Dear Parent/carers

Antisocial Behaviour perpetrated by students in Lewisham Town Centre

This is a letter received from Lewisham to all school which they wish for the schools to share with parents/guardians/carers.

Lewisham Council is working in partnership with the Police, Lewisham Shopping Centre, Safer Business Network, Glass Mill Leisure Centre, Youth First and schools across the borough to reduce antisocial behaviour on Lewisham High Street and surrounding areas, have expressed their concerns regarding the anti-social and in some cases criminal, behaviour of some students on Lewisham High Street, particularly in and around the shopping centre, mainly after the school day has ended (3pm-6pm)

Over the past few weeks, there have been a number of serious incidents involving young people, with quite a number of them in school uniform, and these incidents have also resulted in alarm and distress to a number of other pedestrians and shoppers. These incidents have occurred in Lewisham High Street, in Lewisham Shopping Centre and around the Glassmill Leisure Centre. These problems have escalated over the past week, also resulting in verbal and physical abuse towards some shop staff, security staff and police officers.

Whilst this behaviour is being perpetrated by a small number of individuals, who are currently being identified, the presence of larger groups of on-looking students is adding to the negative perception of Lewisham students as a whole.

In light of these concerns several measures has been implemented to help maintain a safer environment for all in Lewisham Town Centre and surrounding areas.

This will include:

- Police will increase patrols in these hotspot areas to deter and disrupt young people from causing antisocial behaviour.
- Police and Community Safety will review and download any footage of incidents captured on CCTV (both from the on street and the shopping centre) which involves students and then this evidence will be provided to the schools and relevant agencies to identify those pupils and take the necessary steps to tackle this behaviour.
- In accordance with normal protocols, names and addresses of those pupils identified to be committing crime and ASB will be shared as necessary with partner agencies.
- Letters will be sent to each identified student’s parent/guardian to invite them to a meeting to be shown CCTV footage of any crime or antisocial behaviour their child/children are involved in.
• Any young person already known to the Youth Offending Service will be reassessed to explore what action can be taken.

• The Partnership will explore the use of voluntary Anti-social Behaviour Contracts (ABC) where appropriate to be issued to students who prove to be causing Anti-Social Behaviour. This ABC will be specific to the behaviour in question and be signed with the consent of the parent/guardian. Local agencies will alert each other when a warning has been given so that it can be effectively monitored and a record will be kept so that it could be used as evidence if the case was to progress.

• The Partnership will also explore the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions, when if breached, can lead to Criminal Behaviour Orders. These can have geographic restrictions as a condition.

• Lewisham Shopping Centre plan to implement banning orders from the shopping centre for those found to be committing crime or ASB in or around the centre.

• Some key school staff have already been working with partners to monitor this situation and this will continue.

• Crime, Enforcement Regulation Service, Police, Schools, Lewisham Shopping Centre, Safer Business Network, Youth First and other agencies will continue to have regular meetings monitor the situation.

• Going forward, we will work with partners, including local schools, to establish and advertise the provision that exists for young people, to better engage them after the school day has finished.

The Partnership has asked local schools to get a message to all of their students and their parents/guardians/carers outlining that this type of behaviour in Lewisham is unacceptable and that action will be taken against perpetrators.

Schools are asking parents/guardians/carers to discuss the contents of the letter with their children and advise them to refrain from directly or indirectly being involved in antisocial behaviour outside of school.

The Partnership is asking local schools, parents, guardians, and carers that they deter students, unless accompanied by an adult, from congregating in Lewisham Town Centre after school and instead ask them to either go straight home or on to another activity in the Borough.

Yours sincerely,

Dr T Bennett
Principal