

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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East Haven Starts “School Liaison Officer Program” in advance of Rolling Out Revised School Safety Program

Mayor Joseph Maturo, Jr. announced today that the Town of East Haven is beginning a new police program called the “School Liaison Officer Program” in which specific officers will be assigned to local neighborhood schools and be responsible for making periodic appearances at schools during normal patrols.

Maturo explained, “This new program serves several important goals. First, it enhances school security by making our schools regular patrol points for officers. Second, it will help open up a dialogue among officers, school administrators, teachers, and students about general Town education issues. Third, and most importantly, it will provide students with another trustworthy resource from which they can regularly seek guidance.”

Maturo continued, “Chief Larrabee has indicated that while East Haven has many defined neighborhoods, they unfortunately don’t lend themselves to traditional neighborhood and community policing. However, the new School Liaison program will utilize the Town’s neighborhood schools to implement more effective community policing and build a stronger relationship among the Town’s schools, neighborhoods, and officers.”

Under the program, officers will be required to make periodic and regular appearances at their selected schools during the course of their normal patrols. Each officer will be responsible for incidents which occur at their selected schools while on duty. If incidents occur when a school liaison officer is off duty, the officer will be briefed. For record-keeping purposes, a case number will be created for each school visit and classified under “extra patrols.”

Chief Larrabee indicates that he expects the program will make officers aware of incidents which occur not only in school, but out of school as well. Larrabee explained, “So often, students don’t know where to turn for help. As students develop relationships with their school officers, we expect officers will become aware of out-of-school issues as well. School Liaison officers will also be responsible for appropriately addressing and reporting these issues.”

The new School Liaison Officer Program is being rolled out ahead of a broader revision to the Town’s general school safety program next month. Maturo explained, “Like many towns, in the wake of the Newton tragedy, East Haven has revisited its school safety policies. The Town will be announcing those revisions in the upcoming weeks. However, I expect the School Liaison program to be an integral part of the Town’s revised school safety policy moving forward.”

According to the Town, the School Liaison program was implemented on a voluntary basis, allowing officers to choose amongst the schools they will visit. Pathways will be visited by Officer Dave Olson, Deer Run and Ferrara Schools will be visited by Officer Justin Brochu, East Haven High School will be visited by Officer Shawn Hatchel, East Haven Middle School will be visited by Officer Shirley Conyers, Tuttle School will be visited by Officer Joseph Finoia, and Momauguin School will be visited by Officer Dave Torello.

Maturo concluded, “This new program is a tremendous new resource for our students, teachers, and school administrators. While it will undoubtedly raise the level of security in our schools, it will also serve the critical purpose of opening up a meaningful dialogue among residents of all ages and the police department.”

For more information, please contact Frank Gentilesco, Jr. at 203-468-3204.