



Guidance On Stewarding a Play Street

Setting up the closures

- There must be two stewards at *each* closure point. One floating steward is in the middle.
- Each steward must wear a high-viz jacket and carry a whistle – provided by the organiser.
- The closure points at each end of the road should be set up *simultaneously* by stringing a 'Road Closed' sign on a wheelie bin – positioned in the middle of the road, or alternatively the sign can be strung between two wheelie bins.
- 'Road Ahead Closed' signs, if provided, should be used before each closure point to give drivers extra warning – positioned to the side of the road.
- Use traffic cones across the road at closure points – these are provided by the Council.
- Children should not play in the road until the street is closed off 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 that drivers can 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 other parents.

Diverting through traffic

- Be friendly when diverting people. Smile and point to the diversion route.
- If drivers ask, explain briefly: "The road is shut for a few hours so children can play out."
- It also helps to have Hackney Play Streets flyers you can hand out.

Residents' access

Residents who live in the street still have vehicle access (in and out of the street). If 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.
- You can also show drivers a copy of Hackney Council's written guidance to drivers – see page 3.
- 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."
- 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.
- Keep blowing the whistle in short bursts 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.
- Once the car has parked or left the road, shout out "Safe to play".

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.

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 stop any vehicle from attempting to suddenly leave the road. 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. Explain the closure is legal and temporary – show them the legal notice, which should be up on lampposts near closure points. 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 sought to return to play in the road after a play street 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. In essence, this means that you end the play street 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 indoors *before* the street reopens.

- One steward from each end and 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 play session, all stewards should blow their whistles repeatedly, shout out: "Play street 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. Talk to parents individually – tell them 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.
- One steward from each end should remove all bins, barriers and road signs.
- 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.

The Hackney Play Streets Project – part of Hackney Play Association and funded by Hackney Council - issued this guidance. Go to: www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets where you can download this document and other free tools. 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, with free tools and resources. Go to: www.playingout.net

A project by:



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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 or slower.

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 the street first.

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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