

A safer, healthier, more joyful school run



London's streets are a hostile place for children and the school run is the most dangerous and polluted part of their day.



A surge in traffic at exactly the same time as thousands of children are walking and wheeling to school makes London's streets hazardous and stressful. Although 80% of children walk, cycle or take the bus to school each day, 20% of children are driven.

These car journeys are over a quarter of London's morning rush hour traffic. They push the road network to capacity, cause gridlock, congestion and road danger. This pressure on our roads is made worse by carspreading, the increasing numbers of SUVs on our streets, towering over children, blocking their views and dominating their space. The school run – pick up and drop off – is when most children die or are seriously injured on our roads.

YouGov polling has shown London parents think cycling to school is a better way of spending quality time with their child than driving, and yet a clear majority (79%) feel it's not safe for children to cycle on the road, while 61% are concerned that bigger cars make it more dangerous for children to walk and cycle.

We want children to be independent, not car dependent. We believe the school run can be a safe, **healthy and joyful** part of a child's day.

We want to help kids **gain confidence and life skills on our streets**, navigating journeys on their own, **giving valuable time back to busy parents**. We want to see journeys to school that are health-giving, fun-loving and community-building.

Local councillors hold the power and influence to create Streets for Kids. We are calling for every candidate in the London local elections to make this a reality by committing to the following demands...



An effective school street for every school.*



Both primary & secondary schools. Schools on roads that can't be closed should close their side roads, with alternative measures that give children safe access — like better crossings, slower speeds and wider pavements.

A school street is where the road by a school is closed to traffic during the hours of school drop off and pick up, to prioritise the health and safety of the majority of families who are walking or wheeling to school. Exemptions are provided for residents, blue badge holders and SEND pupils.

Currently there are over 800 school streets in London, but they vary in their ability to protect children. We want effective school streets and this means they should be:

Substantial – when only a small area outside the school gates is closed, a school street can present the same dangers as before, just in different locations. A school street has to be big enough to disperse traffic so there are no seriously problematic points that children have to pass through to get to school. It should be a significant amount of the road the school is on, and additional adjacent roads which are impacted by school traffic.

Enforced – permanent cameras or bollards are effective ways of restricting cars from accessing the school street area. They are reliable and do not depend on volunteers or sporadic monitoring by mobile camera units.



Once boroughs have implemented effective school streets, they should connect them together to create **joined up school street networks**. These are made by linking effective school streets together, using timed restrictions on the roads that connect them. These networks fully realise the potential of school streets by giving children a comprehensive car-free route on which they can walk or cycle the majority of their school run safely.

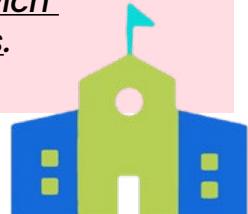
Measurement:

Number of effective school streets and school street networks in the borough by 2030.

Case Studies:

Effective school streets — [Rockmount Primary School, Croydon](#). The school street closes the entirety of the road at the primary school's entrance, plus nearby roads — nearly a kilometre of network in total.

School street networks — [Rosendale school street with the Dulwich networks of timed closures](#).



Access to a cargo bike for every family



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Electric Cargo bikes have huge, yet largely untapped, potential in the UK. In other countries, they are a normal, everyday way for families to travel—especially for school runs and local trips—usually serving as a car replacement to create safer, calmer streets.

They can often be the quickest and most convenient way to transport children for local trips and they are significantly cheaper than owning or travelling by car. A recent trial of loaning e-cargo bikes to households in UK cities that were relatively car-dependent led to more than 50% of car-use being switched to e-cargo bikes. Less car journeys make the roads safer for those walking and cycling. One in five of the households purchased an e-cargo bike at the end of the trial.

But right now, the barriers are too high. The upfront cost of an e-cargo bike, the lack of secure storage, and the fear of having to ride on busy, hostile roads make it an unfeasible option for many families—especially those on lower incomes who could benefit the most from cheaper,

Measurement:

Level of council funds directed to enabling household cargo bike uptake.

healthier travel. We believe boroughs can deliver a step change by committing to a dedicated cargo-bike fund to unlock the potential of family cargo bike use in London to make it more accessible and equitable. This would include:

- Delivering secure cargo bike parking options including overnight (residential) and destination parking.
- Subsidising the purchase of cargo bikes, especially for low income households.
- Investing in community trials and cargo bike share schemes that focus on accessibility, training and behaviour change.

Case Studies:

On-street cargo bike hangars - Westminster

Cargo bike bays near schools - Richmond

Significant subsidies for cargo bike hire costs - Hammersmith & Fulham, Richmond, Greenwich

New “flexi” community cargo bike scheme, drop off at any hub - Hackney

Reallocate kerb space in child-friendly ways

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Children now are “the least active generation ever,” and with 20% of London’s children having no access to a garden, it is important that they are able to safely navigate the world on their doorstep. Cars are stationary over 90% of the time, parked at the kerbside, dominating the pavements of many London boroughs. Add to this the huge growth in SUVs – from 3% to 30% of London’s cars in 20 years – and it is becoming impossible for children to see past the cars to safely cross their local streets.

Boroughs should prioritise the kerbside as much as possible in favour of child-friendly measures that help kids to be safer, more active and healthy. We are asking councils to deliver a dedicated kerbside strategy by 2027 that will enable them to:

- Increase double yellow lines, zig zag lines and informal crossings so children can see and be seen.
- Install more parklets, cycle hangars, shared-use mobility bays and greenery whilst maintaining safe sight lines.
- Introduce fairer parking tariffs to discourage cars spreading, when cars are unnecessarily large and dangerous.

Measurement:

Percentage of kerbside dedicated to these child-friendly measures and fairer parking tariffs.

Case Studies:

Department for Transport Inclusive Mobility statutory guidance (p43) recommends provision of informal crossings at least every 100 metres, where possible, to avoid the need for pedestrians, particularly wheelchair users, to make lengthy detours to cross the road. Due consideration must be given to pedestrian desire lines. This aspect of guidance is routinely ignored across London, even though it is relatively straightforward and inexpensive to implement. Many residential streets have parking from one end to the other, with no safe or accessible place to cross, leaving families with children having to attempt to cross between parked cars, which are increasingly larger.

All borough parking spaces are in Controlled Parking Zones – Hackney Commitment to allocate 25% of parking space to sustainable uses by 2030 – Lambeth

Implementing weight based parking charges for SUVs – Cardiff, Paris

“Parking policy for climate and health” from London Councils and CitiScience”.



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