

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 contact the organiser of the PlayStreet and they may know. Ultimately it is in the organisers' interest to keep residents happy; indeed, as part of the preparation for the Play Street, they 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.

