

Can our school be a safe-enough place to call Home?

My school, St Benedict College Secondary School Kirkop welcomes more than 700 people every school day. The question of my investigation is, does everyone feel comfortable at school, and does it provide a safe space for our belongings?. Thanks to some research and interviews with people from our school I have collected their opinions on the school grounds and environment on a normal school day.

Before we get into the school, let's discuss the outside premises of the school and what is around it. The picture below shows the Lidl Supermarket which is directly facing the school.

Photo source: Guidememalta.com



Between the two buildings there is a busy road which is active almost all the time, and according to the EkoSkola Committee's Green school Travel plan,¹ " At around 8:00 am when the traffic is monitored for 5 minutes, it was noted that a maximum of 70 private cars and a minimum of 45 cars passed during different days. It was also noted that a maximum of 15 large vehicles, including Public Buses, passed during this time. No scooter or bikes were monitored during the time". This gives the idea that the road is mostly busy on school days in the morning, when parents are taking their children to school using their private vehicle.

The first concern that comes to mind, the exhaust from all those cars, harming not only the environment by polluting the air, but also us people, especially those who have breathing problems. So how can we solve it? Some people that I have asked said that we have to reduce the usage of private vehicles by encouraging students to use the school transport, or maybe to a larger extent, using electric cars. These are of course very good ideas, but not everybody prefers these methods or just simply do not have access to them.

I researched how students commute to school. It was noticed that some students use multiple means of transport to go to school. According to the Green School Travel Plan, there were 177 students using the bus, 46 by a private vehicle, 27 students that use cars with only one student in it, 16 students who use cars which have more than one student inside, 15 who walk to school and 2 that use a bicycle.

Questioning a teacher who commutes to school by bike, he said that he uses the bicycle to travel to work because it is a good way to exercise and that it makes him feel good. He thinks that students need to be more aware about pollution and urged them "not to be soft". He continued that taking a bicycle can provide other people with more parking space. And he also mentioned that the bike storage needs to be improved so it can be protected from natural elements like the rain and the heat of the sun, and a storage for the helmet and clothing would be ideal. To conclude the interview he said that to reduce pollution we need to stop adding more cars and overusing them and to simply not pollute.

One of the students who commutes to school with his bike said that he likes using the bicycle for exercise. He added that the bike storage was safe but more racks should be added to encourage students to use the bicycle. The student said that he is not polluting and that if the bicycle is used more often it would make a significant change to the earth.

To conclude, many of those interviewed agree that we must make a change otherwise we would not be able to save the earth.

Sources used: GuidemeMalta.com, Green School Travel Plan 2021-2022-
St Benedict College, Secondary School Kirkop