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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to all headteachers of secondary phase schools following the incident on Dagenham Heathway which took place in the hours after school ended on Friday 25 January. You will know that the large number of young people from schools across Barking and Dagenham and beyond, congregated on The Heathway, intimidated local people going about their daily business and culminated in wrecking the Subway branch and injuries to security personnel. The vast majority of these young people were in uniform and much work has been done to identify those that were present, putting themselves at risk.

First, I want to thank you for the way you have responded in coming together to view the CCTV and work with the Council and Police to identify those involved. When I spoke to your representatives on Friday, I made the following points:

- It is incredibly disappointing that a group of young people acting in this way have done so much to damage to the achievements of the vast majority of young people. The damage is not just to how young people are viewed but to the reputation of schools and risk to community relations in Barking & Dagenham.
- The Council will use processes and resources working with schools and the Police to press parents to accept and take responsibility for the actions of their children in the crucial hours between 3pm and 6.00pm when they leave school premises. At the forefront of our minds is how we safeguard young people from placing themselves at risk in this way. I have also asked senior Council officers to advise on our legal powers, including how we use estates Police and how we respond when parents are Council tenants. We shall be pushing forward with our campaign to promote parents and guardians - responsibility for their secondary aged children after school, commonly known as the 'lost hours'. I want to start to get this message across to parents by sending a letter home to all parents or guardians- jointly signed by myself, Jason Gwillim the Tri-Borough Commander, and each headteacher. I also want to write to the parents of those young people who we know were involved, setting out the Council's expectations in the strongest possible terms. Further information on our proposed response will follow.

Please do continue to work with us. I know that at least one school has returned to view the CCTV again since Friday, and my officers will continue to arrange this for you if it is required. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Darren Rodwell
Leader of the Council