reviews the responses to this consultation. We are looking for at least a 30% response rate from residents, and ideally majority support, but it will depend on the nature of the objections. Ultimately, each application is treated on a case by case basis. A typical street receives one or two objections and people may have reservations and questions. Be prepared to listen to concerns and answer queries. Please see our [FAQs for residents in Appendix 10](#) for more information. There is also another Q&A addressing common concerns in the 'Playing Out' manual, available at [www.playingout.net/useful-stuff](http://www.playingout.net/useful-stuff).





## Door knocking or residents meeting

We find that if you present the idea personally, most residents usually react positively or neutrally to the idea. Most schools simply do a door knock in the street affected, although some choose to hold a residents meeting. Both offer a great way of helping a school connect with its neighbours and to build positive relations, as well as giving people the opportunity to ask questions and get involved. For door knocking, we advise providing our **template letter** to all who answer the door as well as those who don't, as that contains the link to our online survey. **This will be emailed to the school upon initial application.** For those who do answer the door, we advise taking signatures to make it easier for those residents who are not likely to fill in the online survey. Please see [Appendix 3](#) for a template table to fill in. Please also use our Residents' FAQs in [Appendix 10](#) and post a copy through every door. This may help get the majority support that you need!



## After consultations

Once the consultations are finished we will review the responses and then notify the school about whether the application for a PlayStreet has been approved. In successful cases, we will then raise a Traffic Management Order (TMO) which is when the PlayStreet is advertised to emergency services to ensure they don't have any objections. This takes 4 weeks. Once this time period has elapsed, pending approval, a copy of the TMO will be emailed to the main organiser, as well as a Traffic Management Plan (instructions on how and where to direct traffic). Once you receive these, you can get on with the planning!

## Step 5: Publicising your PlayStreets

Publicise in all the usual ways and via as many channels as possible! For starters, please see [Appendix 2](#) for our example parent letters. Try to use all your other channels as well e.g. the school newsletter, email, texts, school website, parent meetings and staff meetings, etc.



Playing Out, the national organisation supporting street play, offers flyers and posters you can download freely at [www.playingout.net/useful-stuff](http://www.playingout.net/useful-stuff) or you may wish to create your own. Some schools run a competition for pupils to design posters. We'd love to see them if you do! Show us them by adding them as a story on STARS (see page 10). Laminate them and try not to make them date specific – e.g. say 'This Friday' as this allows you to reuse them each time (if you commit to Fridays of course!).

Please note that any publicity materials should make clear that parents/carers remain responsible for their children during the play session, e.g. 'During the PlayStreet, parents/carers remain responsible for their children as on any other day. You must stay to supervise your child.'

Talk to the children in assembly about how the closure will work and explain they can bring in scooters or bikes if they wish. Flag up the key safety information and explain the process for walking cars in/out. Tell children to listen out for instructions from stewards. It's also a great idea to remind staff at your staff meeting and invite them to get involved.

### **Tell residents**

You must remind all residents in the street that the PlayStreet is happening ideally a week or two beforehand. You can use flyers or letters through letterboxes (we have a resident reminder letter in [Appendix 4](#)) as well as posters in windows or on lampposts. We also have a template document in [Appendix 7](#) to be put on parked car windscreens the day before. If you do any of the above, consider listing all the year's PlayStreets dates.

## **Step 6: Other preparations in the lead up**

As the organiser of a PlayStreet, you are responsible for running the sessions. We recommend taking the following steps in the two-four weeks before the first session:

### **Order signs from Ealing Council**



Once you have received confirmation that your PlayStreets has been officially approved, please contact us at [sta@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sta@ealing.gov.uk) to arrange delivery of your own Murrill sponsored barriers, for the school to keep. Two are available per PlayStreets, although you may want to consider whether you need extra 'barriers' such as chairs etc if your school is on a wide road. These should be placed ahead of the closure point at each end to warn drivers of the actual closure.





Exact locations for where these should be placed will be in the Traffic Management Plan, as emailed to the organiser after approval. Please note that **these are for the school to keep** as our contractor does not have the resources to pick them up again each time - so please find a suitable storage location for them.

### Do a risk/benefit assessment

Whilst it is impossible to eliminate all risk, it is important to consider all potential hazards and how you will manage them. You can use our risk/benefit template to help – see [Appendix 5](#).

Many experts on childhood now recognise that risk taking in play is beneficial for children. Accidents happen in PlayStreets as they do in parks, playgrounds and streets on any normal day. The most serious risk to manage is that presented by cars entering at speed. Having stewards who follow the procedures around stewarding minimises this risk; see information on stewarding below as well as our **Stewarding Guidance** in [Appendix 6](#). Watch our video guidance too - <https://youtu.be/osR2CRC3V98>. Each time you run a PlayStreet, review your risk/benefit assessment to reflect on new risks and lessons learned.

As part of the risk/benefit assessment, do a street walkabout to assess the area by checking to see if there are any small turnings or carparks for flats from where cars might try to exit that will need stewarding. On the day itself, do another street walkabout and ask your stewards to help check for any dangerous objects or hazards in the street, for example glass in the road. If you wish to read up further about the risk/benefit assessment see Tim Gill's website: <https://rethinkingchildhood.com/>.

### Recruit stewards

Read our Stewarding Guidance in [Appendix 6](#). You need to recruit parents and/or staff to help with stewarding on the day – at least five. Stewards should be responsible adults and able to give the role their full attention. We advise that stewards are not looking after young children (e.g. those under 6) at the same time as stewarding, so although parents may be keen to help, it is important to stress this point. Stewards need to be in position as soon as the PlayStreet starts, which is usually when school finishes. This might be difficult for teachers who need to dismiss their classes, so it might be worth asking Teaching Assistants or Parents, depending on the timings of your PlayStreets. Stewards need to be reliable and confident, particularly on streets that normally have a high volume of traffic. They should also be aware that blocking a road to drivers (especially if this is a new closure) can lead to people getting confrontational; consideration in advance of how they will de-escalate situations is important. Circulate the stewarding guidance to all stewards ahead of the day and go through it with them at a meeting, leaving opportunity for questions and discussion.



## Get equipped

The main equipment necessary for a PlayStreet, aside from the barriers that we provide, are high vis jackets and whistles for each of the stewards. Megaphones and Walkie-Talkies are optional. If the school does not already have a set of these, they can be purchased online at <https://brightkidz.co.uk/>. Store them all together along with the stewarding guidance, to be given out to stewards on the day.

## On the day

### Hold a stewards' briefing

Each time you run a PlayStreet, arrange to meet and brief your stewards at least 30 minutes before it starts. At the briefing you will give out the equipment, discuss the stewarding guidance (and have a copy available), talk through how the stewarding should be done and answer any questions from your stewards.

### Display signage

You must put a barrier at each end of the road closure. Set up the road closure points at least 15 minutes before school ends/before the PlayStreet starts, so you are not rushing and so that everything is in place before the children come out. Doing it early will also help prevent too many parents parking in the area and needing to be stewarded out during the event. 'Road Closed Ahead' or 'Diversion' signs are unfortunately not available for PlayStreets because the closures are short lived and generally only on quiet residential streets. Don't forget any posters made by the children can go further down the road.

### Reminder to parents

Just before and during the session, remind parents verbally that they are responsible for their own children and that they are not to leave them unsupervised.

## Other considerations

### Play equipment

Most schools provide some play equipment, such as simple things that are used at playtimes like chalk, hula-hoops, bat and balls, soft footballs and skipping ropes. Beyond this, there's no need to organise games or anything special to entertain the children. They will do the rest for themselves and will enjoy coming up with their own fun. If you do have volunteers who want to organise extra add-on activities then that's brilliant too, so long as children can choose whether to join in and adults are supporting, rather than leading the activity. Examples have included parachute games and setting up table tennis tables. Check out our ideas for games in [Appendix 9](#).



## First Aid

Have a First Aid box/point available in case of minor accidents and ensure stewards know where to direct children and parents as part of your stewards briefing.

## Refreshments

You might choose to offer some light refreshments, but this is not essential. We recommend having some jugs of water and canteen cups (please avoid single use plastic), especially in hot weather. Sometimes parents sell cakes, fruit or lollies to raise funds for the PTA and these are sure to go down a treat and add to the community feel!

## Photography

Find a volunteer to take photos. Ahead of the session, they will need to talk to the school about their photography permissions policy and how the photos will be used. It can be great to use the photos to document the event for newsletters, and of course evidence for the [STARS story](#).

## Toilets

Have a plan for toilet access; if this is via school then you may need to have a member of staff available to let children in.



## Finishing up

Give parents and children lots of staged warnings (blowing whistles and shouting out) before stewards reopen the street so as to ensure that anyone left on the pavements is aware that cars will be coming through.

We recommend having a buffer zone period of around 15 minutes between ending the session/clearing people from the street and the time when stewards physically reopen the street to traffic. See our stewarding guidance in [Appendix 6](#) for full information on the reopening process. Another useful cue is to hand out dustbin bags in the last five minutes or so of the session and encourage everyone to help clear rubbish and recycling and collect up toys. Ensure someone is made responsible for the return of all equipment to school premises, and to remind children to not take any of it home. You may want to create an inventory of equipment available to help you keep track.





## After the event

### Debrief and learning for next time

Doing a debrief with your stewards on the day might be tricky as it is likely they may just want to get home after a tiring afternoon. Instead, email all your stewards thanking them for their help, sharing any photos and asking for any feedback and learning points. Alternatively, you can hold a separate meeting later on. Make sure they also all fill in our [online stewards survey](#) which allows us at the council to keep our finger on the pulse as to whether the PlayStreet are working well and how we can help. Please also send out our [Parent Participant online survey](#) to parents who were there on the day.

### Post event publicity

Write up a short article yourself or ask students to do so; publish this in the newsletter, on the website and use photos too! Local media may be interested, especially as PlayStreets at schools are quite new in Ealing. See an example press release in [Appendix 8](#).

### Get tips from others and share your ideas too!

Please join the national 'Playing Out' group on Facebook and like the page also! They are a great source of peer support.

Please also check out our **Checklist** for running at PlayStreet at your school in [Appendix 1](#).



## TfL STARS

STARS is TfL's accreditation scheme for London schools and nurseries. STARS inspires young Londoners to travel to school sustainably, actively, responsibly and safely by championing walking, scooting and cycling. STARS also supports pupils' wellbeing, helps to reduce congestion at the school gates and improve road safety and air quality.

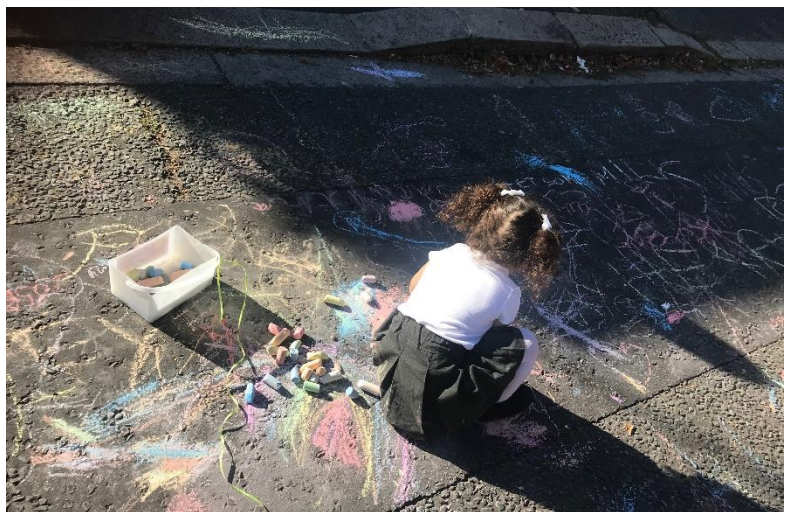


Each activity a school carries out that promotes or facilitates active travel in some way, can count towards STARS accreditation. PlayStreets for Schools is no exception! If you are not yet working towards accreditation but are keen to run a PlayStreet at your school, take advantage of the opportunity to get signed up with STARS to make this activity count. Schools often don't realise that they are doing a lot of the work for accreditation already.

TfL STARS guidance on running a PlayStreet for Schools can be found at the link below, and once logged in, this is also where you can log the activity on your STARS account to make it count towards accreditation.

<https://stars.tfl.gov.uk/Explore/Idea/Details/1103>

Please see the School Travel page on the Ealing Grid for Learning - <https://www.egfl.org.uk/services-children/school-travel-plans-stp> for more information, or get in touch with the School Travel Team directly to book a STARS surgery with us – [sta@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sta@ealing.gov.uk).



# FAQs for schools

## Do stewards need DBS checks?

To our knowledge enhanced DBS checks (disclosure and barring checks) are not needed for people stewarding PlayStreets. This is because the stewards' are not working with children and the role is not eligible for a standard or enhanced check. However the school can still [request a basic check](#) if they feel this is required. Stewards are there to make sure the space is as safe as possible; they are not responsible for children and are not providing childcare. Furthermore, the stewarding role is occasional and does not involve unsupervised access to children. You must make clear on all publicity that parents are responsible for their own children.

## Does the school need Public Liability Insurance?

Ealing Council recommends, but does not insist, that schools take out Public Liability Insurance for their PlayStreets. Hackney and Bristol schools have done this. Many schools or PTAs already have PLI, so it would only need to be added to the policy. It is our understanding that as the organiser you take on liability for the safe running of the PlayStreet session, following the guidance and managing risk to the best of your ability. An example of a risk/benefit assessment for a PlayStreet is included in [Appendix 5](#) of this guidance.

The national organisation Playing Out advises:

***"We are not lawyers, but we have sought advice from lawyers and it seems that the liability situation is slightly uncertain. It is best to get advice on this from your council and also look at the FAQs on our website for more explanation. In general, the best way to prevent being held liable for anything that goes wrong is to make sure you do everything in a responsible way. Our main advice is that you take good care, prepare well and encourage everyone to be sensible and respectful about other people and their property. In all publicity and on the day, please remind parents that playing out sessions are not 'risk-free' and that they are still ultimately responsible for their own children's safety, both during and after the sessions."*** *Playing Out manual – Feb 2015.*

## What if the weather is bad?

There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing! Children generally don't mind a bit of rain or colder weather; if they are dressed appropriately it can be great fun. If there are extremes of weather; e.g. really hot or freezing/ snowy conditions – then you should reflect this in your risk/benefit assessment. One option if the weather isn't great could be to simply shorten the session. In the case of really bad weather, plan for who will make the final call and when, and how you'll advise parents if it's cancelled.





### **What if anyone makes trouble?**

This is really rare but it's good to have a plan for this and also have someone who can assist. Having a senior school staff member prepared to help with such situations is really helpful. We know of one instance where a parent organiser had to deal with a very drunk individual who was causing problems in the street just as the children were coming out to play. In such a scenario, it would be a matter of considering your own safety and that of those around you, getting back-up from another adult and asking the person politely but firmly to move on or stop the troublesome behaviour.

You may also experience irate drivers who are not happy that they are not allowed to drive though. It *may* be possible to request the assistance of a Civil Enforcement Officer for the event, although this is not guaranteed. We recommend that the school attempts running the event independently first before requesting one. If support is needed please email [sta@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sta@ealing.gov.uk). In the event of trouble you should tell parents to take charge of their children and to move away if necessary. If the person remains uncooperative and causing safety issues, then call the police – 999 if an emergency or 101 if not an emergency. Some schools have invited community safety officers from the local police to attend the event, which has worked really well.

### **What if children/parents from other schools join in?**

School PlayStreets take place in a public space with children and adults passing through and sometimes joining in - but in our experience this does not cause any problems; it can in fact be a really nice way for children from different schools to mix. So long as you limit the publicity it's unlikely you will get lots of extra people turning up.

### **My school has an after-school play centre/childcare? What happens here?**

Talk to the after-school staff as part of the consultation so they can form a plan around it. The ideal scenario is enabling all children to join in if they want to. Of course, this will involve the club staff getting up-front permission from parents and working out the supervision ratios – but it's all doable so long as it's planned for. With one school, for example, all the after-school children took part and wore their club T-shirts to make them more easily identifiable. The after-school staff said it was one of their best ever sessions.

### **Will you let deliveries and visitors through?**

Stewards should ensure that if a delivery needs to be made that cannot be done on foot, the vehicle will be escorted at walking pace to their destination. The same goes for visitors if they are unable to park elsewhere.



### **There is a business on the street. What about parking for their customers?**

As part of the application process, everyone within the closure area should be consulted. It is inevitable at some point that somebody is unhappy with plans to close the road, but there are often ways of negotiating ways around it with open discussion. It is helpful to remember that there is no right to parking on a public highway. In addition, there is strong support for children's right to play out amongst parents and grandparents in particular, so you might even find that by pushing this point, businesses might be more open to being accommodating or offering support, as it offers an opportunity to improve their business image and potentially get new customers.

### **Aren't roads just for cars?**

The idea that residential streets are places to simply drive and park cars has crept up on us gradually and now unfortunately become an accepted fact. Up until the 1970s, street play was common. 71% of adults played out in the street or neighbourhood as children, compared to only 21% of children more recently (Playday poll, 2007). The street is our main public space in the city and the place where a sense of community can be created. Playing out is partly about challenging the perception that streets are nothing but highways and demonstrating their possibilities as social spaces for everyone.

### **Won't it encourage children to think the road is a safe place to play under normal circumstances?**

We have had many conversations with parents about this and there is a strong agreement that even young children can understand the difference between a 'playing out' session and normal circumstances. There should be a clear signal that the road is 'safe to play' and parents will ensure children understand that things are 'back to normal' once the session is over. Playing out sessions are also a good opportunity for parents to talk to their children about road safety and the danger of traffic.

### **Why do children need to play in the street when there are parks nearby?**

Parks are great for family outings and for older children who can get there independently but for younger children, it usually involves a special trip, organised and supervised by adults. Street play is very different as it is more accessible as it is literally on the door step (in this case, of the school), and the emphasis is on playing together with others and therefore helps to build a sense of community and belonging.

### **Why can't children just play in their own back gardens?**

Not all families have gardens, and even if they do, the space may be limited and the experience could be isolating. Street play is a way for children to meet other children who they may not come across normally (they may be in different year groups). It also provides more space and freedom to move. Some play activities such as big-rope skipping, hopscotch, roller-skating, cycling and scooting, are all generally impossible to do in a tiny back garden!



### Can we end the closure before the advertised end i.e. if most participants go home?

You need to think very carefully about ending the road closure early, even if most people have gone home. All advanced communications about the closure will have stated the originally agreed times, so you will have to bear in mind that if some families come late, or go home and come back, they might still be under the impression that the road is closed (even if it might be obvious to you that it is not). It is our recommendation to keep as originally planned and as per your risk assessment (i.e. with barriers and stewards in place and stewarding procedures still taking place). This way there is no possibility of a misunderstanding.

## Further information and resources

Ealing Council School Travel Team email - [sta@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:sta@ealing.gov.uk)

Head teacher Karen Law of William Patten Primary School - [klaw@williampatten.hackney.sch.uk](mailto:klaw@williampatten.hackney.sch.uk)

[www.hackneyplay.org/playstreets](http://www.hackneyplay.org/playstreets) - more info, map of all Hackney's PlayStreets

[www.playingout.net](http://www.playingout.net) and [www.londonplay.org](http://www.londonplay.org) - further guidance, inspiration and tools to download

<sup>1</sup> ICM UK-wide poll for Playday 2010, Play England

<sup>2</sup> Roads Task Force report, Transport for London, July 2013





# Appendix 1: Checklist for running a PlayStreet at your school

## Two-four weeks before your session:

- ☐ Join the national Playing Out Facebook group for further support and inspiration
- ☐ Recruit helpers for lead-up jobs and stewards for the day
- ☐ Order barriers from the council
- ☐ Read 'Guidance on stewarding a PlayStreet at your school'
- ☐ Do a risk/benefit assessment and street walkabout
- ☐ Put high-viz bibs, whistles and copies of the stewarding guidance together in a box or bag
- ☐ Publicise on the street with flyers and send a reminder letter to residents, plus flyers day before
- ☐ Publicise to parents, children, staff and residents using posters, flyers, meetings, emails etc.

## On the day:

- ☐ Send a reminder message to parents in the morning
- ☐ Bring out stewarding gear kit
- ☐ Do a stewards' briefing 30 minutes before you start and go through the guidance together.
- ☐ Give stewards high-viz and whistles to wear (and megaphones and/or walkie-talkies if applicable)
- ☐ Do a street walkabout to check for and remove hazards
- ☐ Set up the barriers at least 15 minutes before the children come out
- ☐ Have a First Aid kit handy for minor scrapes
- ☐ Provide basic play equipment e.g. chalk, balls, skipping ropes
- ☐ Consider having a table with refreshments e.g. water and fruit (please avoid single use plastic)
- ☐ Have someone take photos for use in school publicity
- ☐ Follow the reopening procedure as per Stewarding guidance

## Afterwards:

- ☐ Thank and debrief stewards
- ☐ Write something or ask children to write up for the school newsletter/website with photos
- ☐ Make note of learning points for next time and adapt risk/benefit assessment as appropriate
- ☐ Let us know how it went! Tag us on our social media channels @EalingSTARS and @EalingCouncil on Twitter and Instagram



## Appendix 2: Example parent letter

Dear Parents,

[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] PlayStreets: [INSERT DATE]

We have an exciting event happening here on [INSERT DATE]. Following council approval, our school is holding its first ever PlayStreet in [INSERT ROAD NAME] when we will be reclaiming the street for play and fun!

The idea is to create a traffic-free space for children to play together, and for the adults to be able to chat together too. The road will be closed to through-traffic. It takes place at [INSERT TIMING AND DATE].

The school will provide some play equipment like chalk, hoops and balls – and your children are welcome to bring their own bikes and toys too. Please also provide snacks and water for your children.

### Important safety information

- During the PlayStreet, parents/carers remain responsible for their children as on any other day. You must stay to supervise your child.
- If you intend to drive to school on [INSERT DAY] afternoon, you will not be able to park in [INSERT ROAD NAME]. You can also not park or stop in [INSERT WHERE ZIGZAGS AND DOUBLE YELLOW LINES ARE]. Therefore please plan in advance where you will park if you must drive, or even better, consider taking public transport, or walking or cycling.
- The road closure will be stewarded by parent and staff volunteers who will be wearing high-viz tops. Residents are still allowed vehicle access during the event. If a resident wishes to drive in, stewards will blow whistles to alert children to get out of the road. Once the road is cleared, a steward will walk the car through at 5mph. Please assist the stewards if this happens by helping to get your child out of the road.

Can you help with stewarding? If you are able to, please contact [INSERT NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS]. Look forward to seeing you on [INSERT DAY]! It will be a lovely opportunity for the children to play and let off steam and for us all to come together.

[INSERT NAME] Head teacher/ or PTA member as appropriate



## Appendix 3: Resident signature table

	Name	House number	Agree	Disagree	Signature
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					





## Appendix 4: Example resident reminder

Dear Neighbours,

[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] PlayStreets: [INSERT DATE]

We have an exciting event happening here on [INSERT DATE]. Following council approval and as per our resident consultation, our school is holding its first ever PlayStreet in [INSERT ROAD NAME] when we will be reclaiming the street for play and fun!

The idea is to create a traffic-free space for children to play together, and for the adults to be able to chat together too. The road will be closed to through-traffic. It takes place at [INSERT TIMING AND DATE]. We really hope you will be able to join us.

Here is some more information about how the event will run:

- Children get to play in the street – for example riding scooters and bikes, skipping and chalking, and playing ball games.
- Parents are responsible for their children, as on any other day.
- Residents do not have to move their car – but if you don't mind doing so then please go ahead as it will create more room for play.
- Residents have stewarded vehicle access. Please tell a steward (they will be at the barriers in high-viz) if you wish to drive in or out so they can clear children off the road first and escort you safely at walking pace/5mph. Deliveries and visitors to your house also have stewarded access.

We are also running sessions on the following dates/times during this academic year:

[INSERT DATES AND TIMES OF OTHER SESSIONS]

If you'd like any more information, please contact [INSERT NAME & CONTACT DETAILS OF ORGANISER]. Look forward to seeing you on [INSERT DAY]. We think it will be a lovely opportunity for the children to play and let off steam and for us all to come together.

[INSERT NAME] Head teacher/ or PTA member as appropriate



## Appendix 5: Risk/benefit assessment

Hazard	Risk(s)	Benefits	Actions to reduce risk
Moving vehicles	Injury to volunteers when setting up road closure, or to children when playing.	Residents able to access their cars and to come in and out of the street if necessary, minimising disruption to residents. Children learn about road safety and to be cautious when moving vehicles are nearby.	<p>All volunteer stewards to wear high visibility jackets. Road closure points to be clearly marked with barriers provided by Ealing Council.</p> <p>Road closure notices and door-to-door leafleting prior to event to warn neighbours in advance of the road closure.</p> <p>Children and adults told to stay out of the road until ALL road closure points in place.</p> <p>Stewards given briefing material in advance, briefed verbally and will follow Ealing Council Stewarding guidance. Stewards to all watch the <a href="#">stewarding guidance video</a>.</p> <p>Stewards to use whistles and/or megaphones to gain attention of children/adults.</p> <p>Floating steward on duty to look out for cars trying to leave.</p>



Playing beyond the barriers	Injury to children by vehicles passing beyond the road closure barriers		Stewards posted at barriers. They are briefed to watch for children playing on the road beyond the barriers and will instruct them to move on the pavements if they see this happening. Parents instructed in advance and reminded on the day to remain responsible for their children.
Collisions with parked cars	Children may collide with parked cars (e.g. when riding a scooter) causing damage to themselves and/or car.	Children enjoy being able to ride in the street more freely and develop motor skills. Children can develop spatial awareness by having to negotiate obstacles. Children develop resilience and confidence through minor scrapes and knocks.	Organiser will monitor activity and talk to child(ren) if it becomes necessary, about the need to be aware and allow space around parked cars. Notice put on car before reminding drivers about event and suggesting they could move their cars (but not compulsory).  Children advised in advance in assembly of the expected behaviour.  Soft balls are encouraged instead of tennis balls/ footballs.





Children arguing/getting upset/physical violence between children	Bringing groups of children together in unstructured way may lead to confrontations, upsets, and possibly physical violence between them.	Opportunity for children to learn coping skills and ways to deal with confrontation without parental/adult input.	Organiser and/or steward will intervene if they judge it is necessary to do so and will alert parents. Stewards and organiser instructed to intervene if they see any children acting violently or inappropriately and parents to be informed. Parents reminded to supervise their own children.
Personal injury to participants	Collisions between scooters/bikes/skateboards; collisions between children running around. Slips, trips, falls, broken limbs, collisions involving adults or children in the course of play.	Fun, freedom and enjoyment of playing. Children develop social, physical, intellectual and creative skills. Riding scooters, bikes and skateboards makes children happy, active and boosts their confidence and independent mobility skills.  Children develop resilience and confidence through experiences of minor scrapes and knocks – they also learn to assess and modify their risk-taking. Adults and children get to know their neighbours, increasing neighbourliness and community cohesion.	Parents and carers attending to be informed via flyers and word of mouth that children with them are their responsibility at all times. Monitor numbers of children and types of activity to ensure that possibility of injury is kept to a minimum. Advertising limited so that only children from school and immediately neighbouring streets likely to be coming. Stewarding arrangements in place as described. Council has approved the road as being suitable for temporary street play closures. Clear the area beforehand of any trip hazards or glass in the road, etc.



Damage to houses	House windows damaged by balls or other thrown objects e.g. frisbees	Ball and other throwing/kicking games develop children's hand to eye coordination. Ball games are particularly great for engaging dads in play with their children.	Parents and carers attending to be informed via flyers and word of mouth that children arriving with them are their responsibility. Organiser/stewards to monitor activity and talk to children/parents where necessary – e.g. if kicking balls too hard. Soft balls to be encouraged over hard ones such as tennis balls and footballs.
Disturbance from non-residents	People come to the street and create problems e.g. noise or inappropriate behaviour. Drivers get irate at not being able to park or drive as usual, causing stress to stewards and participants and a road safety risk if they drive unpredictably.	Closing the streets for play has myriad benefits already discussed in detail such as improving community cohesion, increasing physical activity levels, reducing air pollution, reducing road danger in the vicinity of the school by reducing the number of cars approaching the school.	Organiser to monitor numbers and activity. Talk to people about what's happening and that it's a low-key community event. Politely ask anyone causing problems to stop or move on (with back up from another adult). Call for assistance from police if necessary - 999 or 101. Alert parents to move children away/clear street if necessary. Follow stewarding guidance and clearly communicate street closure plans to parents and residents well in advance.



Noise disturbance	Night shift workers not able to sleep, those working from home not able to concentrate	Children being loud and exuberant, sometimes is a normal part of playing freely. Many adults enjoy the sound of children playing.	Reminder posted in street in week running up to event to make neighbours aware. Invitations controlled so that only children from street and immediately neighbouring streets invited. Monitor noise levels and where appropriate intervene.
Extreme weather conditions e.g. hot sun, heavy rain, high winds, flooding, etc.	Sun burn, heat stroke, hypothermia, catching cold, slipping on ice/wet patches, equipment or participants blown in wind.	Being outdoors regularly is good for health and wellbeing. A moderate amount of sun, rain or wind exposure is beneficial. Children learn to take care when surfaces are wet. Children also love playing the snow!	Stewards briefed to look out for children getting too hot or showing signs of sunburn. Provide jugs of water and cups if possible. Suggest sensible sun protection/hats in communications with parents and children. Check weather in advance to advise families accordingly e.g. appropriate clothing and footwear. Secure/monitor loose objects if windy. Where extreme weather is predicted, plan how families are to be advised in cases of cancellation.





## Appendix 6: Stewarding Guidance

### The main roles of the stewards are:

- To set up the closures
- To keep children within the closure
- To politely divert 'through' traffic
- To safely escort residents leaving or arriving by car in or out of the street
- To reopen the road again at the end of the event
- To be a point of contact during the event for members of the public and the school community

### What is not the role of the steward:

- To enforce other traffic infringements. If you do witness a traffic related violation then please report it to the police here <https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/rti/rti-a/report-a-road-traffic-incident/>.
- Stewards **do not have the authority** to allow or encourage any kind of traffic infringement, even if it may seem to benefit the PlayStreet, for example advising through-traffic to park or drive somewhere that is not permitted, to avoid having to pass through the PlayStreet.

### 1. Setting up the closures

- There must be a minimum of two stewards, wearing high-viz and carrying a whistle, at each closure point, plus one floating steward in the middle. A closure with 2 barriers requires a minimum of 5 stewards, 3 barriers requires a minimum of 7 stewards.
- All closure points should be set up simultaneously, to prevent cars entering and then you having to let them exit.
- Barriers should be put in place at least 15 minutes before the intended start time.
- Children should not play in the road until the street is closed and stewards are in position.
- Remind parents that they are responsible for their children - use on-street flyers and tell people.
- Stewards should stay inside the barrier for their safety and so drivers can see the signage

### 2. Keep children inside the closure

- Look out for children trying to go beyond the barrier and remind them to stay on pavements beyond the barrier.
- If you have concerns, try to locate the child's parents and get assistance from other parents.



### 3. Diverting through traffic

- Be friendly when diverting people. Smile and explain the diversion route, provided by your contact at the council. You should have this printed out so you can show it.
- If drivers ask, explain briefly: "The road is shut for a few hours, so children can play out."
- It also helps to if you have Playing Out flyers you can hand out. You can download these here - [www.playingout.net/useful-stuff](http://www.playingout.net/useful-stuff).
- Residents who live in the street still have vehicles access, and must be stewarded through the closure, please see (4) below.

### Cyclists

Explain to cyclists what is happening and that young children are playing in the street. Tell them they can enter but must go very slowly/cautiously (5 mph) or walk their bike through.

### 4. Residents' access

Residents who live in the street still have vehicle access (in and out of the street). If they are simply driving through and not going home, even if they are residents, give them the option (but not obligation) to drive around via a diversion. If however a resident wants to enter or leave the road in their vehicle, this is the recommended procedure:

- One steward explains to the driver they can have stewarded access once the street is clear. Get their agreement and stay with the driver. **Do not open the barrier yet.**
- Clear the road of all those playing out. This should be done by one steward from each end and the floating steward walking up and down, blowing whistles and shouting: "Car coming, move onto the pavements."
- Walkie Talkies are very useful to enable stewards to communicate, and megaphones for when you need children to move onto the pavements to let a car through.
- You can choose to have different whistle signals if you do not have a megaphone or walkie talkies, such as several long bursts to mean 'everyone out of the road' and two quick bursts to mean 'safe to play again'. Or you can arrange your own signals.
- When the road is fully clear, one steward from the relevant end walks the car in or out – walking in front of the vehicle at 5mph or slower. You may want to ask which number they are driving to so you know how far to walk/where to walk to.
- Keep blowing the whistle and shout out "Car coming, stay on pavements".



- Only remove the barrier when the car is just about to pass through and replace it immediately to prevent other cars following behind or entering. At each end one steward can move the barrier and one can walk the car through. The floating steward should be ensuring the road is clear.
- Once the car has parked or left the road, shout out “Safe to play” and use your agreed whistle signal if appropriate, at which point children can return to playing in the street.

Please now watch our video guidance demonstrating how to let a resident drive through a PlayStreet - <https://youtu.be/osR2CRC3V98>. Credit to Perivale Primary School for helping us produce this.

### Floating steward

The floating steward’s key role is keeping an eye and ear out for engines starting up within, or near the closure, and to facilitate their exit as they would any other resident looking to enter the closure. Floating stewards also assist the other stewards by helping to alert and clear everyone when cars are about to be walked through. They also help with reopening the road – see below.

### Dealing with difficult drivers

Sometimes drivers may become angry or difficult. Keep calm but assertive. Remember that people may have all kinds of reasons for their reaction and try to remain calm and courteous. Explain that the closure is legal and temporary and show them the legal notice if possible. If a driver becomes confrontational, call for back up from the organiser or other stewards. If you feel threatened, dial 999 (or 101 if the immediate situation has passed) and alert parents to ensure children’s safety. Don’t let the idea of this put you off though; we now have over 50 community PlayStreets in Ealing so it is clear that once people get used to the idea it becomes a regular feature in the community calendar and people who might not have supported it initially do become accustomed to it.

### 5. Reopening the road after the event

There have been cases where children have sought to return to play in the road after a PlayStreet has ceased. In one case, a child was knocked down by a car and injured, thankfully not seriously. For this reason, we recommend a buffer zone or staged approach to reopening the road. This means ending the session **10-15 minutes before** you intend to physically reopen the road. Give everyone lots of notice that the street is to be reopened to cars. You should also gently encourage parents to take their children home before the street reopens.

- One steward from each end as well as the floating steward should walk up and down the street and give a series of warnings in the lead up to the formal end of the session.
- The other two stewards stay at the closure points at all times.





- To mark the end of the event, all stewards should blow their whistles and shout out: “PlayStreets finished now”.
- After the session has ended, take at least 10 minutes to ensure that everyone is out of the road, and that anyone left on the pavements is aware that cars are about to return. Tell parents it is recommended they take children inside before the road reopens.
- Co-ordinate reopening the road at both ends, so the barriers are removed simultaneously by a steward at each end.
- At the same time the other stewards shout out: “Cars coming through now,” blow whistles, and do a final sweep walking down the pavements to ensure everyone is aware.

## 6. Being a point of contact for participants and members of the public during the event

The most common question members of the public and the school community will ask is ‘what time does this finish?’. If they are a participant of the PlayStreet, then they will need to be advised of the ‘play timings’ of the PlayStreet, i.e. what had been advertised to the school community. This is important because we want to avoid confusion as much as possible, whereby participants might end up staying to play beyond the end of the ‘play timings’. If they are a driver wishing to drive through, then they will need to be advised of the ‘closure timings’ which are the play timings inclusive of the 15-minute buffer either end. Equally, this distinction is important because drivers will want to know when they can re-enter the street normally, and won’t be interested in whether play has finished or not.

Audience	Which timings?	Timings
PlayStreets Participants	Play Timings	3pm till 5pm (example)
Drivers/Residents/non-participants	Closure Timings	2.45pm till 5.15pm (example)

Once the PlayStreet is over, please do fill in our online steward survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VGY5WLG>. We would love your feedback!



## Appendix 7: Example reminder note for parked cars

### Reminder: PlayStreets in [INSERT ROAD NAME] – [INSERT DATE & TIMING]

Just a reminder that our PlayStreets takes place here on [INSERT DATE AND TIMING] in [INSERT ROAD NAME including specific closure location]. The area will be shut to through traffic, but open for play and neighbourly chat – we hope you might be able to join us!

You do not have to move your car – but if you don't mind doing so then please go ahead as it will create more room for play.

Residents who need to come in or out in their cars are still able to access the street; we will clear the children and you will be escorted by a volunteer steward and must drive at walking pace/5 mph. Deliveries and visitors can also come in. Alternatively – and if you are happy to do so – you can park just outside the closure area until the PlayStreet ends.

Important: Please tell a steward (wearing high-viz) if you wish to drive out so they can clear children off the road first and escort you out. Please also note that parents/carers are responsible for their children, as on any other day.

For more information, contact [INSERT NAME & CONTACT DETAILS OF ORGANISER].



## Appendix 8: Example press release

### Play stops traffic outside school

Play stopped traffic outside [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL] last Friday – as pupils reclaimed the street for hula hooping, skipping and games!

Around [INSERT APPROX NUMBER] children and their parents took part in the PlayStreet Session. The school based in [INSERT STREET/ AREA], is hosting INSERT NUMBER of the sessions per year.

Headteacher [INSERT NAME], said: “Street play provides the opportunity to all children to have the freedom to explore their area, to enjoy and participate in space for free play, independently in front of or near their own front door and school, contributing to a healthy and happy lifestyle.

“It was good to see children, parents and residents playing outside, which helps families get to know each other and creates a greater sense of community spirit. A big ‘thank you’ message to all residents and parents that came out to show their support!”

Parents volunteered to ‘steward’ the road closure – standing at the barriers and redirecting through-traffic. People living on the street also helped with stewarding and joined in the fun.

[INSERT NAME], whose children attend the school, said: “It was fun doing the stewarding and nice to be able to help out. My children were very excited when they came out and saw they could play in the street there and then with their friends. They loved riding up and down on their bikes and doing the chalk drawing. Afterwards all they kept saying was: ‘When can we do it again?’”

More information:

For further details contact [INSERT NAME OF PERSON AND CONTACT DETAILS]





## Appendix 9: Ideas of games for PlayStreets for Schools

Item	Cost	URL
Paint your own parachute	From £14.95	<a href="http://newitts.com/PLAYM8_Paint_Your_Own_Play_Parachute">PLAYM8 Paint Your Own Play Parachute (newitts.com)</a>
Bean Bag 6 Pack	£6.00	<a href="http://newitts.com/PLAYM8_Bean_Bag_6_Pack">PLAYM8 Bean Bag 6 Pack (newitts.com)</a>
First Play Target Parachute	£18.00	<a href="http://newitts.com/First_Play_Target_Parachute">First Play Target Parachute (newitts.com)</a>
Horseshoe Toss	£20.36	<a href="http://newitts.com/PLAYM8_Horseshoe_Toss">PLAYM8 Horseshoe Toss (newitts.com)</a>
Giant Dominos	£24.95	<a href="http://newitts.com/Urban_Giant_Dominoes">Urban Giant Dominoes (newitts.com)</a>
Large 4 Pack of Hula Hoops	From £10.00	<a href="http://newitts.com/First_Play_Flat_Hoops_4_Pack">First Play Flat Hoops 4 Pack (newitts.com)</a>



## Appendix 10: FAQs for residents

### What if I want to use my car during the event?

Not a problem! If you want to drive home or leave your property by car, you will be stewarded in and out of the road closure at walking pace, after children have been cleared from the road.

### Will you let deliveries and visitors through?

Stewards should ensure that if a delivery needs to be made that cannot be done on foot, the vehicle will be escorted at walking pace to their destination. The same goes for visitors, if they are unable to park elsewhere.

### There is a business on the street. What about parking for their customers?

As part of the application process, everyone within the closure area should be consulted. It is inevitable at some point that somebody is unhappy with plans to close the road, but there are often ways of negotiating around it with open discussion. It is helpful to remember that there is no right to parking on a public highway. In addition, there is strong support for children's right to play out amongst parents and grandparents in particular; businesses that are supportive of this may well open themselves up to further customers.

### Aren't roads just for cars?

The idea that residential streets are places to simply drive and park cars has crept up on us gradually and now unfortunately become an accepted fact. Up until the 1970s, street play was common. 71% of adults played out in the street or neighbourhood as children, compared to only 21% of children more recently (Playday poll, 2007). The street is our main public space in the city and the place where a sense of community can be created. Playing out is partly about challenging the perception that streets are nothing but highways and demonstrating their possibilities as social spaces for everyone.

### Won't it encourage children to think the road is a safe place to play under normal circumstances?

We have had many conversations with parents about this and there is a strong agreement that even young children can understand the difference between a 'playing out' session and normal circumstances. There should be a clear signal that the road is 'safe to play' and parents will ensure children understand that things are 'back to normal' once the session is over. Playing out sessions are also a good opportunity for parents to talk to their children about road safety and the danger of traffic.



### **Why do children need to play in the street when there are parks nearby?**

Parks are great for family outings and for older children who can get there independently but for younger children, it usually involves a special trip, organised and supervised by adults. Street play is very different as it is more accessible as it is literally on the door step (in this case, of the school), and the emphasis is on playing together with others and therefore helps to build a sense of community and belonging.

### **Why can't children just play in their own back gardens?**

Not all families have gardens, and even if you do, the space is limited and the experience isolated. Street play is a way for children to meet other children who they may not come across normally (they may be in different year groups). It also provides more space and freedom to move. Big-rope skipping, hopscotch, roller-skating, cycling and scooting are all generally impossible to do in a tiny back garden!

### **What happens if my property is damaged as a result of children playing?**

The same as what would happen on any other day; it is the responsibility of those who have caused the damage to resolve it with you. If it is not clear which individual(s) is/are responsible, then someone at the school may know. Ultimately it is in the school's interest to keep residents happy; indeed, as part of the preparation for the Play Street, the school will have carried out a risk assessment and done their utmost to reduce the risk of breakages or accidents, especially if they wish to make the PlayStreet a regular occurrence.

### **What about all the noise?**

There is always going to be noise, but the source of this will vary. On a normal day, that noise may well be that of traffic, revving engines and car horns, whereas during a PlayStreet this would be of children playing. Children can be loud and exuberant, but this is a normal part of playing freely. Many adults enjoy the sound of children playing. Organisers are advised to give as much notice of PlayStreets as possible, as well as to monitor noise levels, in order to reduce inconvenience for residents.

### **What about those without children?**

PlayStreets are for the whole community! Although children may be the most visible, it is also an opportunity for residents to have a chat and get to know each other.

