

# Play Street for Schools Stewarding Guidance

## The main roles of the stewards are:

1. To set up the closures
2. To keep children within the closure
3. To politely divert 'through' traffic
4. To safely escort residents leaving or arriving by car in or out of the street
5. To reopen the road again at the end of the event
6. 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:

1. 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/>.
2. 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 two stewards wearing high-viz and carrying a whistle at each closure point. One floating steward is in the middle. Therefore, for every PlayStreet you will have a **minimum of five stewards**.
- The closure points at each end of the road 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).

### 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 have between 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.

### 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 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!

