

EXETER SCHOOL STREETS

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, GOVERNORS AND STAFF

Are you concerned about dangerous driving and parking near Exeter's schools during the 'school run'?

This briefing explains how to be part of the solution if you are a parent, governor or staff member at an affected school.

This guide has been written to provide information for anyone interested in exploring the idea of a School Street at a school in Exeter. It has been written to reflect the new national guidance on School Streets and the fact that Devon County Council can take powers to enforce School Streets on a sustained basis.

What is a 'School Street'?

School Streets are initiatives that create safer, healthier, and more pleasant environments outside schools by temporarily restricting motor vehicle access during peak drop-off and pick-up times. These restrictions typically operate for around 1-2 hours in the morning and afternoon during school term times.

The Government has recently brought in stronger guidance for School Streets which will make them effective, as they now have to be supported by enforcement and monitoring. This most commonly takes the form of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) i.e. drivers who ignore the restrictions receive fines.

Previously, School Street initiatives in Devon relied on staff and parents acting as volunteer stewards. This has not been successful, so the compulsory enforcement included in the new Government Guidance is a big step forward.

How do you get a School Street set up?

A School Street initiative requires time and effort on the part of all those involved. They cannot be imposed but are developed collaboratively by an engagement process which includes all of the main stakeholders - parents, governors, staff, local residents and Devon County Council, the authority with the power to create the Transport Regulation Orders needed for a School Street.

The enforcement element, whether it is ANPR, moving bollards or anything else, is costly and therefore each School Street initiative is dependent on sufficient funding being found by Devon County Council.

What are the benefits of School Streets?

School streets put children first. They provide space for children to talk, scoot, play or pause on the way to school. These schemes are overwhelmingly popular with parents, teachers and pupils. The Government's guidance gives the benefits of School Streets as follows:

"School Streets can improve the experiences and safety of schools' pupils, staff, visitors, and neighbours at peak school arrival and departure times. Schemes can support the delivery of a range of benefits at the individual, school, neighbourhood and broader local authority level, including:

- removal of congestion and reduction in emissions outside schools
- reduced instances of dangerous driving, parking and turning outside schools at times of day when many children and families are present
- fewer road safety issues and improved perceptions of road safety
- increased levels of walking, wheeling and cycling to school
- enhanced opportunities for social interaction
- improved physical and mental health amongst pupils
- increased pupil independence
- developing early active travel habits which can be carried into later life"



The steps that are typically worked through are:

- Establish that there is a wish to at least explore having a School Street for your school
- Establish whether the school is ready to engage straight away, or whether a group of parents might need to lobby for this to happen
- Agree a process for at least stage 1 of the work eg set up a steering group, agree boundaries of what is being done etc
- Set up liaison contact with Devon County Council so that they are involved from an early stage, particularly in relation to the realities of timing and funding for a possible scheme
- Keep your Ward Councillors engaged too -they cannot control what Devon County Council does, but they can help speak up for residents.
- Undertake research phase which can comprise:
 - Information, views and data gathered by and from local stakeholders
 - Data contributed or new data researched by Devon County Council
 - Review and plan next stage



EXETER CITY COUNCIL MOTION ON SCHOOL STREETS, DECEMBER 17TH 2024

Green Councillors put forward a Motion asking the City Council to push the County Council to be more active on School Streets. The Motion was carried. The Council 'calls on Devon County Council to work with schools and communities to increase the number of School Streets in Exeter, where schools are willing to explore this option and to ensure full consultation with residents.'



Other useful information

Government Guidance on School Streets

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-streets-how-to-set-up-and-manage-a-scheme/school-streets-how-to-set-up-and-manage-a-scheme>

Bicycle Bus

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/get-active/what-is-a-bike-bus-and-how-can-i-set-one-up/>
Parent organised shared bike rides to school

School Streets Campaign

Great material written for parents
<http://schoolstreets.org.uk/>

Sustrans School Street Information

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/sustrans-school-streets/>

Devon County Council

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/safe-travel/road-safety/schools/school-streets/>

Portsmouth

<https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s48200/School%20Streets%20-%20Options%20report%20appendix%20A.pdf>

West Berkshire

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/school-streets-about>

Who pays for School Streets?

School Streets are funded via the County Council and depend on securing funding. Costs can be significant and this means that most Councils take a 'one school at a time' approach and work with schools that show the greatest interest. Sometimes pilot schemes are set up first to test things out.

BRIEFING ON SCHOOL STREETS FROM EXETER'S GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS

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