

HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

1010 Darby Road Havertown, Pennsylvania 19083

Official Press Release

INACCURATE EMAILS IN REFERENCE TO RECENT SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS

The Haverford Township Police Department has been inundated with requests for information about an email circulating that a “predator” is in the township targeting children.

That civilian e-mail is misleading, inaccurate and wrong. The department wants to assure residents that there is not a “predator” targeting children in the township as that incorrect e-mail has stated.

Below is a summary of the actual incidents reported and investigated by the police. All three incidents have been fully investigated and the department is confident in stating there is no connection or linkage between them.

On 05/09/2010 a resident in the 100 block of North Morgan Ave reported a suspicious incident that occurred on 05/07/2010. The resident reported that while at a neighbor’s residence her two young children were playing in their back yard. The resident reported that as she returned to her property she observed a white male standing next to an older model gray Dodge Caravan that was parked on Dill Road at North Morgan Avenue. The resident described the white male as being in his late twenties to early thirties with dark hair. The resident reported that as she made eye contact with the male he entered the van and left the area. The resident reported to the Police that she feared that the male was watching her children play in her rear yard. The resident reported that her immediate neighbors were not familiar with the van or the male based off of her description.

On 05/11/2010 another resident of 300 block West Hathaway Lane contacted Police after receiving an email that detailed the above incident. Resident 2 reported that he believed that his babysitter came in contact with the same suspicious male while she stood with his toddler son on the bus route by Merwood Park. The babysitter reported to Police that on either 05/08/2010 or 05/09/2010 she noticed a male photographing her and the child as the two stood on the Bus Route watching the trains on the Route 100 line. The babysitter reported that she confronted the male and he stated that he was taking pictures of the trains for a research project. The babysitter reported that she believed that the male continued to photograph them as they left the area to return to their residence. The babysitter described the male as a person of color possibly Puerto Rican. The babysitter described the male as being in his thirties with black hair approximately 5’9 with a medium build.

On 05/12/2010 Detectives spoke with the babysitter about the suspicious incident. The babysitter reported that **she did not know for a fact that she and the child were being photographed.** The babysitter reported that at no time did the male actually turn and face the two and take a photograph. The babysitter reported that the male and his camera were facing the train tracks throughout the encounter. The babysitter reported that she did not feel that the incident should have been reported to Police but Resident 2 insisted.

As many of you may know a large scale email is circulating through Haverford Township concerning not only the above two incidents but also the suspicious male that was reported on 04/22/2010 at Coopertown School. The male involved in the Coopertown School incident was described as an older white male with gray hair operating a red Honda Civic. The male was reportedly taking photographs of the children in the playground area.

The mass email **incorrectly** states that the same male and vehicle were involved in both the incident on North Morgan and Coopertown School. The email now includes the incident that occurred on the Hathaway Lane again reporting that the same suspicious male is now involved in three separate incidents.

The Haverford Township Police Department's Detective Unit and Patrol Division have conducted multiple investigations into these incidents. **These investigations revealed that the incidents and the persons observed are not the same.** Each of the three reported incidents was unique containing neither the same male nor the same vehicle. Additionally the department has found **there was no criminality** in either the North Morgan incident or the Hathaway Lane incident. The male in the Coopertown School incident has not yet been identified, and that investigation is ongoing. Taking pictures of people in public while disconcerting is not a crime and generally will not result in criminal charges.

Our Department has been fielding many phone calls about the incidents and the email continues to be circulated to new viewers. The Department wants to stress to our residents that our **investigations have revealed that there is not a connection between the three incidents.** Further the Department has no information or belief that our parks or our children are being actively targeted. However our officers will continue to keep a check on our schools and parks for any suspicious people described in the incidents or in general.

The Police Department is encouraged to see that the community's information distribution web is so active and vibrant. While the linkage of these incidents was unfortunate, the department hopes that the increased level of community concern continues to keep us vigilant in protecting the children and property of our community. For accurate and factual information we would hope that the community visits the police department website at www.haverfordtownship.com

The investigation of these incidents is continuing by the Detective Division of the Haverford Township Police Department. Residents are reminded to report any suspicious persons, vehicles or incidents to police by calling 911 and requesting to speak to an officer to have the incident documented.

This is an Official Press Release of the Haverford Township Police Department issued on the authority of Chief Carmen D. Pettine



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Community Policing Unit