

Residents in European cities overwhelmingly support school streets, new survey



Photo: Sergio Gatto

What are 'School Streets' and why do they matter?

School Streets are accessible spaces around schools where walking and cycling is prioritised over motor vehicles, at least during drop-off and pick-up times. They provide immediate health benefits for children, through the reduction of air pollution in the vicinity of the school, where they spend a big part of their day, and encourage families to switch from driving to walking, cycling or public transport.

Today, school streets exist in many European cities and the number is growing. However, there are still many schools waiting for one. We believe every school should have a school street.

School streets put children first and create more child-friendly cities

Children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution and at risk from road collisions with cars. School streets address these issues by prioritising children over cars. By reducing traffic around schools, they can help to improve air quality and remove the potential for accidents. This can help to encourage children and their parents to leave the car at home.

Walking or cycling to school helps children to develop independence and to get some exercise before arriving in the classroom. Teachers have reported that children's concentration levels are

higher if they have been active before school. Opening the streets around schools enables parents to have quality time with their children in a calmer environment and they provide space for community connection.

Given the above, it comes as no surprise that in places where school streets are created, they unanimously prove to be popular amongst children, parents, teachers and residents alike, as numerous studies show.

No surprise that school streets are popular

The Clean Cities Campaign commissioned research into public attitudes on school streets, which goes into more detail than simply studying attitudes among children and parents.

Kantar Public, the organisation behind the 'Eurobarometer' surveys for the European Commission, conducted a representative survey in June 2022. One thousand people in five cities each - Brussels, Barcelona, Paris, London and Warsaw - were asked for their views. The results have been

weighted by gender and age to be representative of the polled city's population.

Residents were asked to what extent they support or oppose a number of potential measures, including the introduction of school streets. Summarised below is the response to the question ***"To what extent do you support closing streets in front of schools and nurseries to motorised traffic, at least at pick up and drop off times?"***

On average

71%

of respondents supported closing streets in front of schools and nurseries in their city to motorised traffic, at least during drop-off and pick-up times.



People want School Streets!



Representative opinion poll carried out by Kantar Public in June 2022 on behalf of the Clean Cities Campaign amongst n=1000 adult respondents per city, weighted by aged and gender. Detailed results: 39% strongly support, 32% somewhat support, 13% neither support nor oppose, 8% somewhat oppose, 6% strongly oppose, 2% don't know.

Infographic: Doug Dawson (Layout) and Kantar Public (Survey)

School streets are popular and enjoy widespread support in all cities polled

On average, 71% of respondents supported closing streets in front of schools and nurseries in their city to motorised traffic, at least during drop-off and pick-up times. Only one in six respondents opposed the measure. One in six neither support nor oppose the measure or do not have an opinion on the issue.

Levels of support vary between cities due to the local context and circumstances, but in each city, a large majority backs the introduction of school streets. Support is lowest in Warsaw (where 64% support them), but exceeds two thirds in Brussels, London and Paris and reaches 76% in Barcelona.

A school street for every school by 2030

The Clean Cities Campaign and Street for Kids believes that creating child-friendly cities should be a priority for policy-makers everywhere.

School streets are a proven and easy to implement intervention that benefits the most vulnerable, our children. They are building blocks for a more liveable city for everybody. We are calling for every school, where feasible, to have a school street by 2030.

- ▶ **Develop a clear plan to roll out school streets** in front of all kindergartens, elementary and middle schools by 2030 at the latest, with intermediate annual targets.
- ▶ **Roll out temporary street closures first**, and use the time to engage with residents, schools, parents and children themselves in the definition of the project. Consider tactical urbanism as a way to roll out a temporary School Street.
- ▶ **Make School Streets permanent.** Limiting hours to only drop-off and pick-up times can work for temporary School Streets but ultimately, most School Streets should become permanent. This will support a lasting change of transport patterns and make enforcement easier.
- ▶ **Install and maintain the necessary (basic) infrastructure.** School Streets require (basic) infrastructure to ensure permanent closure of the street to cars, such as bollards, flower pots, barriers. Some of these can be built locally, such as the 'Wikiblocks' used in Toronto.
- ▶ **Plan an awareness raising campaign** with parents who drive on the benefits of school streets. Consider incentivising and promoting autonomous initiatives by parents and teachers, such as bike to school days.
- ▶ **School Streets need to be coupled with a programme to increase the safety and ease of journeys to and from school by bike, on foot or with public transport.** It is essential that the way to school be safe, which usually also requires infrastructure improvements. Appointing mobility managers for each school (district) should also be considered to act as a link between residents and the school community on the one hand, and city hall and the local transport authority on the other hand.



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2030

Annex: Survey Results

Support for the introduction of school streets						
	Total	Brussels	Barcelona	Paris	Warsaw	London
Strongly support	39%	34%	44%	39%	36%	42%
Somewhat support	32%	35%	32%	32%	29%	32%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	14%	13%	13%	13%	12%
Somewhat oppose	8%	7%	6%	7%	12%	6%
Strongly oppose	6%	8%	4%	6%	10%	5%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%

Source: Opinion poll carried out by Kantar Public in June 2022 on behalf of the Clean Cities Campaign. Representative survey amongst n=1000 respondents in each city, weighted by age and gender. Differences between sum of responses and 100% are due to rounding



This briefing was written by the Clean Cities Campaign, using survey data provided by Kantar Public. Kantar Public is a global consulting and research business, providing public policy services to government, the public sector, and corporations.

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