

Global Warming

Global warming is the greatest environmental challenge that our planet is currently facing if not the worst challenge in general. We all understand the size of the situation, yet we still choose to ignore it. The fuel we use to power our homes, cars and more is heating up our planet much faster than expected. We are currently recording the hottest temperatures ever; the temperature of the earth has reached the highest point it has ever been in the past 12,000 years and it only gets worse from here.

As the planet gets hotter, collectively we must act now instead of waiting or dismissing the situation. The primary cause of global warming is fossil fuels. Fossil fuels pollute our atmosphere, contributing to greenhouse gases and therefore trapping in heat from the sun, increasing the earth's temperature. However, despite the damage, humans are addicted to fossil fuels! We use them constantly every day, sometimes without even realising, from the car journey to school, to the plastic pen you are holding right now. The carbon dioxide they produce stays in our atmosphere for 5 decades or more.

Due to the rise in temperature, sea levels are rising. Greenland is losing 20% more mass than it receives from new snowfall and will continue to shrink as the earth continues to warm. As well as this, extreme weather conditions are becoming more frequent. The heat waves, wildfires and floods are now taking place with greater intensity and frequency. Hurricanes are now occurring twice as often, regularly hitting the Caribbean and North America. When I visited the Caribbean in 2018, I was there at the time of a hurricane. I remember the whole island experienced a lockdown that lasted 3 days, banning people from leaving their homes. There was heavy rainfall and incredibly strong winds causing our flight to be cancelled and eventually having to take another route. It was only once I had got home that I saw the aftermath of the hurricane on the news. It had caused \$50 billion in damages across the countries in its path as well as 172 deaths. Unfortunately, this is now a yearly occurrence.

There are ways we can tackle this global warming crisis. If we do not, we will soon reach the point where our damage becomes irreversible. Whether it is taking public transport more to reduce carbon emissions or getting into the habit of recycling and reducing unnecessary wastage. We tend to follow the rule of 'if it's not going to bother us today, we'll push it to the back of our minds'. We can become very reluctant when it comes to changing our lifestyles, however, any little change we choose to do now will prolong the life of our planet in the future.