**[TEMPLATE] LETTER REGARDING A SCHOOL STREET**

Dear [Headteacher], [Ward Councillors], [Cabinet Member for transport/environment/air quality in local Council] [Cabinet Member for schools/education in local Council] and [leader of the local Council][[1]](#footnote-1),

**Introduction:**

We are a group of local parents at [school] concerned about traffic and air pollution around the school gates. We are writing to propose that a School Street be implemented on [Road at the school gates] as soon as possible. We note that, partly due to the Covid19 pandemic, there has been an accelerated rollout of School Streets across London and England in the last two years. There are now over 500 School Streets in London, and 200 across the country.

**What are School Streets?**

School Streets are an initiative that transform the roads outside schools at school drop off and pick up times. The idea is simple – at set times every day, the streets around schools are closed to most motor traffic. Signs are put up to inform drivers of the road restrictions, and barriers or cameras can be used to enforce them. Residents, local businesses, and blue badge holders can apply for an exemption.

**Air pollution and traffic:**

A recent TfL study[[2]](#footnote-2) revealed that around 25% of the morning rush hour traffic is made up of parents dropping children to school. Closing the roads around schools to motor traffic reduces exposure to air pollution at the school gate, at times when children are clustered there. It also makes it safer to walk, cycle, and scoot to school, creating a more pleasant environment and giving children a chance to get some exercise. It helps to raise awareness among everyone who passes the road and school about the link between vehicle emissions and health problems.

Air pollution permanently damages children’s health. It is also a particular problem for pregnant women[[3]](#footnote-3). According to the World Health Organisation[[4]](#footnote-4):

1. Air pollution impacts neurodevelopment and cognitive ability and can trigger asthma, and childhood cancer. Children who have been exposed to high levels of air pollution may be at greater risk for chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease later in life.
2. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution because they breathe more rapidly than adults and so absorb more pollutants. They are also closer to the ground, where some pollutants reach peak concentrations (*inter alia* because vehicle exhaust pipes are low to the ground), further increasing the emissions they breathe in at a time when their brains and bodies are still developing.

More widely, it should be noted that **4000** people every year die prematurely as a result of air pollution in London, and tens of thousands across the UK.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Road Safety:**

A final yet important point is the physical safety of children. In 2019, there were 5,200 child pedestrian casualties on UK roads – 39 of which were deaths.[[6]](#footnote-6) In 2020, this increased to 52 child deaths.[[7]](#footnote-7) School Streets offer an obvious solution to improving road safety around schools.

**Conclusion:**

The Government and the Mayor of London are strongly supporting the introduction of School Streets. Accordingly, and in light of the other points above, we believe that the introduction of a School Street outside our school is a priority to protect our children and our community. We seek its introduction as soon as possible and are happy to do whatever we can to assist the school and Council in achieving this.

Yours sincerely,

The Undersigned.

**Signatures:**

[Parent 1]

[Parent 2]

[etc.]

**[OPTIONAL] Stakeholder groups in support:**

1. Some of the email addresses should be on this list <https://www.writetothem.com/> the others will be on the website of your local council. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2018/august/tfl-research-shows-that-walking-or-cycling-to-school-could-take-254-000-cars-off-london-s-roads-each-day> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://inews.co.uk/news/science/why-air-pollution-harms-pregnant-women-and-their-unborn-babies-1764514> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/29-10-2018-more-than-90-of-the-world’s-children-breathe-toxic-air-every-day](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/29-10-2018-more-than-90-of-the-world%E2%80%99s-children-breathe-toxic-air-every-day) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-pollution-applying-all-our-health/air-pollution-applying-all-our-health#:~:text=In%20the%20UK%2C%20air%20pollution,and%2036%2C000%20deaths%20every%20year> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928205/reported-road-casualties-gb-annual-report-2019.pdf>

 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2020/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2020>
 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)