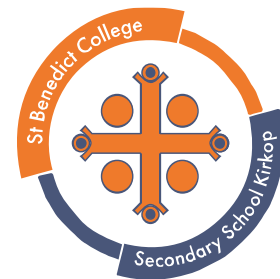


Cycling to school is not as hard as one might think

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I cycle to school every day except when weather conditions are unfavourable (storm). I have been cycling to school for around two years now; a distance of around 2km from Zurrieq to San Benedittu Kirkop Secondary School and back. This trip takes between 8 and 12 minutes and this is my daily experience.

I am encouraged to cycle to school due to an increased flexibility of when I need to leave from home, unlike the school transport, my exercise is improved upon and because cycling is a



hobby I enjoy. The routes I must take are never 100% safe due to the lack of cycling paths, the state of maltese streets and lack of knowledge some drivers may have on what to do when encountering a cyclist on the road. The Maltese streets may only be classified, to a certain extent, safe when being used by experienced cyclists who are comfortable with cycling in such an environment (such as myself).

Some challenges I have to face, especially when locking my bicycle to the bike rack are: having to pass through a door, between an office stairs and piles of books, recycling bags and empty cardboard boxes simultaneously. The rack itself is of a low quality as it can be moved and can damage a bicycle. Due to the lack of space, when every space is taken up, it is nearly impossible to manouver one's way outside.



I would suggest that bike racks should be attached to the ground outside and be lockable to the frame of a bicycle rather than a wheel. Some suggestions I would give to students proceeding to use a



bicycle as their choice of transport to go to school would be: always wearing a helmet, being cautious of one's surroundings and other vehicles, using hand signals to indicate the direction one is taking in a turn and using a bike lane or the safest road available.

If more people were to use this alternative mode of transport rather than being driven by car this would make a significant difference to global warming and air pollution, and for every new cyclist there can be another person inspired to do the same.

