

Wirral School Streets Update and Prioritisation Criteria

Background

Driving children to school can seem the safest, easiest or quickest option for some people resulting in increased cars at, or near to the school gates. This creates a challenging environment for those who want to walk and wheel on the journey to and from school and it can discourage people from actively travelling due to the perceptions of safety.

In addition, school related parking generates a significant number of enquiries for elected members, Wirral Council and Merseyside Police.

The Road Safety Team have resources available for all Wirral Schools to help address concerns and increase the numbers of people actively travelling. These are set out in Wirral Council's Road Safety Plan 2023-2027 (see also Alternatives to School Streets page 2). A School Street is just one of these available measures to address concerns.

To support the ongoing road safety education and behaviour change programmes we also deliver capital programmes through Safer Routes to School, Pedestrian Improvement Schemes etc. The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers routinely attend Wirral Schools to encourage compliance through enforcement activity. Merseyside Police work closely with us on reported issues.

Wirral Council has signed up to the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Road Safety Strategy, the strategic outcomes are:

- A reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions working to a target of no avoidable collisions by 2040
- Creating the conditions for more people to make safer journeys on foot or bicycle and enabling more children to walk or cycle to school.
- Contributing to improved air quality and reducing climate changing CO₂ emissions

Wirral council's adopted Road Safety Plan 2023-2027 sets out delivery of the LCR Road Safety Strategy, locally.

What is a School Street?

A School Street is a stretch of road outside a school that is temporarily closed to traffic during school drop off and pick-up times. A school street can benefit the whole school community, including those living close to the school. They aim to:

- limit traffic in the road outside the school at key times to create a predominantly car free zone

- reduce avoidable short car journeys and unsafe parking close to school
- encourage mode shift, particularly short journeys of less than 3km
- create happier, healthier and calmer environments around schools
- improve the perception of safety making it an environment where people choose to walk or wheel

It is recognised that a School Street will not always be the suitable solution for every school. The council's education, enforcement and engineering schemes aim to address issues around Wirral Schools. Please refer to Wirral Council's Road Safety Plan 2023-2027 for a full list, examples of other alternatives are listed below:

Alternatives to School Streets

Wirral Council provides access to the National Accreditation platform Modeshift STARS which is recognised by the Department for Transport (DfT). All schools can sign up for free and begin their journey to accreditation.

The council's Active Travel Officers work closely with several schools annually to help support them embed activities and initiatives. Initiatives including Junior Travel Ambassadors and Scooting Stars have been designed to create enthusiasm for other ways to travel to school and reduce the need to park outside the school gates. We provide banners and resources and toolkits for managing school related parking within the Park Elsewhere, Show you Care campaign. Our Road Safety rolling programme is offered to all schools.

For some families the option to walk or wheel the whole route to school is not possible due to commitments and personal circumstances. We promote schemes to encourage Park and Stride, to park a distance away from the school and walk and wheel for the remainder of the journey. The Scooting Stars project works fits this option as scooters are generally smaller and can fit in the boot of a car more easily.

Guiding Principles on selecting future School Street locations

The suitability for a location to be adopted as a School Street is governed by several factors. To ensure the scheme can be managed effectively, achieve the aims of a school street and avoid disruption on the wider road network for other road users including residents and local schools; it is important that a School Street is used as the best fit for both the location and the problem that is trying to be addressed.

- Future School Streets should not be implemented in streets with any other traffic generators in the proposed closure, e.g. shops, businesses, health centres, leisure facilities etc. as this will have an impact on the schemes ability

to reduce traffic entering the proposed School Street and levels of compliance.

- If an alternate diversion route would be unsuitable e.g. has a considerable impact on the network and / or the local neighbourhood, then a road closure should not be implemented
- With the roll out of 20mph limits, it is best to select schools where the road is within a slower 20mph limit.
- To ensure the scheme is embedded effectively, the education and behaviour change programme should support and evaluate the implementation of the school street initiative. This programme will be delivered by the Active Travel Officers within the Road Safety Team.
- Existing School Street schemes both locally and nationally have shown that the full involvement of the school is essential. In Bradford, the council will only accept expressions of interest directly from the school, not from a third party acting on their behalf, and will require a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed. Leeds Council requests Expressions of Interest forms direct from schools.
- Additional consideration should be applied where the size and complexity of the school street layout e.g. where there are multiple access points and entrances which could pose a challenge for managing the scheme and compliance.
- The numbers of residents and properties affected should be considered in the suitable selection of a school street location, the aim is to reduce vehicle movements
- Where a school has multiple entrances and only one road has been selected for closure, this could have an impact on the other entrance and residents. Each site would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis in partnership with the school.

Considering these factors in an early stage will ensure the school street has the best chance of meeting its aims. The School Streets Matrix and Prioritisation Criteria is set out on page 6.

Enforcement and Compliance

An important aspect for Wirral School Streets is quality schemes over quantity. We have worked to understand what is working and how to get sites working more

effectively. We understand that there are reputational implications for the council when a scheme is considered to be poorly managed.

We do not currently have enforcement capabilities for all School Streets as this falls under the responsibilities of Merseyside Police. We need to implement the schemes in a managed way for Merseyside Police resources in line with other duties and the wider role out of the Road Safety Plan. ANPR camera technology is an option we are progressing, however there are considerable costs involved in this option.

Signed-only schemes work for the majority of motorists, however research undertaken by Dr Sarah Toy on the psychology of drivers, indicates that some drivers will resist compliance due to habit, inconvenience or opposition to change. Research identifies that these motorists, or 'defiers' require enforcement mechanisms to ensure consistent compliance. We have observed similar behaviour within Phase 1 and Phase 2 schools and poor, or low-compliance makes a scheme more challenging to manage.

Options for enforcement could include physical barriers, camera enforcement or increased Police presence. These measures are more effective when supported by education and engagement programmes to help 'defiers' understand the reasons behind the rules

- Physical barriers: Analysis of Wirral schools contained within Phase 1 and Phase 2 indicate that two schools, which staff a temporary road closure barrier have the highest proportion of compliance within our School Streets trials.
- Police Enforcement: Merseyside Police cannot attend each School Street daily, they remain committed to supporting the council and communities where resources are available, and we have visited schools in partnership. Unfortunately, we have observed, the levels of noncompliance return when the Police are not in attendance.

Analysis of Raeburn Primary School in Bromborough confirms compliance levels are low and requires additional support. When the School Street at Raeburn Primary School was made permanent, it included a caveat that ANPR should be installed within 1 year, (subject to DfT approval and consultation) or an alternate traffic scheme to be considered. Merseyside Police have been supporting Raeburn Primary School Street with ad hoc visits where possible.

- ANPR: Greenleas Primary was the first School Street pilot to launch in Wirral and we applied for powers for Moving Traffic Offences under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act were granted. Greenleas Primary School, ANPR will be trialled during the financial year 2024/25

We will extend the powers to the existing 5 School Street locations (as set out in Appendix 1). We aim to have powers to enforce all School Streets schemes.

Initially we will trial ANPR cameras at Greenleas Primary School and extend these powers to Raeburn Primary School.

Raeburn Primary, Moreland Avenue will be added to the ANPR trial during the 2025/2026 financial year.

The trial of ANPR technology at these two schools will enable us to compare its effectiveness to existing School Street schemes which utilise a physical barrier.

Real Time Monitoring at School Streets

Implementing school streets aims to reduce the number of short trips in vehicles, which could reduce vehicle use and emissions of greenhouse gases (CO₂) and reduces air pollution emissions (Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter) in the proximity of the school.

The existing monitoring method for air pollution currently in use at school street sites does not enable detailed analysis of pollution levels, as it only provides an annual average level of pollution at the site. Investment in modern 'real time' monitoring would enable further analysis of pollution levels on an hourly basis, e.g. peak times at school drop off and pick up) and help demonstrate the positive effects of school street on air quality. In 2025/2026 we will look to improve the measurement of future schools so we have additional data to help monitor the success levels.

School Street Prioritisation Matrix

Stage 1

There are 4 qualifying questions that will be asked to assess if the proposed location is suitable for a School Street.

1. Is the proposed School Street located within a 20mph speed limit?
2. Is the proposed School Street on a local bus route (which operates during peak school pick up and drop off)?
3. Are there other known traffic generators on the proposed school street that require access by vehicles during School Street operation times?
4. Is the proposed location on an A or B road or a through-route with no suitable alternative route available? *An A road is defined as trunk or principal roads. They are often described as the main roads and tend to have heavy traffic flows. B Roads tend to connect different areas and feed traffic between A roads and smaller roads on the network.*

In order to progress to Stages 2 and 3 the schools must pass Stage 1.

Stage 2

Senior Leadership Team School expression of interest form

The success of schemes will depend on a range of factors. School streets tend to be successful when children, families and the wider community understand the benefits. This helps to build wider support for the scheme

Stage 3

It is necessary to be able to prioritise the shortlist to ensure that we can direct the resources to the area where we can have the most benefit.

The following criteria will be used to prioritise schools:

- Traffic Flow
- Mean Speed
- Recorded Collisions within the last 5 years
- Number of properties affected
- Diversion Route (length of diversion and suitability of diversion)
- Number of roads / Points of entry that would be required e.g. is it manageable?
- Known traffic problems e.g. consistent issues reported
- Level of Modeshift Accreditation
- Consideration of the proportion of children with SEN Support or an Education, Health and Care Plan.

ACTION PLAN 2025/26

	2025/26
Greenleas Primary School, Wallasey	Approval from DfT Granted under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. Camera to be procured and installed during financial year 2024/25 as part of trial in using ANPR for School Streets Schools. Ongoing review to see if any additional measures can be introduced. Continued support from Active Travel Officers.
Raeburn Primary School, Bromborough	Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 powers to be extended, ANPR camera to be procured and installed during financial year 2025/26, as part of trial. Ongoing review to see if any additional measures can be introduced. Continued support from Active Travel Officers.
Liscard Primary, Wallasey	Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 powers to be extended, ANPR camera options to be reviewed during financial year 2025/26 as part of trial. Ongoing review to see if any additional measures can be introduced. Continued support from Active Travel Officers.
Christ Church CE Primary, Birkenhead	Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 powers to be extended, ANPR camera options to be reviewed during financial year 2025/26 as part of trial. Ongoing review to see if any additional measures can be introduced. Continued support from Active Travel Officers.
St Albans Primary, Wallasey	Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 powers to be extended, ANPR camera options to be reviewed during financial year 2025/26 in line with the current barrier scheme, where compliance is good. Ongoing review to see if any additional measures can be introduced. Continued support from Active Travel Officers.
St Georges Primary, Wallasey	Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 powers to be extended, ANPR camera options to be reviewed during financial year 2025/26 in line with the current barrier scheme, where compliance is good. Ongoing review to see if any additional measures can be introduced. Continued support from Active Travel Officers.

Future School Selection for 2025/2026

Signed-only School Street schemes place a pressure on Council resources due to increased enquiries and on Merseyside Police resources who cannot attend all schools daily. Delivery of schemes need to be in line with available resources and still enable the Road Safety Team and partners to deliver the wider Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2027.

Merseyside Police are supportive of continuing to support our signed only schemes as we undertake the next stage of the trial. We have also discussed any further schemes being taken on in the next year to be self-enforcing where possible. This means barrier only schemes in 2025/26 would be prioritised. Merseyside Police are in support of this approach.

Low compliance leads to dissatisfaction from schools and residents and parents and can have reputational impacts on the council.

School Streets will be introduced in 2025/2026 where signage compliant with the Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) is supported by Barrier operated by suitably trained volunteer for temporary road closure

The next 3 schools to be selected in 2025/26 will be prioritised for School Streets where they can be operated by a suitably trained volunteer and road closure equipment.

The 53 requests for a School Streets (as set out in Appendix 2) would be assessed and prioritised utilising the School Street criteria as set out on page 6.

Appendix 1: School Streets in Wirral

Phase	School	Scheme Ref	Scheme Launched	Consultation Close (6months)	End of Experimental Traffic Regulation Order	Scheme Type	Modeshift STARS Accreditation Status
1	Greenleas Primary	SS1	15-Nov-21	16-May-22	15-May-23	Signed Only Scheme, Moving Traffic Powers approved by DfT	Bronze Status July 2024
1	Liscard Primary	SS2	02-Mar-22	02-Sep-22	02-Sep-23	Signed Only Scheme, Moving Traffic Powers awaited from DfT	Bronze Status July 2024
1	Christ Church CE, Birkenhead	SS3	28-Feb-22	28-Aug-22	28-Aug-23	Signed Only Scheme, Moving Traffic Powers awaited from DfT	Silver Status July 2024
2	Raeburn Primary	SS5	31-Oct-22	30-Apr-23	30-Apr-24	Signed Only Scheme, Moving Traffic Powers awaited from DfT	Bronze Status September 2022
2	St Georges Primary (Lower site)	SS4	17-Oct-22	17-Apr-23	17-Apr-24	Signed-Scheme supported by barrier operated by School staff. Moving Traffic Powers awaited from DfT	Bronze Status December 2023

2	St Albans Primary	SS6	17-Oct-22	17-Apr-23	17-Apr-24	Signed-Scheme supported by barrier operated by School staff Moving Traffic Powers awaited from DfT	Bronze Status July 2024
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Appendix 2: Full List of School Street Requests (By Ward)

School	Ward	Raised By
1. Brackenwood Infants	Bebington	Councillor
2. Brackenwood Junior School	Bebington	Councillor
3. Higher Bebington Junior School	Bebington	Councillor
4. St Andrew's CE Primary	Bebington	Resident
5. Town Lane Infant School	Bebington	Councillor
6. Wirral Grammar School for Girls	Bebington	Resident
7. Bidston Village CE Primary	Bidston & St James	School
8. Our Lady & St Edwards Catholic	Bidston & St James	School
9. St Werburgh's Catholic Primary	Birkenhead & Tranmere	Officer
10. Woodlands Primary	Birkenhead & Tranmere	School
11. Church Drive Primary	Bromborough	Councillor
12. Co-op Academy Woodslee	Bromborough	Councillor
13. Brookhurst Primary	Clatterbridge	School
14. Poulton Lancelyn Primary	Clatterbridge	Resident
15. Co-op Academy Hillside	Claughton	School
16. Heygarth Primary	Eastham	School
17. Irby Primary	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	School
18. Greasby Infant School	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	Councillor
19. Greasby Junior School	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	Councillor
20. Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary	Greasby, Frankby & Irby	Councillor
21. Barnston Primary	Heswall	Resident
22. Gayton Primary	Heswall	Resident
23. St Peter's CE Heswall Primary School	Heswall	School
24. Great Meols Primary School	Hoylake & Meols	Resident
25. Hoylake Holy Trinity CE Primary	Hoylake & Meols	School
26. West Kirby Grammar School	Hoylake & Meols	Councillor
27. Leasowe Primary	Leasowe & Moreton East	School
28. Sacred Heart Catholic Primary	Leasowe & Moreton East	Councillor
29. Christ Church CE Primary Moreton	Moreton West & Saughall Massie	School
30. New Brighton Primary	New Brighton	School
31. Birkenhead High School Academy	Oxton	Councillor
32. Prenton Prep.	Oxton	Councillor
33. Townfield Primary (residential roads)	Oxton	Councillor
34. Woodchurch Road Primary	Oxton	Police

35. Pensby Primary	Pensby & Thingwall	School
36. Devonshire Park Primary	Prenton	Councillor
37. Prenton Primary	Prenton	Councillor
38. Bedford Drive Primary	Rock Ferry	Councillor
39. St Anne's Catholic Primary	Rock Ferry	Resident
40. Well Lane Primary	Rock Ferry	School
41. Park Primary	Seacombe	School
42. Riverside Primary	Seacombe	School
43. Somerville Primary School	Seacombe	Councillor
44. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Seacombe	School
45. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Upton	School
46. Woodchurch CE Aided Primary School	Upton	School
47. Elleray Park School (SEN) Main Site	Wallasey	Councillor
48. The Mosslands School	Wallasey	Councillor
49. Avalon	West Kirby & Thurstaston	School
50. Black Horse Hill Infants	West Kirby & Thurstaston	School
51. Black Horse Hill Juniors	West Kirby & Thurstaston	School
52. Dawpool CE Primary	West Kirby & Thurstaston	Resident
53. West Kirby Primary	West Kirby & Thurstaston	School

