



## Guidance On Stewarding a Play Street

### Setting up the closures

- Two stewards are needed at each closure point. One 'floating' steward is in the middle.
- Stewards wear a high vis top and a whistle – provided by the organiser
- Set up the two closure points simultaneously. String the 'Road Closed' sign to a wheelie bin (or between two wheelie bins). Use 'Road Ahead Closed' signs, if provided, ahead of the closure.
- Use traffic cones, if provided, at closure points.
- Stay inside the barrier for your safety and so drivers can clearly see the signage.

### 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 others.

### Diverting through traffic

- Be friendly when diverting people, smile and point to the diversion route.
- If drivers stop to ask what's happening, briefly explain – e.g. "The road is shut so children can play out for a few hours like we used to when we were kids." It also helps to have Hackney Play Streets flyers you can hand out.

### Residents' access

Residents who live in the closed off street still have vehicle access. As well as explaining the walk-through access, you can show them Hackney Council's written guidance for drivers – see page 3.

*If a resident wants to enter the road in their vehicle:*

- Steward A stays with the driver. Explain that to keep everybody safe, they will be walked in at 5mph once people in the street have moved onto the pavements. Ensure they understand and get their agreement. **Do not open the barrier yet.**
- Meanwhile Steward B walks down the street blowing a whistle, shouting: "Car coming, move onto the pavements." Get help from the floating steward. When the road is clear, Steward B returns to the barrier and stands in front of the car ready to walk it through.
- Steward A removes the barrier briefly to allow the car in.
- Steward B slowly marshals the car into the street, walking directly in front of it. Blow the whistle in short bursts to keep alerting people. Shout out: "Car coming, stay on the pavements".
- Steward A puts the road closure sign/cones back into position as soon as the car passes.
- Once the car is parked, Steward B shouts out: "Safe to play," and returns to the barrier.

*If a resident wants to leave the road in their vehicle:*

- The floating steward asks which way they are going. Now explain the escorted walk-out process and be clear they understand. Alert the two stewards from the appropriate barrier.
- The floating steward stays with the driver, while Steward B walks up the street blowing a whistle, shouting: "Car coming, move onto the pavements". Check for children around the car.
- Once the road is clear, Steward B marshals the car out by walking directly in front of it, shouting "Car coming, stay on pavements," blowing the whistle in short bursts to keep alerting people.
- Steward A removes the barrier when Steward B gets there, the barrier is closed immediately after the car has passed through. Now shout: "Safe to play".

**Continued ...**

## Floating steward

The floater's key role is keeping an eye and ear out for engines starting up within the closure – and to stop anyone trying to leave suddenly – explaining the walk-through process as above and alerting other stewards. They should also assist the other stewards when cars are walked through.

## Cyclists

Explain to cyclists what is happening, and children are playing in the street. Say they can still enter but must go very slowly/cautiously (5 mph) or walk their bike through. If you encounter issues with cyclists coming through too fast – using bunting across the barrier area can deter this.

## Dealing with difficult drivers

Sometimes drivers may become angry or difficult. Keep calm but assertive, explaining the closure is legal and temporary (point to the legal notice that will be up the street and hand them the attached council guidance). If this isn't working, call for back up from the organiser or other stewards. If you feel threatened dial 999 and alert parents to ensure children's safety.

## Reopening the road and the buffer zone

There have been cases where children have gone back in the street in the immediate aftermath of a play street finishing and in one case a child was knocked by a car. For this reason, we recommend a *buffer zone* approach to reopening the road. This means you formally end the play street session 10-15 minutes *before* you intend to physically reopen the road. You also encourage parents to take their children indoors before the street reopens.

- Stewards B from each end walk down the street giving a series of warnings eg 10-minute warning and then 5-minute warning in the lead up to the formal end of the session. The floater should give lots of help here too. Stewards A stays at each closure point at all times.
- During this stage, encourage people to clear rubbish. Handing bin bags is a good cue!
- To mark the end of the session, all stewards blow whistles repeatedly - or ring a bell loudly – and tell parents for children's safety, you recommend taking them inside before the road reopens.
- After the session has ended, take at least 10 minutes ensuring everyone is out of the road, and that anyone left on the pavements is aware cars are about to return.
- To reopen the street, Stewards A from each end walk towards the middle of the street shouting out: "Cars coming through". One they meet in the middle the Stewards B do the same walking the wheelie bins with 'Road Closed' sign attached ensuring that the road is clear and ready for normal vehicle access.

*The Hackney Play Streets Project – part of Hackney Play Association and funded by Hackney Council - issued this guidance. See [www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets](http://www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets) The guidance is adapted from the 'Stewards' Information' note produced by Playing Out, the community interest company which pioneered the 'playing out' model of road closures and supports anyone who wants children to play out more.*

Go to: [www.playingout.net](http://www.playingout.net)

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## **Guidance Notes for drivers using a street while a play street session is occurring**

1. Drivers must wait until children and adults have been cleared from the street by stewards.
2. A steward will inform a driver when they can move off.
3. A steward will escort vehicles in and out - walking in front of the vehicles. They must drive at a walking pace a maximum of 5mph.
4. Vehicles/Drivers must drive with due care and attention at all times, with special consideration that there are children playing in the street.
5. Visitors/delivery drivers have the same obligations. It is your duty as a resident within the street to inform anyone leaving your property of their obligations so that they don't just drive off without first informing a steward and allowing children to be cleared from street etc.
6. Through drivers are not permitted access to the street while a Temporary Play Street session is happening.

***If you have an enquiry about play streets, please contact Hackney Council's Streetscene team.***

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