Enhancing the vicinity of middle schools

Improving attention to young adolescents and their needs

RECOMMENDATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2024

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KEY POINTS

Specific characteristics of middle schools: enhancing the vicinity of middle schools (11 - 15 year olds) requires a different approach to that for other schools, owing to the particular issues, the people affected and the problems specific to each context. The particular issues go beyond the school entrance area, requiring a broader vision of access routes, from the forecourt to the bus stop or from the forecourt to the local square (p. 25). Middle-school pupils are more autonomous, but also more prone to risky behaviour and therefore vulnerable (p. 16 and p. 18). Problems are specific to each context. Some middle schools open onto the street, while others have a dedicated forecourt, are in a cul-de-sac or in a neighbourhood centre (p. 20-22).

Understanding habits and use: in-depth understanding of the habits and use of middle-school pupils is essential to effectively meeting their needs. This requires us to ask the right questions regarding who attends the school premises, in what circumstances and why (p. 12-13, p. 16-17).

Prior analysis: an analysis must be performed upstream, involving all the parties concerned (teaching staff, technicians, elected representatives, parents and pupils), in order to determine everyone's needs and expectations. This analysis confirms the road safety issues (p. 18-19).

Active participation of pupils: it is not enough to simply ask pupils for their opinion. It is crucial to actively involve them in working on the development projects (p. 12-13).

Inclusion in the civic education pathway: development projects should be integrated into the pupils' civic education pathway, empowering them and encouraging them to engage. They can also play a role in their orientation projects (p. 12-13).

The right balance between safety and a relaxed environment: projects must reconcile safety considerations, such as crime, the risk of terrorism and road safety, with a relaxed atmosphere that fosters autonomy, intimacy and emancipation (p. 10, p. 19, p. 44 and p.48-50). So this should not only involve restrictive safety and security measures, but also the creation of a welcoming and tranquil public space that encourages teenagers' autonomy.

Space adapted to the needs of the pupils: the designed space must be sufficiently open and cater to the behaviours of middle school pupils, who need room to flourish and thrive in safety (p. 50).

Adapting local authority methods: the methods and practices for road planning and design must be adjusted to make the projects pupil-centric, in accordance with the challenges outlined in the Public Spaces Charter (pp. 28-41).

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Contents

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FOREWORD

editorials

Fabien Bagnon
Vice-President of Lyon Metropole,
responsible for Highways and Active Mobility

The areas surrounding middle schools are public spaces unlike any others. Like the schools themselves, they are used by both vulnerable groups and large numbers of pedestrians. As a result, safety – particularly road safety –is a top priority and demands our constant attention.

What truly sets these areas apart, however, is how they are used by the teenagers who travel daily to middle schools in the Lyon metropolitan area, sometimes by public transport, often by car, and increasingly on foot, by bike or on scooters.

The projects we develop within our local authority must take into account the behaviours and needs of these young people, who are not only learning but also becoming more independent. These recommendations have been drawn up to equip urban planners with the tools necessary to identify key issues in the vicinity of schools, access valuable advice and practical ideas, and be informed of pitfalls to avoid. Serving as a complement to the Public Spaces Charter, this document offers insights and practical solutions to the major challenges faced in everyday urban planning. Nearly sixty individuals, including specialists from various fields and members of the general public, attended the various session that led to the drafting of this document. We extend our sincere thanks to each of them.

« The areas surrounding middle schools are public spaces unlike any others. »

« How can we create an appropriate space for teenagers in the city? »

Véronique Moreira
Vice-President of Lyon Metropole,
responsible for Middle Schools, Education and Memory

While attention to schoolchildren in the city is not entirely new, the focus on middle school pupils and their use of public space is a more recent development. Historically overlooked, teenagers have not been the subject of much research and their place has typically been framed within the confines of educational institutions, rather than in the broader public space.

Yet these young people are also out and about in the city, and their lives extend beyond the classroom and playground! Every day, many of them travel to school alone or in groups, gather with friends at the entrance, talk, play and occasionally squabble... How can we create an appropriate space for them that meet their needs for freedom and even mischief, while also addressing the imperatives of safety and personal growth? And how can we move beyond thinking for young people, and instead think with them, alongside their families and the adults who support their education?

This is the aim of this recommendation guide, the result of several months of work. Teachers, pupils, their families and technical staff were invited to share their perspectives on the challenges facing the areas around middle schools and to propose potential solutions. We hope our readers will share the same enthusiasm as the members of the working groups, and we extend our sincere thanks to them for their involvement.

INTRODUCTION
From the study to recommendations

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In 2022, Lyon Metropole commissioned Urbalyon, The Lyon Town Planning Agency to conduct a study on the use of areas around middle schools. The goal was to gather insights for urban development projects by better understanding the people who frequent these schools and the surrounding areas, and analysing their social behaviours. Developments planned around middle schools need to differ from those of primary schools. Who actually uses these spaces? At what times of day, week, or year? How do they get there and what are they doing? Detailed fieldwork conducted by students from the *Institut d'Urbanisme de Lyon* allowed us to closely observe and analyse the diverse users of these spaces and their relationship with the city. In addition to young adolescents and their teachers, the area surrounding middle schools is frequented by families, local residents, passers-by, bus drivers, street cleaners, shopkeepers and others. Each of these groups has its own habits, perspectives and needs, all of which must be considered.

Building on this approach, in 2023 it was decided to organise a series of working groups within various middle schools across the Metropole, bringing together all stakeholders in a spirit of collaboration. School heads, eco-delegates and parents, as well as police officers, gendarmerie staff and specialists in health and mobility issues, met together to discuss the findings of the field survey and explore how to translate them into actionable steps for integration into local authority projects.

This recommendation guide is the result of two years of reflection and collaboration. It draws on the main themes of Lyon Metropole's Public Spaces Charter, mirroring them for secondary education institutions and the urban spaces surrounding them. Special attention has been given to the diverse configurations across the region: while the findings and recommendations outlined in this document apply to all middle schools, unique characteristics have also been considered. Lastly, this is not a set of guidelines, but rather a collection of best practices.

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IN SEPTEMBER 2022, THERE WERE NEARLY 120 MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

Source DSHE

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- State schools
- Private schools with a state contract
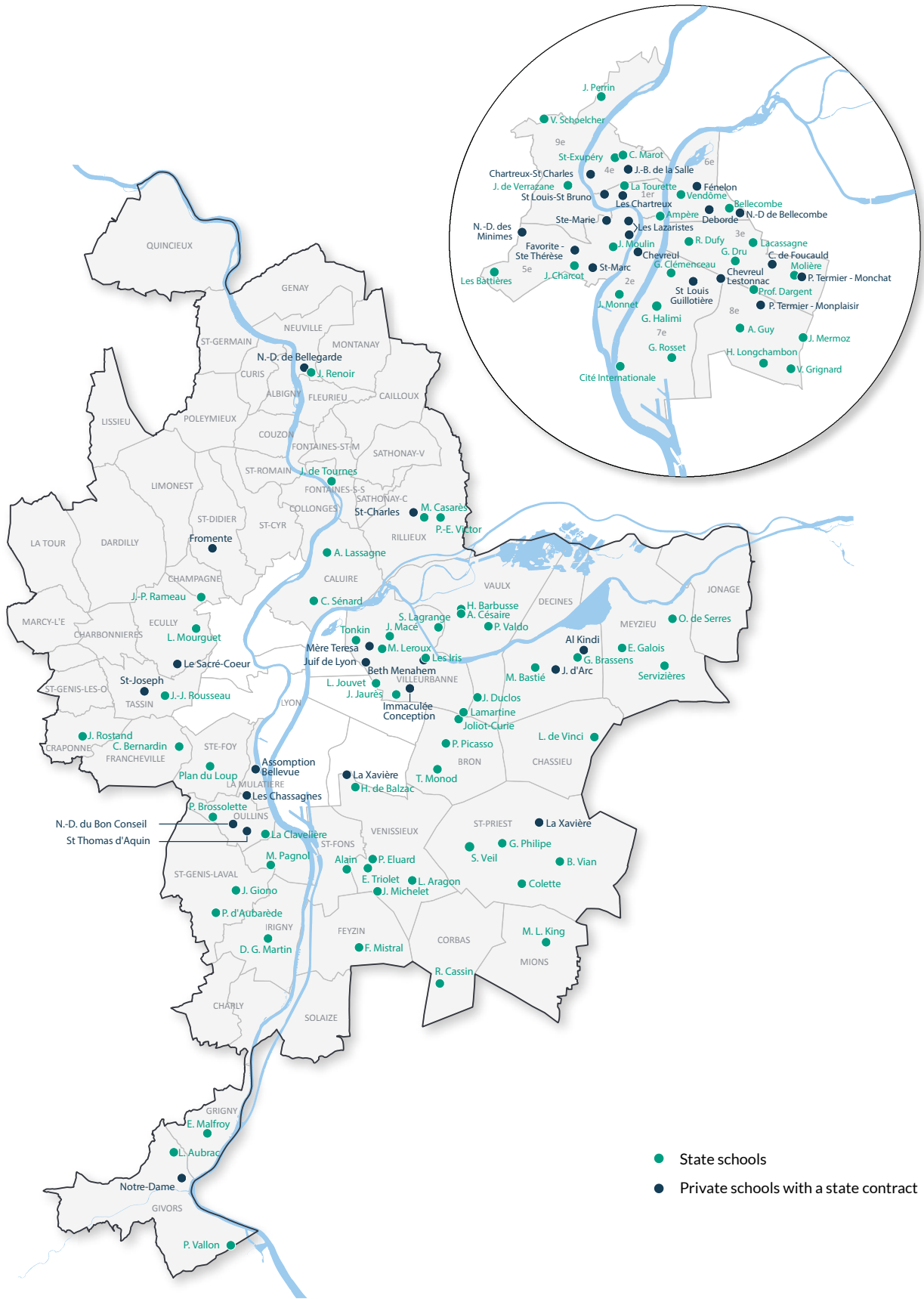
Manifesto for a more tranquil city

Two fundamental principles guide these recommendations, initiated by Lyon Metropole as part of its urban planning policy, namely enhancing the tranquillity of public spaces overall, and specifically improving tranquillity in the vicinity of schools.

This approach is part of an ambitious vision by the local authority: a fully walkable and bikeable city, where calmer streets encourage active travel (walking and cycling) and foster the use of public transport. Lyon Metropole thereby aims to achieve a more equitable distribution of public space, supporting developments that lead to new uses and drive sustainable change. **This vision is also inclusive, by designing a city suited to the needs of children and families. A key element of this policy is the focus on participatory projects, emphasising the importance of citizen involvement in shaping actions and decisions.**

Within this framework, enhancing the tranquillity of areas surrounding schools is a key objective. This involves making these spaces safer and ensuring the educational community takes ownership of them. The goal is to promote active modes of transport and improve access to middle schools, with a particular focus on road safety and preventing potential security risks, such as terrorist attacks. The Metropole is also working to minimise conflicts between different modes of transport, while encouraging the installation of dedicated parking facilities for bicycles and scooters. Moreover, it aims to enhance the quality of surrounding public spaces by providing pupils with areas to relax and landscaped spaces that foster their well-being and personal growth. **In short, the approach to developing the areas around middle schools is guided by these two core principles, reflecting the Metropole's commitment to creating a safe and pleasant urban environment that serves the needs of all its users, especially the younger generation.**

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More tranquil public spaces – a key policy objective for Lyon Metropole

Participatory projects

A metropolitan area that is entirely walkable and cyclable

Quieter streets that encourage active travel and the use public transport

A child-friendly, family-friendly city

Developments that encourage new uses and sustainable changes

A more equitable distribution of public space

Middle-school pupils at the centre of projects

For many years, urban development projects followed a utilitarian and functionalist approach, driven by production and management standards and constraints. **This mindset, focused on efficiency and profitability, often sidelined the needs and aspirations of end users.** Today, there is a growing shift towards reversing this approach, placing users at the heart of projects. It is becoming increasingly central to the way we think about urban development. This is all the more important when it comes to developing the areas around middle schools, where young adolescents are the primary users. At a stage of life focused on identity formation and personal development, they are not only active users but also vulnerable, requiring careful consideration and attention. **It is therefore crucial to ensure pupils are at the centre of development projects.**

The spaces surrounding schools are not merely places people pass through or functional areas; for pupils, they are places for socialising, meeting up, playing games and expressing themselves. However, these spaces can also present risks and dangers, making it all the more essential to design safe and suitable urban amenities. With this in mind, Lyon Metropole is actively working on initiatives that place pupils at the heart of its considerations. Through consultation and collaborative creation, it sets out to gather their opinions, needs and expectations in order to design spaces that are truly suitable. The aim is also to understand the full range of uses and ways in which the area is appropriated, encouraging pupils' involvement from the earliest design stages and actively engaging them throughout the implementation of the projects. This process strengthens their sense of belonging and civic engagement.

Ultimately, placing pupils at the heart of urban development projects is not only an ethical imperative, but also a pragmatic approach. **By responding to the needs and aspirations of the younger generation, Lyon Metropole is helping to shape an urban environment that is inclusive, safe and conducive to their growth, while also laying the groundwork for a more democratic and participatory society.**

Ten key questions to consider when developing the vicinity of a middle school

1
What are the primary activities pupils engage in outside the school – such as playing, chatting, waiting or moving around – and at what times of day, week and year are these activities most frequent?

2
How do pupils occupy the space in front of the school: do they gather in small groups, large groups, or tend to act individually? How do pupils move and navigate these spaces in relation to their activities?

3
What safety concerns arise from pupils' observed behaviour in front of the school, such as traffic hazards, dangerous behaviour or conflicts between pupils?

4
How do the existing facilities around the middle school influence the practices and use of the space by pupils, for example, by either facilitating or hindering their movement and social interactions?

5
What modes of transport do pupils most frequently use to get to and from school, as well as during breaks, and how are these practices influenced by the school's immediate environment?

6
What areas around the school most interest and attract pupils, such as improvised play areas, meeting spots, or informal relaxation spaces? Are there other areas near the middle school where teenagers tend to gather?

7 How are social interactions between pupils observed and encouraged outside the school, and how can the design of these spaces help to promote positive interactions?

8 What elements of the built or natural environment influence the behaviour of pupils, such as the availability of benches, green spaces, safe pedestrian crossings, or access control measures?

9 What practices are observed in terms of space usage and appropriation by pupils, for example, in relation to the use of green spaces, public benches, or adjacent pavements. How do they share the space? And where does this happen most often?

10 How can the spontaneous and informal activities of pupils in front of the school be taken into account in the planning and design of future developments, so as to best respond to their current uses and practices?

Before launching any project, it is crucial to ask these questions and gain a deeper understanding of how the spaces are used, in order to target developments more effectively. **To this end, Lyon Metropole organises 'walk-and-analyse' sessions, where participants – including middle school pupils, teaching staff and technicians from the local municipality and the Metropole – are encouraged to ask these types of questions.** This framework helps raise awareness of the importance of understanding how pupils use these spaces in order to better meet their needs and expectations. The approach also enables the project to be collaboratively developed.

Collaborative creation with adolescents to involve them in the life of their school and the community

As part of its efforts to place pupils at the heart of urban projects, Lyon Metropole is adopting an innovative approach to collaborative creation.

Working closely with middle schools across its local authority, it is inviting young people to actively contribute to the design and implementation of developments around their school. Through collaborative workshops (such as those with the artist 'Spirale' at Collège Marcel Dargent in Lyon's 3rd district), site visits and brainstorming sessions, pupils are actively involved at every stage of the process, from identifying needs to implementing solutions.

This hands-on approach ensures that the projects are both relevant and well-received, by drawing on the expertise of young people and giving them an active role in transforming their immediate environment.

© Noémie Hugnit and Mathieu Schmets

Involving middle-school pupils in decision-making and fostering civic engagement

Lyon Metropole is leading an innovative consultation process to actively involve middle-school pupils in shaping the areas surrounding their schools.

Through regular meetings, participatory workshops and site visits, pupils are given the opportunity to share their ideas and express their needs for the development of the vicinity of their school, directly contributing to the enhancement of their quality of life.

This practical approach to consultation not only takes into account the specific expectations of young people, but also empowers them and increases their involvement in shaping their urban environment. It further supports them in their civic education pathway. As part of this participatory process, Lyon Metropole also organises presentations on the roles of urban planning professionals, including visits to highway subdivisions and the traffic control centre. These activities offer young people a behind-the-scenes look at how the city functions and the planning process.

Snakes & Ladders: an experimental 'serious game' to understand the rationale of professionals involved

To enhance this recommendation guide and present it from a new angle, Lyon Metropole and Urbalyon, teamed up with two students from the Lyon School of Architecture, Noémie Hugnit and Mathieu Schmets, under the supervision of Estelle Morle.

As part of their final year project, they designed an experimental Snakes & Ladders game to illustrate and explain the rationale of the professionals involved in shaping the vicinity of a middle school, and how these impact the expectations and needs of the pupils.

This 'serious game' encourages players to consider the challenges and constraints faced by the various stakeholders, all while keeping in mind the needs of the public for whom the development projects are intended.

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GENERAL FRAMEWORK

A field survey to gain a deeper understanding of how school vicinities are used

In 2022, students from the Institut d'Urbanisme de Lyon (IUL) spent several months studying the dynamics of the areas surrounding several Lyon Metropole schools.   While each of the middle schools has its own unique characteristics, four key issues are common to all.

The first issue is mobility. Secondary schools are attended by a particularly high volume of people, including pupils, teachers and staff. The surrounding areas are also frequented by local residents and parents, who often come to drop off and pick up their children. IUL students estimated that, on average, nearly 700 people come to the vicinities of schools each day in the morning and late afternoon. This substantial figure underscores the importance of ensuring the unobstructed flow of all those involved, as well as ease of access to schools. Some schools are conveniently located near public transport links, while others suffer from poor accessibility. In every case, however, observations and surveys have revealed that the car remains the dominant mode of transport, regardless of the school's location. This reliance on cars often comes at the expense of greener alternatives, which struggle to integrate into public spaces. Likewise, parking for bicycles and scooters can be an issue, as many schools lack dedicated facilities for these modes of transport. Despite these obstacles, walking and cycling appear to be on the rise, despite the strong reluctance of some parents and educational staff. Public transport, on the other hand, often struggles to meet demand: buses are frequently overcrowded, services are irregular (with, for example, two buses arriving just five minutes apart, followed by a 15-minute wait), and the distance of bus stops from schools can cause further issues – leading to overcrowding, pushing and conflicts between passengers.

The second overarching issue faced by all middle schools is safety. This is linked to the mobility issue, as accidents are clearly recognised as a significant risk for pupils. Unfortunately, several of the schools surveyed have recently had to deal with accidents. These were caused by factors such as excessive speed from drivers, limited visibility for pedestrians in certain situations (such as when getting off the bus), the narrowness of the streets, and the fact that some schools open directly onto the street. Additionally, the need to cross particularly busy roads contributes to the risks. The behaviour of pupils also plays a role at times, including lack of attention and reckless actions. However, safety extends beyond the dangers posed by road traffic. It also includes issues such as fights (both between pupils from the same school and those from other schools), trafficking (including street vending, cigarettes, drugs, etc.), extortion, unauthorised squats and intrusions by individuals from outside the school community. Since 2015, the threat of terrorist attacks has been added to the growing list of safety concerns facing secondary education institutions. As a result, middle schools and their administrators are now subject to an increasing number of regulations. Security has become such a dominant issue that, at times, it risks overshadowing other vital aspects of school life.

(Re)designing the vicinity of middle schools
SUMMARY

AUGUST
2022

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AbordsCollegesSynthese

The third issue shared by all middle schools is their relationship with the surrounding environment. Secondary schools are not isolated entities, detached from the town or city. Rather, they are integrated into an often dense urban landscape that is connected to a variety of other functions and communities, including housing, economic activity, amenities and essential infrastructure. This question of the relationship with the environment indirectly raises another issue: that of the boundaries surrounding middle schools. These are not limited to the school forecourt, if there is one, or the pavements in the immediate vicinity. Depending on the geographical situation, they can extend for dozens or even hundreds of metres around the schools. This environment is shared between the middle schools and those who attend them, as well as with other stakeholders. This coexistence is usually satisfactory (local residents' perception and experience of secondary schools is largely positive), but there are sometimes conflicts. For instance, throughout the field study, several individuals raised concerns about cleanliness, questioning the responsibility of the pupils, though it was difficult to quantify or define the issue objectively. The relationship with the environment also appeared to be even more complex in socially deprived neighbourhoods.

Finally, one extremely important issue that concerns all secondary schools is the preservation and enhancement of their image. The area surrounding a middle school is the first impression that passers-by, local residents and even prospective families will have of the institution. The way the vicinity is maintained and used can influence its perceived quality and management, whether those perceptions are accurate or not. School principals are especially attuned to this aspect, as they know it plays a pivotal role in shaping their school's reputation. This concern is particularly pronounced in private schools, which are often keen to control their communication strategies to maintain the loyalty of pupils and their families. Yet state middle schools are also mindful of their image, taking care to project a positive public perception in order to prevent attempts to circumvent the school catchment area rules. The importance of this image can sometimes overshadow other vital concerns, such as student well-being or the social dynamics of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Teenager safety, an ongoing concern

Lyon Metropole is deeply committed to protecting middle school pupils. This involves addressing a wide array of issues including road safety, preventing intrusions into schools, combatting illegal trafficking and managing terrorism threats. Here, we spotlight three key initiatives designed to mitigate these risks.

609
accidents involving road users aged 11 to 16 were recorded between 2018 and 2021.

58%
of accidents occurred within 500 meters of middle schools, [...] primarily while crossing major roads.

Understanding accidents around middle schools

In 2023, Lyon Metropole enlisted the Covadis consultancy firm to gain a clearer picture of accident trends near middle schools in its area. The findings from the study, covering the period from 2018 to 2021, reveal several key observations.

Firstly, a total of 609 accidents involving users aged 11 to 16 were recorded, accounting for 7.6% of all accidents in the metropolitan area. This percentage is slightly lower than that of Strasbourg Eurometropole but higher than that of Grand Paris and Montpellier Metropole. The results reveal a significant gap in understanding accidents involving 11 to 16-year-olds, despite the ongoing Adolescent Pedestrian Accidentology and Mobility (PAAM) research project launched in 2015. This project has highlighted a peak in pedestrian accidents among 11 to 13-year-olds, with 75% of these incidents occurring within 500 metres of their school, mainly while crossing major roads. More specifically, in the Lyon metropolitan area, 58% of pedestrian accidents involving middle school pupils occur within a 500-meter radius of the school. The Collège Georges Clémenceau in Lyon's 7th district stands out as the most accident-prone, with six recorded accidents in this area[1].

Geographically, the municipalities most affected by these accidents are Vénissieux, Lyon (7th and 3rd districts) and Villeurbanne, located in the centre of the metropolitan area and its inner suburbs. This study underscores the need for a proactive, targeted approach to enhancing safety around middle schools.

1 - Improvement work was completed on the vicinity of this middle school in the summer of 2024

Security vestibules: an added measure for schools

Middle schools renovated or built after 2015 are often equipped with security vestibules to enhance student safety. These serve as a buffer zone, creating a transition between the public space and the school interior, and are designed to restrict unauthorised access and regulate the flow of people entering and exiting the school. However, the installation of these vestibules is not mandatory, as it is not required by regulations. In, a basic system, typically consisting of a gate. In schools without vestibules, a minimal setup, consisting of a gate and an electronically controlled turnstile managed from the security desk, is usually put in place.

Spatial and technical constraints can sometimes limit the feasibility of installing these vestibules. Additionally, it is important to ensure that their installation does not encroach on public space, as this could negatively impact user comfort and road safety.

While vestibules are a useful technical solution, it is important to note that they do not replace the need for human intervention. Their effectiveness relies heavily on continuous monitoring by dedicated personnel. Therefore, the presence of a vestibule does not guarantee complete security. Instead, it serves as a practical tool to support staff in managing the entry of pupils. It is therefore crucial to recognise that, ultimately, security in middle schools relies not only on technical systems but also on the commitment and vigilance of the staff overseeing the premises.

The issues involved in installing anti-ramming devices

Anti-ram bollards, designed to protect a range of areas by preventing the intrusion of vehicles such as cars and trucks, are occasionally installed around middle schools in the Lyon metropolitan area.

However, their deployment should not be systematic, given the diverse range of contexts involved. Indeed, the installation of these bollards presents several challenges related to the layout of the premises, the division of responsibilities and ongoing maintenance. While there is no legal requirement for their installation when planning permission is not

necessary, their implementation does involve the coordination of various expertise and services. This involves both the Metropole and the municipalities concerned, particularly the highway and police departments.

The process requires a collaborative, cross-functional approach among all stakeholders before any decisions are made. Installing anti-ram bollards around middle schools therefore necessitates a thorough assessment of security needs, an analysis of the site's layout and an evaluation of the technical constraints. This ensures that the devices are installed in a way that is both effective and appropriate.

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Four different configurations

Four main scenarios can be found in the Lyon metropolitan area regarding the surroundings of middle schools.

Schools situated on street fronts, facing roads open to traffic

Schools featuring a forecourt

Schools located in cul-de-sacs

Schools set in a neighbourhood square

1. Schools situated on street fronts, facing roads open to traffic

This is the type of school most exposed to road safety issues, as the road is busy and offers no alternatives for pedestrians other than pavements.

Examples

— Collège Gabriel Rosset in Lyon

— Collège Clémenceau in Lyon

— Collège Lassagne in Caluire-et-Cuire

— Collège La Xavière in Vénissieux

— …

Issues

— Accidents (pupils are increasingly at risk of accidents involving motorised vehicles) and conflicts of use (between pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders in particular).

— School bus drop-off. Some schools require pupils to wait in the playground until the exact time the buses arrive, often as close to the entrance as possible.

— Car drop-off. Traffic jams and delays are common during drop-off times.

— Risk of cars overtaking buses as passengers are disembarking.

— Excessive speed of motorists.

— Crowding on the pavement. Pupils and families often wait in a small, crowded space, creating congestion.

— …

2. Schools featuring a forecourt

These schools are set back from the street to different extents. This buffer zone typically takes the form of a semi-circular space, reclaimed from the school grounds, which is opened up and used as an extension of the pavement.

Examples

— Collège Charcot in Lyon

— Collège Clément Marot in Lyon

— Collège Colette in Saint-Priest

— Collège Jean Macé in Villeurbanne

— …

Issues

— The combined presence of various user groups – pupils alongside local residents, families and potentially unrelated adults (passers-by, loiterers, etc.).

— Misuse (gatherings, squatting and fighting, for example).

— Accessibility: removable bollards typically allow emergency vehicles, such as fire engines, to access the forecourt when necessary.

— Maintenance: questions often arise regarding responsibility for the upkeep of forecourts, particularly when ownership is unclear.

— Quality: some forecourts are poorly designed, being barren, with no greenery.

— …

3. Schools located in cul-de-sacs

This type is less common and generally found outside the central districts (more often to the east of Lyon, where schools have larger grounds).

Examples
— Collège Boris Vian in Saint-Priest
— Collège Olivier de Serre in Meyzieu
— Collège Jean de Tournes in Fontaines-sur-Saône
— Collège Marcel Pagnol in Pierre-Bénite
— ...

Issues
— Bus drop-off: bus stops are typically situated at the entrance of the cul-de-sac, requiring pupils to walk the remaining distance.
— Car drop-off: some parents attempt to drive as close to the school entrance as possible, causing traffic slowdowns and occasional congestion.
— Parking: car parks are often located next to cul-de-sacs, as parking is generally prohibited within them.
— Safety: while these schools are located away from traffic, they are also removed from regular supervision. Problematic behaviours are frequently observed outside school hours, including gatherings, fights and even illegal activities such as trafficking or street racing, especially in the evenings, on weekends and during holidays.
— ...

4. Schools set in a neighbourhood square

These schools concentrate a wide variety of issues, both urban and social.

Examples
— Collège Gisèle Halimi in Lyon
— Collège Jean de Verrazane in Lyon
— Collège Le Plan du Loup in Sainte-Foy-lès-Lyon
— Collège Jean Jaurès in Villeurbanne
— ...

Issues
— All the aforementioned issues as well as those specific to public spaces in an urban environment (congestion, noise, etc.).
— ...

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Three levels of analysis

Through group discussions and observations of usage, the analysis has been organised into three distinct levels: the immediate perimeter, the adjacent perimeter and the extended perimeter.

Each level addresses different challenges and is associated with specific public infrastructure, categorised by both their intensity and proximity to the school entrance. These levels are illustrated schematically below, with additional details on the elements they encompass.

1.

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IP1 The immediate perimeter

The immediate perimeter encompasses the school forecourt and entrance.

It includes the area directly surrounding the school, typically visible from the security desk:

— **the school entrance,**

— **the forecourt (when such exists),**
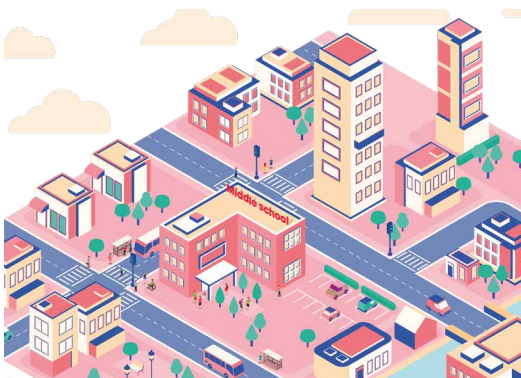
— **the immediate roadside,**

— **bus stops in some cases.**

2.

AP2 The adjacent perimeter

The adjacent perimeter covers the beginning of pupil travel paths and the first interactions with the city. This is at street level.

It includes:

— **bus stops,**

— **the external car park (when such exists),**
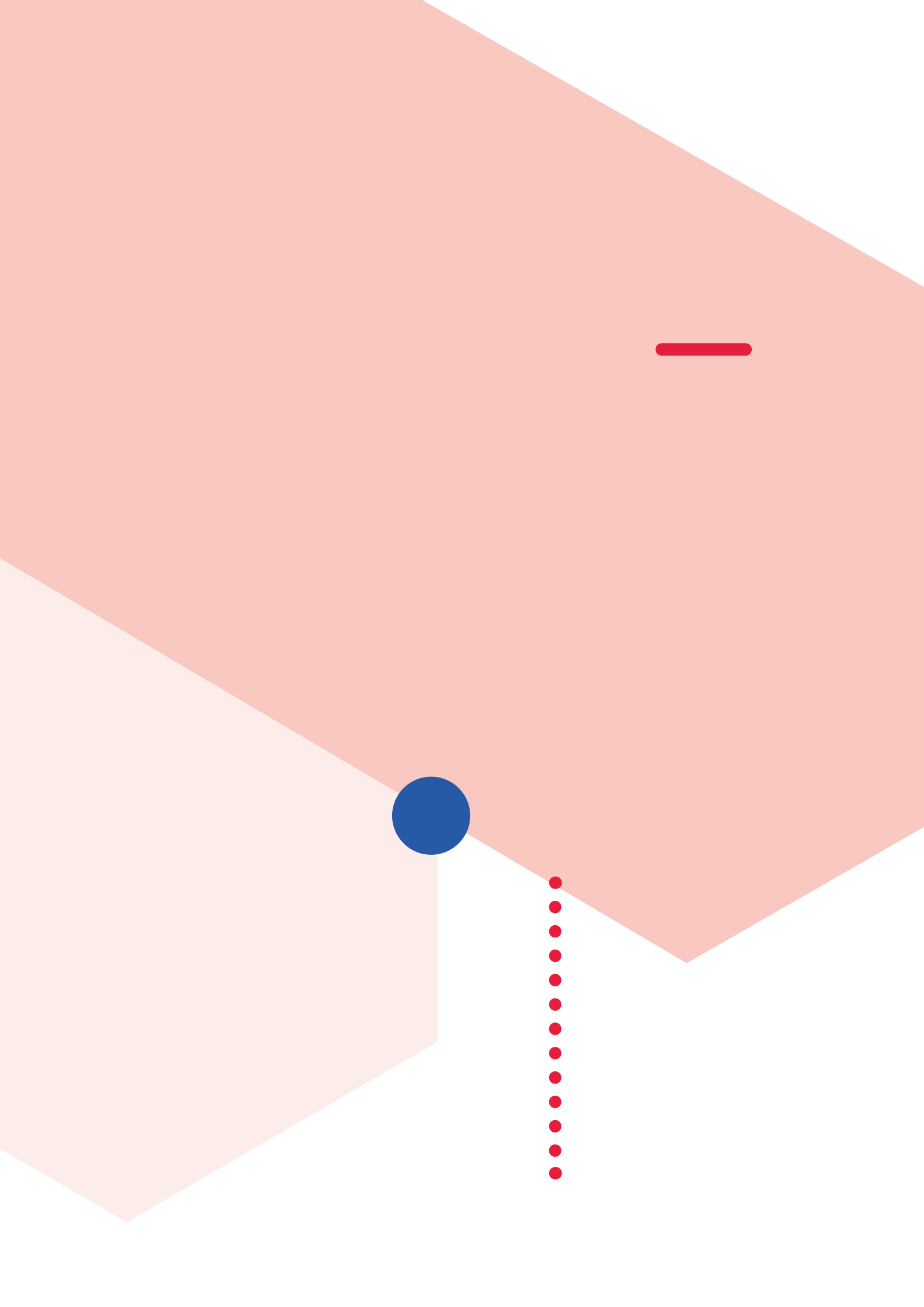
— **pedestrian crossings.**

3.

EP3 The extended perimeter

The extended perimeter refers to the broader area where the school's concerns are integrated with wider urban issues. This is at neighbourhood level.

It includes:

— **access to local parks,**

— **any other nearby schools,**

— **pedestrian pathways and cycling infrastructure.**

SIX CHALLENGES

An adaptation of the Public Spaces Charter

Six priority challenges for the development of public spaces reflect the key directions set for the planning, design and implementation of public space projects in the Lyon metropolitan area. Derived from the Public Spaces Charter, the challenges are outlined in this recommendation guide for enhancing the vicinity of middle schools. They served as guiding principles for collaborative working groups, which led to the drawing up of the subsequent best practices.
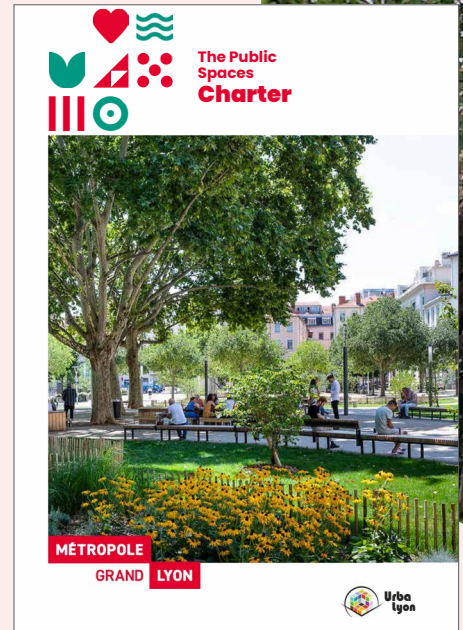
➔ https://www.grandlyon.com/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pdf/urbanisme/charte-espaces-publics.pdf

1
Better adapt public spaces to climate change and make them more supportive of biodiversity

3
Create a more inclusive city for all

2
Ensure a comfort of use that is key for health and well-being

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4

▶ Design public spaces that accommodate the diverse rhythms and uses of the city

6

▶ Develop a comprehensive vision for the region that also enhances local characteristics
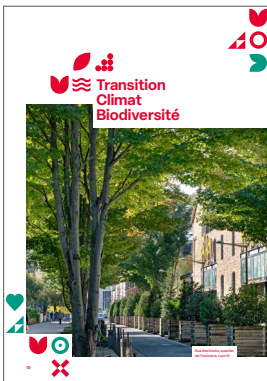
5

▶ Prioritise and promote walking, cycling, public transportation and low-carbon mobility

▶

Challenge 1
Better adapt public spaces to climate change and make them more supportive of nature

Transition Climat Biodiversité

➔ https://www.grandlyon.com/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pdf/urbanisme/charte-espaces-publics.pdf

« The effects of global warming on our way of life are already being felt and are expected to intensify and become more unpredictable in the coming years. Droughts, heatwaves, storms, heavy rainfall and intense thunderstorms: to adapt and mitigate these effects, we must start planning our developments with these significant shifts in mind, while adapting to the uncertainty they bring. Human activities are also having a profound impact on our environment, with pollution, the over-exploitation of land and resources, and the erosion of biodiversity at the forefront. These issues challenge both the habitability of our cities and the role of nature within them. In addressing these unavoidable challenges, we must also contend with the growing scarcity of essential resources – raw materials, energy and financial resources – as well as the need to decarbonise our economies. This calls for more sustainable, resource-efficient and cost-effective solutions. Public spaces, due to their structural significance, are key levers for transforming the environment in this dual perspective.

Sub-challenges

1 Mitigate the impacts of climate change

2 Reintroduce nature at the heart of the city

3 Use resources efficiently and sustainably

4 Promote the natural water cycle and enhance its integration into developments

5 Prioritise developments that easy to upgrade

KEY IDEAS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

— The role of greenery around middle schools is overwhelmingly positive.

— It supports biodiversity and offers both practical benefits (shade, coolness) and aesthetic appeal (colours, landscaping).

— It directly contributes to a positive image of the school.

— The presence of greenery around schools encourages positive behaviour among both pupils and adults.

— Greenery can indirectly enhance safety, particularly by creating separation between pedestrians and vehicles.

— Greenery encourages active transportation (walking, cycling, scootering) by helping to create a more pleasant environment.

— However, to prevent damage (trampling, vandalism) and misuse (creating hiding places, obstructing visibility), the placement and design of greenery must be carefully considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

⊕ PRIORITISE

Create spacious areas for pupils who need them.

Choose plant species suited to adolescent activity (foot traffic, trampling and potential damage).

Encourage the use of colour in planting choices, as this is something pupils particularly appreciate.

Take existing uses into consideration (pedestrian pathways, etc.).

Ensuring regular maintenance (preferably eco-responsible) to prevent deterioration.

Protect fragile areas (such as flower beds).

Enhancing user safety by using vegetation to separate pedestrians from vehicles.

Involve pupils in decisions about the presence of plants, to foster respect for them and to strike the right balance between open spaces and greenery.

Provide a 'buffer zone' between the school and the surrounding neighbourhood (a park, for example) and encourage the presence of adults to help ensure a peaceful environment.

⊖ AVOID

Blocking visibility (especially at pedestrian crossings and for video surveillance).

Excessive use of low-lying plants (such as bushes or flowerbeds) that encourage concealment or littering.

Limiting vegetation to aesthetic or decorative purposes (forgetting about biodiversity).

Using wood chips or gravel that can be used as projectiles.

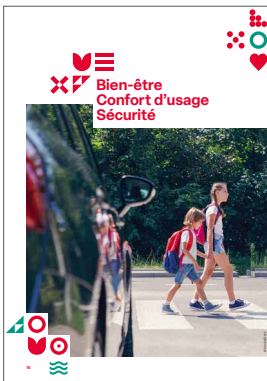Installing lightweight wooden fences.

A step further/avenues to explore
➤ Landscape swales—could they offer an environment that benefits both nature and user safety?

Challenge 2
Ensure the comfort of use essential for well-being and health

Bien-être Confort d'usage Sécurité

➜ https://www.grandlyon.com/
fileadmin/user_upload/media/pdf/
urbanisme/charte-espaces-publics.pdf

" Public spaces serve a wide range of essential functions, including emergency services, waste collection, cleaning, urban logistics, transport and retail. Addressing these needs is a fundamental aspect of ensuring quality service for the public. Beyond their functional role, considering the safety and usability of public spaces is part of a more global quality requirement. As urban lifestyles become increasingly intense, they introduce various health risks, such as sedentary behaviour, stress, pollution and overcrowding, all of which contribute to health inequalities and other types of disparities. Lyon has a long history of addressing health in the city, dating back to the 20th century and the hygiene movement. These concerns have been renewed in the 21st century with the growing focus on environmental health and sustainable urban development. By improving the living environment, these initiatives contribute to overall well-being, with a proven positive impact on the health and quality of life of everyone.

Sub-challenges

1 Design a healthy, peaceful environment that is pleasant to use

2 Meet the essential needs of users and ensure the smooth running of urban services

3 Encourage active uses for public spaces that contribute to well-being

4 Contribute to security and the prevention of crime

KEY IDEAS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

— Pupils are generally encouraged to avoid lingering in front of their school after classes and to disperse quickly to prevent crowding and any associated issues.

— Outside of school hours, they rarely gather in front of the school, as the forecourts are not designed for such use (lack of seating, etc.).

— Sometimes, when there is nowhere else to go after class, pupils may gather in unsuitable locations, such as abandoned buildings or wastelands.

— They need 'third places'—spaces outside of home and school where they can spend time.

— Walking to school offers an opportunity for physical activity and serves as an "airlock" to help pupils transition mentally, preparing them for the school day or helping them unwind after class.

— Walking becomes more enjoyable and convenient when the urban environment is well-designed: areas with ample greenery, proper lighting and adequate shade make it easier for pupils and their families.

— Public transport can be a source of discomfort and stress, as buses are often overcrowded. The issue is not the length of the journey, but the level of congestion.

— In densely populated urban areas, pupils are often exposed to pollutants and fine particulate matter.

— Noise – both in and around schools – can have a direct impact on health.

— Bullying can occur both inside and outside schools, particularly on the routes taken by pupils, as well as on social networks, which are a virtual extension of the public spaces frequented by pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

⊕ PRIORITISE

Taking account of health issues related to pollen and allergens when planning the areas around middle schools.

Increasing the number of litter bins and sorting facilities in and around schools.

Designing public spaces using materials and layouts that accommodate people with reduced mobility (e.g., flooring that is accessible to pupils in wheelchairs or on crutches).

Locating bus stops near to schools, so that pupils do not have to walk in unsuitable streets, but not too close (to avoid conflicts of use between different modes of transport).

Organising events focused on promoting soft modes of transport to raise awareness among pupils and encourage adoption (e.g., breakfast gatherings, supportive approach and awareness campaigns).

Distributing information booklets to pupils that detail existing amenities (cycle paths, quiet streets, wide pavements, etc.).

Install a lighting system that allows security staff to easily spot individuals approaching the school, while also providing a sense of safety for pupils both at the school and along their routes.

Developing 'walking buses' and encouraging group walking among friends.

Bringing in mediators in public spaces and public transport to help reduce stress linked to tensions and conflict.

⊖ AVOID

Heavy vehicles in the vicinity of schools, which create noise and pose a danger to pupils walking, biking, or scootering.

High pedestrian traffic near schools, which negatively impacts the well-being of teenagers.

Public spaces and amenities used by pupils but separated from schools by busy roads.

Insufficient lighting during winter months, leading to feelings of anxiety and discomfort for certain groups.

A step further/avenues to explore

➤ Prioritising having a human presence at school entrances and exits to foster a sense of calm and provide assistance to those in need.

➤ 'Active design' offers a unique approach that empowers the public to take an active role in shaping their environment and well-being by participating in the planning and design of public spaces that encourage physical activity.

Challenge 3
Create a more inclusive city for all

Solidarité
Inclusivité
Hospitalité

« Ensuring the hospitality of public spaces means being mindful of everyone, especially those who are vulnerable or excluded: children, the elderly, women alone, people with disabilities, those in precarious situations and young people, whether in groups or not. To implement this inclusive approach, it is essential to address specific needs right from the start of the project. This approach also involves designing spaces that can accommodate a variety of uses and diverse groups, fostering collective activities – whether artistic, cultural or social – that transform public spaces into interactive places.

Sub-challenges

1. Ensure universal access to public spaces

2. Promote involvement from a greater diversity of people and practices

3. Provide support for cultural and artistic expression

4. Encourage a wide range of groups to actively participate in collaborative initiatives

KEY IDEAS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

— A comprehensive approach to the diversity of uses and users is essential, ensuring that focus is not placed on just one specific issue, in the interests of fairness and efficiency.

— The well-being of middle school pupils is a central concern…

— … as is their safety and the responsibility of school principals.

— Achieving a balance between freedom and security is important, as is preventing the displacement of problems to neighbouring areas.

— The need for inclusive spaces varies across different areas, particularly depending on factors such as their usage levels and density.

— Pupils require informal, comfortable spaces where they can relax, socialise, play and enjoy quality time together.

— Shops and parks located near schools are often heavily frequented due to the lack of alternative spaces for socialising.

— The inclusive and supportive nature of the areas surrounding middle schools can be enhanced through the theme of mobility.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

⊕ PRIORITISE

Synchronising street lighting with school hours to enhance safety.

Designing pavements wider than two meters, with barriers in areas adjacent to schools.

Installing speed bumps or traffic humps.

Ensuring adults are also present in public spaces near schools (parents, local residents or shopkeepers).

Using more subtle, melodic bells to signal the start and end of classes, varying them regularly to avoid disturbing local residents.

Organising activities within schools to encourage pupils to stay on school grounds rather than gather in surrounding areas.

Creating participatory murals.

Ensuring pupils are safe – and feel safe – when walking, scootering or cycling.

Installing designated bike and scooter parking areas within the school grounds, positioned near the entrances, with separate zones for staff and teachers, distinct from those for pupils.

Placing benches near the schools, but not directly in front of the entrances.

Clear signage identifying the schools (with a Metropolitan Charter).

Creating or sharing of green spaces near the schools – yet not directly in front of them – that offer a variety of activities and facilities, such as sports fields, playgrounds, benches and picnic tables.

Ensuring optimal cleaning and maintenance of the areas surrounding the schools, including the removal of litter and graffiti.

⊖ AVOID

The prolonged, static presence of pupils directly in front of the schools, for safety reasons.

The prolonged, static presence of non-school individuals directly in front of the schools.

Installing a high number of benches directly in front of schools, which may encourage inappropriate use.

Dense vegetation that obstructs visibility around the schools.

Ball games played too close to residential buildings, as they may cause noise disturbance for local residents.

Poorly visible signage, such as signs that are too small, poorly positioned or outdated.

Shared bike and scooter parking areas for both pupils and staff/teachers.

A step further/avenues to explore

➤ Is the added presence of adults around schools a means of enhancing tranquillity and safety?

Challenge 4
Design public spaces that accommodate the diverse rhythms and uses of the city

**Partage
Proximité
Temporalité**

➔ https://www.grandlyon.com/
fileadmin/user_upload/media/pdf/
urbanisme/charte-espaces-publics.pdf

Public spaces are not just areas for movement; they are also vital hubs for social cohesion and a welcoming environment, thanks to the variety of activities they host. Neighbourhood squares, gardens and streets should prioritise this diversity of uses, as it is central to the vibrancy of local life. Rebalancing the space allocated to traffic and parking goes beyond the physical area; it also requires consideration of time. This involves imagining spaces that can host both temporary and multifunctional activities – festivals, ground-floor business operations, local shops, etc. By approaching public spaces with an understanding of the city's varied rhythms and experimenting with how they can be used, we can ensure they are adaptable to the everyday flow of life in the neighbourhood, while also accommodating special events that strengthen community bonds and promote social cohesion.

Sub-challenges

1 Foster tranquillity for the benefit of everyday activities

2 Encourage residents to reclaim their streets

3 Adapt spaces to the changing pace of local life

4 Engage residents in the planning and management

KEY IDEAS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

— The start and finish of the school day are key moments for everyone involved.

— Pupils use a variety of transport modes, which must coexist: car, walking, cycling, scootering and buses.

— Many conflicts of use arise around the schools.

— Traffic congestion is common when school finishes for the day.

— The presence of cars remains the primary safety risk around middle schools.

— Parents often try to park as close as possible to the school when dropping off their children, leading to chaotic and double parking.

— Buses are frequently overcrowded.

— The green spaces and sports fields near the schools are often overrun by pupils after classes, particularly by boys.

— Good relations between pupils, local residents and the school staff make it easier to report issues in the vicinity, such as fights, gatherings or trafficking.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

⊕ PRIORITISE

Restricting car traffic in the immediate vicinity to middle schools.

Depending on the context, installing anti-ram devices at entrances to enhance pupil safety.

Ensuring thorough maintenance of the areas surrounding the school (including forecourts, car parks and adjacent grounds) to prevent deterioration and enhance the school's image.

Also ensuring thorough maintenance of the interiors of schools.

Creating or upgrading cycle and scooter parking facilities to accommodate the evolving travel habits of various groups.

Bringing in mediators in the vicinity of the school and outside school hours whenever necessary (in the event of problems such as fighting, gatherings, trafficking, etc.).

Raising pupil awareness of the highway code to reduce high-risk behaviours.

Raising awareness among parents and local residents about the school and its functioning, aiming to challenge and dispel misconceptions.

Allowing pupils to picnic in schools on days when extracurricular activities are taking place and the canteen is closed.

Developing dedicated cycle paths both near schools and along routes frequently used by pupils.

Fostering positive relationships with both pupils and local residents, empowering them to act as intermediaries and report any incidents in the vicinity of the school.

Coordinating bus timetables with school start and finish times.

⊖ AVOID

Middle schools being set back from public spaces, with access only via a cul-de-sac.

Drop-off points directly in front of schools.

The presence of very different types of people near schools during peak times, such as outsiders alongside pupils and teachers.

Periods of inactivity around schools (evenings, weekends and school holidays).

Loud bells or microphone announcements that are a nuisance for local residents.

A step further/avenues to explore

➤ "Filling empty hours" by promoting positive activities around middle schools outside school hours (such as dog walking, leisure walks and sports) to replace problematic behaviours (such as fighting, loitering and trafficking)?

Challenge 5
Prioritise and promote walking, cycling, public transportation and low-carbon mobility

Mobilités

➜ https://www.grandlyon.com/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pdf/urbanisme/charte-espaces-publics.pdf

Mobility practices are undergoing rapid and transformative change: rationalising car use in public spaces must go hand in hand with optimising active mobility, public transport and alternatives to private cars (such as car-sharing, car-pooling and electromobility) to reduce energy dependence and greenhouse gas emissions. The priority is to restore pedestrians' rightful place and encourage walking, which serves as the primary mode of transport in some areas and a vital link in the overall mobility network. Cycling can further enhance travel autonomy and range when supported by an efficient cycling infrastructure, including a network of safe, comfortable routes and services that make cycling more accessible. Furthermore, the key objective is to integrate these transport modes with the expanding public transport system, with a particular focus on intermodal hubs.

Sub-challenges

1 Redistribute the space allocated to cars to benefit other modes of transport

2 Prioritise pedestrian comfort and safety

3 Facilitate the daily use of bicycles as a complement to walking

4 Optimise the intermodality and practicality of public transport hubs

KEY IDEAS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

— Different modes of transport struggle to coexist around middle schools during peak times, leading to conflicts of use.

— Parents often attempt to park as close as possible to schools, resulting in double parking and/or parking on pavements.

— Traffic congestion creates insecurity, stress and disruption for pupils, their families and local residents.

— Cycling remains a minority activity among pupils, as the prevalence of cars makes it a risky option.

— Parents are frequently reluctant to let their children cycle to school, citing safety concerns due to the lack or inadequacy of cycle paths.

— Pupils are increasingly using scooters but are often unaware of the traffic rules that apply to them.

— Both school and public buses tend to be overcrowded in the morning and late afternoon, with bus stops frequently becoming crowded spaces.

— School staff are occasionally required to assist with traffic management around the school.

— Tensions can arise with local residents who struggle to navigate the area or leave their homes.

— Pupils often move around in groups.

— They sometimes take shortcuts, such as crossing the gardens of apartment blocks, which creates tension with local residents.

— Pupils frequently visit shops near their school, such as bakeries and supermarkets, as well as public spaces and facilities where they can socialise and play outside of lessons (libraries, parks, sports fields, etc.).

— They also occasionally go to each other's homes if they live close to the school.

— The ease of getting around and the quality of the surrounding urban environment play a role in shaping the reputation of the schools.

— Parents sometimes weigh the trade-off between travel time and the quality of education, particularly in the private sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

⊕ PRIORITISE

Encouraging "bike bus" initiatives, based on the walking bus model.

Leveraging peer-to-peer communication by engaging parents to share prevention messages with pupils, while also encouraging young people to communicate these messages within their families.

Creating or upgrading cycle and scooter parking facilities to accommodate the evolving travel habits of various groups.

Aligning pupils' departure times with the exact arrival times of buses.

Whenever possible, ensuring a visible human presence around middle schools and on public transport to help manage tensions and improve passenger flow.

Raising awareness among pupils about the proper use of scooters, the highway code and essential safety rules, promoting responsible behaviour (no headphones, for example).

Widening pedestrian paths between schools and public transport stops to allow groups of pupils to walk side by side without overspilling onto the road.

Installing safer pedestrian crossings near schools and along routes to other facilities or public transport hubs.

⊖ AVOID

Locating bus stops right in front of school entrances, which potentially leads to congestion issues.

Limiting cycle paths to the immediate vicinity of schools, as pupils often live further away.
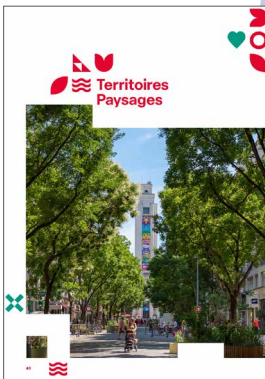
A step further/avenues to explore
➤ Gain a deeper understanding of pupils' mobility practices and needs through field surveys conducted with both pupils and their parents.

Challenge 6
Develop a comprehensive vision for the region that also enhances local characteristics

Territoires Paysages

➜ https://www.grandlyon.com/
fileadmin/user_upload/media/pdf/
urbanisme/charte-espaces-publics.pdf

« The Lyon metropolitan area is characterised by the diversity of its landscapes and topography. This rich variety of contexts and heritage can even be considered a key marker of the metropolitan identity. While the ambition for quality must extend to all public spaces, it must also be tailored to local neighbourhoods and municipalities through projects that reflect local characteristics and draw inspiration from surrounding spatial and landscape features. This local connection requires the involvement of local stakeholders, particularly through approaches that value both everyday and significant heritage, as well as local history, seeking solutions that are specific to each project rather than one-size-fits-all approaches. Therefore, the Metropole must carefully establish the foundations of a shared identity that addresses the area's challenges and public policies, while avoiding uniformity and respecting the unique context of each locality.

Sub-challenges

1 Establish a common foundation for a metropolitan identity

2 Enhance the landscape, urban, social and cultural heritage of each site

**3** Leverage the expertise of local stakeholders

KEY IDEAS FOR THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

— This guide offers a comprehensive set of recommendations addressing a wide array of key topics crucial to the design of areas around middle schools. It provides an overview aimed at meeting the diverse needs of adolescents while prioritising their safety and well-being.

— However, its effectiveness largely depends on how well it can adapt to the specific characteristics of each school. Each middle school has its own unique geographical, social and cultural traits, all of which must be considered when implementing the recommendations outlined in this document.

— With this in mind, a final group work session was dedicated to thoroughly examining local specificities, allowing for the identification of the nuances and particularities of each context.

— This process underscored the need for a differentiated and adaptable approach. It is crucial, therefore, to strike the right balance between applying the general recommendations and considering the unique characteristics of each school. This involves developing a deep understanding of local realities, including the geographical layouts, social dynamics and cultural nuances specific to each context.

— As such, this guide is intended to be a flexible and evolving tool, capable of adapting to the changing needs of middle schools and their environments. By advocating for a holistic approach, it seeks to actively contribute to the creation of safe, inclusive school environments that foster the development of adolescents.


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Toolbox
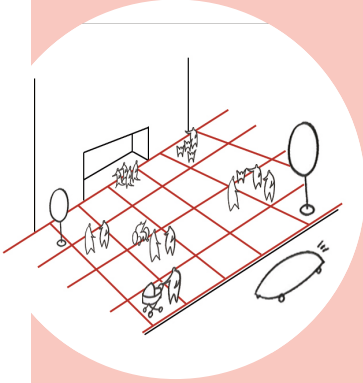
Forecourts
➜ Public spaces accessible to everyone.
➜ Places where pupils wait and interact socially.
➜ School principals often prioritise the quick dispersal of pupils, aiming to minimise prolonged gatherings.
➜ Mostly used during class start and end times.
➜ Little use outside of school hours.
➜ More space is needed in front of school entrances.

Solution ⇨ **A balance between social interaction and safety.**
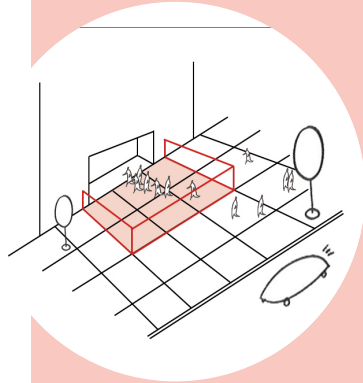
Vestibules
➜ One of several tools aimed at increasing the security of areas around middle schools.
➜ A need for human presence/ intervention.
➜ Not always feasible in schools where they were not part of the original design.
➜ Technical and land-use constraints may pose challenges.
➜ Vestibule areas must not encroach on public space or cause pedestrians to overspill onto the road.

Solution ⇨ **In cases where vestibules encroach on public space, leave sufficient space for pedestrians.**
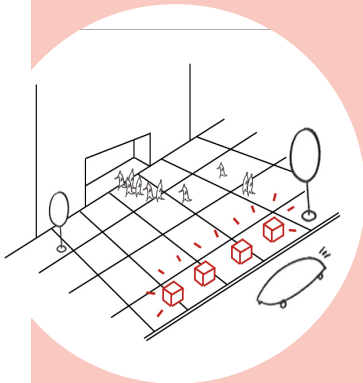
Anti-ram devices
➜ Designed to prevent the intrusion of vehicles.
➜ Installation required based on the necessity of a building permit for the school's construction.
➜ Installed on a case-by-case basis, tailored to the site's layout and the potential for vehicles to accelerate (such as "T-junction" road configurations).
➜ Available in a variety of forms (cubes, blocks, etc.).
➜ Can be designed with aesthetic considerations to better blend into the environment.

Solution ⇨ **Install concrete blocks according to the risk assessment.**

Interim solution ⇨ **Slow traffic using chicanes and speed bumps.**
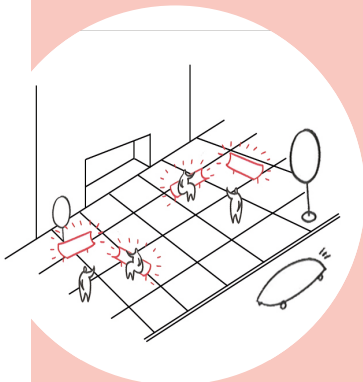
Benches
➜ Clear need for benches among adolescents.
➜ The distance from the entrance should be carefully considered.
➜ Lyon Metropole supports their installation to enhance the social vitality of public spaces for everyone...
➜ ... although headteachers and the police express concerns about potential misuse (such as gatherings, squatting, trafficking or the presence of outsiders).

Solution ⇨ **assess the situation on a case-by-case basis with the headteacher, who will have the final say.**

Interim solution ⇨ **Conduct trials (install them, then remove them if necessary), 'standing seats' and urban furniture designed for resting.**
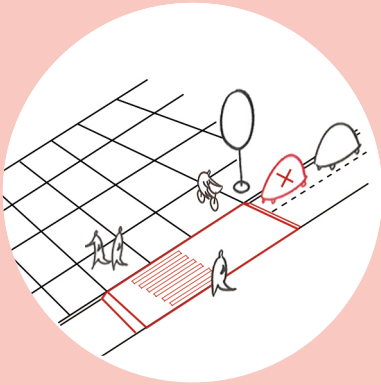
Parking

➔ The mayor holds police powers and can regulate or even prohibit vehicle traffic and parking near schools.

➔ At the 'terrorist threat' level of the Vigipirate plan, vehicle parking near schools may be prohibited.

➔ Furthermore, by 2027, all motor vehicle parking spaces within five meters of pedestrian crossings must be removed. Priority should be given to crossings between the school and public transport stops.

➔ Specific regulation in the City of Lyon: a ten-meter radius around school entrances, inside which any stationary objects (vehicles, bins, flower pots, etc.) are prohibited.

➔ Same situation for cars and bicycles.

Solution ⇨ **Park further away**.

Interim solution ⇨ **Install bike and scooter racks in the neutralised parking spaces.**
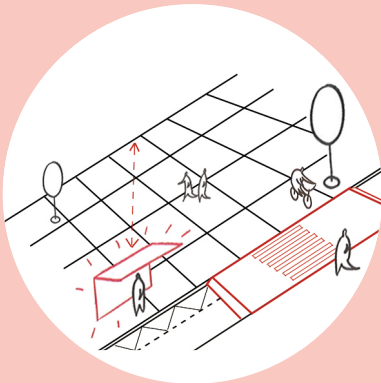
Bus stops

➔ Generate high foot traffic.

➔ Risk of conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles due to visibility obstructions.

➔ Avoid bus manoeuvres in front of the school.

➔ Opt for a linear layout for regular bus routes.

Solutions

⇨ **Position bus stops downstream of pedestrian crossings to improve visibility.**

⇨ **Ensure sufficient distance between bus stops and the school forecourt to ensure safety, yet maintaining accessibility.**

⇨ **Aim for a minimum distance of 50 meters between bus stops and the school.**

⇨ **Implement a staggered layout for bus stops.**

⇨ **Prohibit bus manoeuvres near schools to reduce risks to pupils.**
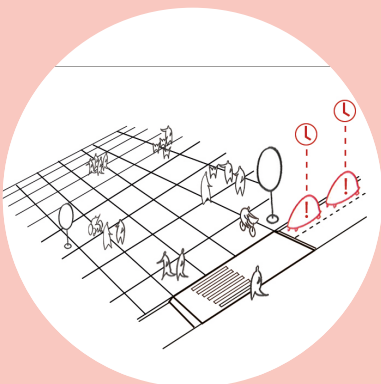
Drop-off points

➔ Avoid in dense, urban areas.

➔ For schools with a limited catchment area, where pupils can walk, cycle or use public transport, it is preferable to encourage and promote public transport or active travel options.

➔ Risks include traffic disruption and hazards when vehicles start moving again.

Solutions

⇨ **Promote carpooling among parents.**

⇨ **Encourage the use of public transport or active travel options.**

⇨ **Utilise existing parking facilities or spaces.**

⇨ **Position drop-off zones 50 to 100 meters away from areas where pupils wait.**

⇨ **Provide a designated drop-off area near the school only as a last resort.**

MÉTROPOLE GRAND LYON — Étude de sécurité

Etude d'enjeux d'accidentologie des collèges de la Métropole de Lyon

➔ Further practical information

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TESTIMONIALS

TESTIMONIAL 1

Mr. Gruson
Technical Advisor for Prevention and Security - Head of the Mobile
Academic Security Team at the Lyon Educational District

FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WHAT ARE THE MAIN CONCERNS REGARDING THE VICINITY OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS?

The areas surrounding middle schools present both safety and school environment challenges, which are key priorities to ensuring that the conditions for high-quality education are met within schools in the French Republic. The area around middle schools is part of the broader school environment, where pupils first come into contact with the school and share the space with other pupils and local users. It is therefore essential that the school vicinity is welcoming and makes pupils want to go to their classes, in safety and with a sense of security. Regarding safety, although the school's vicinity is not directly under the school principals' responsibility, they play a key role in coordinating with the Mayor and the police to implement the Vigipirate directives. These measures aim to limit gatherings and prevent intrusions into the school.

ARE THERE VARIATIONS DEPENDING ON THE LOCATION?

The management of school surroundings is obviously influenced by the immediate environment of each institution. This is evaluated in relation to the available space in front of the entrance, the main traffic routes and the number of pupils. As such, it is important to tailor the approach to each school and carry out a specific, site-based assessment.

WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS REGARDS THE AREAS AROUND MIDDLE SCHOOLS?

These areas are primarily public spaces, meaning they do not fall under the responsibility of the school principals. However, they are directly adjacent to the school, where educational and pedagogical activities take place.

As such, the school's rules continue to apply. Pupils can be disciplined, even outside the physical boundaries of the school, if their behaviour violates the school's code of conduct or disrupts the operation and peaceful environment of the school.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO A SCHOOL PLANNING TO REDEVELOP ITS VICINITY?

It is essential to strike a balance between quality of life (creating an open, pedestrian-friendly space) and the need to make this area safe. It should be a welcoming place where pupils take pleasure in coming to learn. Safety is paramount in making this a reality, whether by upholding the school's rules of conduct or through proactive measures to protect pupils and others from road risks, public disturbances and potential intrusions.

TESTIMONIAL 2

Mr. Oden
Headteacher, Collège André Lassagne in Caluire-et-Cuire

WHAT WERE YOUR INITIAL NEEDS AND THE PROBLEMS YOU FACED?

The pupils of Collège André Lassagne all take the same route to get to school or to the bus stops after their lessons.

When they reach the Square André Lassagne, they split into two groups: one taking transport to the north of the city, the other to the south. This was dangerous, as the bus stop pavements, on a particularly busy road, were not wide enough.

WHAT DID THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE VICINITY OF YOUR SCHOOL INVOLVE?

Firstly, we carried out a diagnostic study with eco-delegate pupils in conjunction with Lyon Metropole's highways department and two partner associations. We then studied the pupils' pathways, their behaviour in the vicinity of the school and their needs in terms of redevelopment.

This enabled us to establish with them how we could restructure the forecourt, pavements and waiting areas at the bus stops. The pavements have now been sized to meet our needs and the pathways have been redesigned to lead them to safer waiting areas. Improvements have been introduced for cyclists and at the end of the project, the pupils even helped with the landscaping.

WHAT'S THE OUTCOME TODAY?

The vicinity is calmer. While conditions for soft mobility have improved, the limited space available on the road prevented the creation of proper cycle lanes as we had originally envisioned. The project would now benefit from being expanded to a broader area, ensuring the safety of pupils from their homes and along their entire journey.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO A SCHOOL PLANNING TO REDEVELOP ITS VICINITY?

It is crucial to listen to users (in this case, pupils) and conduct on-the-ground observations (through a sociological and ergonomic lens) before making any decisions. This approach ensures the creation of spaces that are truly tailored to their needs and aspirations.

TESTIMONIAL 3

Mr. Mekki
Headteacher, Collège Marcel Dargent, Lyon 3rd district

WHAT WERE YOUR INITIAL NEEDS AND THE PROBLEMS YOU FACED?

Collège Dargent was part of a development initiative within the Metropole. Users, especially the pupils, wanted to see more greenery on the school forecourt, as well as areas for meeting together. The idea was to share the area outside the school and turn it into a place for socialising.

There were no specific problems, aside from concerns about the potential for overcrowding due to the installation of benches. However, the pupils reassured us that the benches would be used responsibly and, importantly, that they would also be shared with local residents outside of school hours.

WHAT DID THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE VICINITY OF YOUR SCHOOL INVOLVE?

We planted trees and created a mural designed by the pupils. The pupils were fully engaged in the project, participating in meetings with Mrs. Sylvie Giagnorio and various Metropole representatives, as well as with the artist.

WHAT'S THE OUTCOME TODAY?

Work commenced on February 16th, 2024. The first trees have been planted, creating a very pleasant environment and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the school. Both pupils and staff are delighted with these changes.

We experienced minimal disruption from the work and greatly appreciated the Metropole's ongoing support and responsiveness.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO A SCHOOL PLANNING TO REDEVELOP ITS VICINITY?

Get started, because the Metropole is genuinely committed to supporting middle schools and providing them with all the resources they need to carry out these projects. You can also trust the pupils, because they are realistic and have some really good ideas.

Ms Giampino
President of the Council for Children and Adolescents,
Vice-President of the HCFEA

THE HCFEA IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOCIETY. WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON THIS RECOMMENDATIONS GUIDE DRAWN UP FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT?

The HCFEA has published a new report titled: "Children's Place in Public Space and Nature: Education, Health & the Environment." This recommendations guide will be useful beyond the Lyon metropolitan area, due to the democratic exemplarity of its methodology. It involves all stakeholders, including the pupils themselves, and allocates significant time upfront to ask the right questions. It serves both as a tool for action and a means for ongoing reflection.

WHAT CONCRETE INITIATIVES WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO PROMOTE THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PUPILS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS?

Adolescents and children are integral members of society, and public spaces belong to them just as much as to other generations. It is our responsibility to ensure that their experience of these spaces is positive and harmonious. The HCFEA has proposed several measures to encourage and acknowledge the involvement of children. For example, since its establishment, it has advocated for schools to be open to the communities surrounding them, especially during extracurricular hours. The aim is for schools to actively serve as a participatory civic forum in the ecological transition and the development of local areas. The 2019 Sustainable Development Education (EDD) programme provides a valuable opportunity to link educational projects (E3D) with extracurricular involvement. In some regions, particularly in rural areas, the school can serve as the primary socio-cultural hub of the community.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ADOLESCENTS ARE SUFFICIENTLY INVOLVED IN PROJECTS THAT AFFECT THEM? WHAT MECHANISMS COULD BE STRENGTHENED TO ENSURE THAT THEIR VOICES ARE MORE EFFECTIVELY HEARD AND INTEGRATED INTO URBAN PLANNING DECISIONS?

There remains much to be done to deepen our understanding of adolescents. Conflicts over the use of public spaces often expose prevailing prejudices against young people, as well as misconceptions regarding their behaviour and their need for respect and justice. The media rarely highlight their empathy, solidarity and commitment. For instance, many are unaware that some adolescents assume caregiving responsibilities within their families in situations involving disability, aging or the illness of a relative.

THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ISSUES. HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT THEY ARE CENTRAL TO PUBLIC POLICIES, WHICH ARE OFTEN PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON SAFETY? WHAT ACTIONS WOULD YOU PROPOSE TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SAFETY IN THE DESIGN OF AREAS AROUND SCHOOLS?

Access to the outdoors and nature is vital for children and adolescents; indeed, it benefits everyone. It is crucial to aim for a balance between safety and conviviality. This objective helps to address three key barriers to outdoor access, namely the denial of risks, an excessive fear of insecurity and overprotection. For the health and well-being of young people, as well as for a better understanding of life in society, it is crucial to combat the current trend of retreating indoors, which is closely linked to excessive screen time, sedentary lifestyles and, at times, social isolation. When children are able to flourish in public spaces, it signifies a revitalised and humanised environment for all generations, including those who are socially more vulnerable due to age or health conditions.

CONCLUSION
A long-term acculturation initiative

Following a field survey that highlighted the variety of practices and areas around middle schools, as well as the different perspectives of the stakeholders involved, **this recommendations guide aims to offer planning guidance that serves the widest possible range of people. It is the outcome of a consultative process, involving pupils and all other parties through collaborative workshops, and strives to align the expectations and constraints of all stakeholders.** Considering the legal, technical and financial dimensions of the complex environments around school premises in urban settings, this initiative, which spanned over more than two years, was conceived as a progressive acculturation process for local stakeholders. This process bridges the disciplines of sociology, urban planning, human sciences and development. **It's aim is to offer key insights, avenues for reflection and practical tools to support action in favour of adolescents. It is not therefore intended to serve as a technical reference framework.**

Focusing on the needs of middle school pupils by prioritising their usage of space was the starting point of this approach, steering the work towards enhancing their integration within the city. As emphasised by the work of the High Council for the Family, Childhood and Age (HCFEA), adolescence is a critical phase in life, as pivotal as the early years of a newborn[1]. During this critical period, adolescents form strong connections around the pursuit of independence, personal development and the need to feel safe. For this reason, it is essential to create spaces that are specifically suited to adolescents outside of their homes and schools[2]. **The urban development decisions made by local authorities will significantly affect adolescents' well-being and safety, shaping their identity and helping to alleviate the social inequalities they face.**

Following the recommendations of the HCFEA, it is vital to place adolescents at the centre of policies that affect them, striving to find a balance between their legitimate aspirations and the demands of urban planning and management. This approach will foster the creation of inclusive and secure urban spaces that support adolescent growth and encourage their full engagement in civic life.

1. HCFEA. La traversée adolescente des années collège. Summary. May 2021.

2. HCFEA. Les temps et les lieux tiers des enfants et des adolescents hors maison et hors scolarité. February 2018.

ANNEXES
HCFEA* research

HCFEA. Council for Children and Adolescents. Third spaces and time spent by children and adolescents outside of their homes and schools. Report adopted by consensus on 20 February 2018.

Pages 90–91: 6.1 Building identities in open spaces, away from parents.

"Through experimentation with new spaces, adolescents build their identities by testing and challenging their usual habits with alternative ways of acting. In the absence of four walls and away from the gaze and ears of their parents, children roam outdoors to converse and socialise, in spaces designed for consumption,

recreation, leisure and movement –spaces which differ in urban, suburban and rural environments. In urban environments, the visibility of adolescents in stationary groups, which draw attention, can often be perceived as threatening in public spaces. Furthermore, safety issues arise, either due to physical hazards in unregulated environments (walking in natural spaces, urban sports equipment, etc.), or from the risk of undesirable encounters. The degree of autonomy permitted by parents can vary depending on physical necessities (such as transport by car) and unsuitable company in the local area. This does not imply that greater dangers result in more prohibitions. Social control varies across different social and spatial environments. In order to escape adult oversight, and when lacking designated personal space, children and adolescents create their own spaces, transforming so-called 'interstitial' areas into places for gathering and socialising. The issue presents itself differently for children and for adolescents. A survey conducted by the Cnaf[183] regarding the expectations of local officials and the public on leisure provisions in urban settings shows that while children are generally content with the existing facilities, older children lose interest in structured services, with a noticeable shift occurring around ages 11-12[184], coinciding with the transition to middle school. Beyond potential improvements in terms of structured activity offerings, the rejection of dedicated urban facilities[185] by adolescents underscores the intentionality of their disengagement. The presence of young people in urban spaces, seemingly without purpose or structure,

*HCFEA: Haut conseil de la famille, de l'enfance et de l'âge

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Sylviane Giampino, President of the Council for Children and Adolescents and Vice-President of the HCFEA, speaking at the seminar held in Lyon on 7 December 2023.

emerges as an inherent socialising force of the city itself, acting as a site for experimentation, and adolescence as a 'test of empowerment'. In this process, 'the gradual mastery of the world through one's own actions –autonomy – relies on rules that are at times imposed by others, at times reconstructed autonomously, but always negotiated collectively'.[186] Adolescents revisit relational anchors and peer socialisation – which is free from the influence of adult authority figures – take centre stage and contribute to the formation of an alternative culture, a 'world of our own,'[187] which forms part of the creation of a 'world of one's own'. **In this pursuit, the spaces that adolescents explore and appropriate are both those that elude observation – such as alleys, behind water towers or in abandoned buildings – and those that allow them to be seen, such as shopping streets or town squares. These aimless wanderings and stopping points hold significant identity-forming power for adolescents. The challenge for politicians therefore lies in recognising this need for identity experimentation.** Mobility beyond their neighbourhood also plays a key role in adolescents' identity development, especially because it enables them to leave the familiar behind and engage with the unknown, where they themselves become an unfamiliar element. **This provides the conditions for exploration, often shared with peers, far from the watchful eyes of familiar adults** (family, neighbours or teachers).

Adolescents also seek to broaden their horizons and explore 'other places'. 'Heading into the city as they grow older is a defining feature of adolescent behaviour'[190]. However, low adolescent mobility may also indicate that they find sufficient opportunities for growth (activities, relationships, etc.) within their own neighbourhood[191]. Conversely, the social diversity that comes with adolescents' mobility beyond their neighbourhood should not be idealised. The ways adolescents engage with their environment are not static. The evolve with:

- an increase in age and access to a transport pass;

- a contingent factor, such as the need to carry out an administrative formality;

- the influence of friendships or romantic relationships.

The experiences they undergo will play a crucial role in either reinforcing or altering how they behave both within and beyond their neighbourhoods.

183 "Evaluation de la politique de l'enfance et de la jeunesse des Caf. Attentes des familles et des jeunes. Attentes des élus. Territoires", op. cit. 184 See also J. Zaffran (2000), "Les collégiens, l'école et le temps libre", Paris, La Découverte. 185 J. Zaffran (2016), "Bouger pour grandir", Annales de la Recherche Urbaine, no. 111, p. 69-77.186 J. Zaffran (2016), op. cit, p.70-71. 187 E. Ramos and F. de Singly (2016), " La construction d'un espace 'à nous': la mobilité spatiale à l'adolescence", Annales de la Recherche Urbaine, no. 111, February. 188 J. Devaux (2013), "La dimension spatiale des sociabilités d'adolescents résidant dans un village francilien", Géographie et Cultures, no. 87. 91

(Source: www.hcfea.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_ temps_et_lieux_tiers_des_enfants.pdf consulted on 03/04/2024).

HCFEA. Council for Children and Adolescents. Children's rights: the progress made and the way forward Research by the Council for Childhood and Adolescence, 2016–2022. Report of the Council for Childhood and Adolescence, adopted on 24 November 2022.

Page 31: Third spaces and time spent by adolescents outside of school and family life: the right to culture, play, leisure, the role of children in their neighbourhood and their autonomy.

25% of the time available to children and adolescents is spent outside the school environment and family obligations. In its report 'Third Spaces and Time (TST) spent by children and adolescents outside of home and school', the Council for Childhood and Adolescence of the HCFEA presented twenty-four proposals calling on the government to address this emerging area of public policy. To advance this 'third educator for children', TST are envisioned as a collection of spaces and times that go beyond the conventional models of 'informal education' or extracurricular activities. [...]
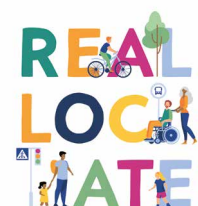
Considering the proven benefits for both children and families, there is substantial potential for progress in the development of TST, especially given the existing discrepancies and inequalities: by the age of 9-10, 25% of children have no structured activities outside of school; 25% do not go on holiday; and 8% of young people between 15 and 18 feel isolated. When broken down by area: among 11-17-year-olds, eight out of ten are engaged in sports; only four out of ten participate in artistic and cultural activities, and fewer than 10% regularly engage in scientific or technical pursuits outside school. Youth involvement in solidarity, environmental and civic initiatives, which appeal to children, remains minimal but has been increasing in recent years: the share of young volunteers under 35 in associations stood at 34% in 2021, compared to 27% in 2010. The development of public spaces that provide safe mobility and social interaction for children and young people is still in its infancy – a situation exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis and overuse of technological media in human relationships.

(Source: www.hcfea.fr/IMG/pdf/hcfea_rapportdde_onu_2022_final_-_le_rapport.pdf consulted on 03/04/2024)

Thank you!

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