



PRESS RELEASE

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Together Gibraltar Concerns on School Parking are Misguided

HM Government notes the concerns raised by Together Gibraltar regarding underground parking at schools and takes this opportunity to reassure them, and any parents who have approached them, that all measures are being taken to ensure the security of these facilities.

The drop-off facility underneath the new Notre Dame School has proven to have improved safety for pupils, who were previously dropped off outside the school and sometimes on the sides of busy and chaotic roads. Children can now be dropped off in an orderly fashion within the school premises.

When the time comes to put up spaces for sale or rent, this will be subject to a full process of background checks on those purchasing or renting. The premises will also be protected by 24 hour security. It is important to emphasise (and relevant in the context of the reports cited by Together Gibraltar) that these are to be fully secure facilities: nobody will be able to enter or leave without being known and registered as a paying user of them.

The Government feels it is also important to clarify the contextual basis of the reports cited by Together Gibraltar in order to avoid any unnecessary public alarm. Together Gibraltar cites a report by FEMA, the US Department of Homeland Security, without any analysis of or regard for the clear differences in both city planning and security concerns between Gibraltar and the United States.

Furthermore, by taking the UK Government's recommendations out of context, Together Gibraltar have actually twisted their advice. The UK Government report cited by them explicitly states the reasons that the recommendations don't apply to schools: 'They are generally controlled environments, unlike universities and colleges where any member of the public can gain access to the campus.' Student wellbeing and safety is our primary concern. Gibraltar's schools are not public areas and will not become public areas.

Minister for Education and the Environment, the Hon John Cortes, said: "Together Gibraltar should know better than to reference any report in such a way and to reduce multi-faceted, nuanced issues to black and white simplicity in an attempt to prove a point. Furthermore, I am sure that Together



Gibraltar, and many others, will agree that land is one of Gibraltar's most valuable assets and a holistic approach to town planning is necessary in order to make the best use of it. Secure parking facilities under schools provides for the needs of teachers and students to have safe access to schools whilst simultaneously alleviating the impact of the school run on our roads and providing secure off-street parking."