



# News release

Issued by the Media and Corporate Communication Department

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## **POLICE OFFER REASSURANCE AFTER SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS**

**Police in East Dorset are offering reassurance to parents following a small number of reported suspicious incidents in Alderholt and Hampshire and subsequent online rumours.**

During the evening of Friday, 7 October 2011, a 12-year-old boy was pushing his bicycle through Alderholt when he was approached by a man driving a white van. The man asked the boy if he wanted a lift home and the boy ran to his house.

This man did not make any attempt to force the boy into the van and officers believe that this incident may be a genuine misunderstanding.

Other suspicious incidents have been reported to Hampshire Constabulary but these are not linked and are certainly not abductions or attempted abductions, as has been erroneously claimed on online social network sites.

Inspector Mike Darkin, of East Dorset, said: "Dorset Police takes all such reports extremely seriously and it is entirely appropriate that we alert our communities when such reports are received.

"However, it is equally important that we let you know that, following further enquiries, these reports are not as they first appeared.

"Unfortunately, it seems that a number of malicious rumours have been circulated on the internet and that these unverified reports have caused unwarranted, but understandable, alarm among parents.

"I would urge residents not to pass on unsubstantiated rumours and information that they do not know to be true as this frightens people unnecessarily.

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“I would also like to reassure Dorset residents that genuine incidents such as this are exceptionally rare in East Dorset and rarer still when straightforward safety advice is followed.

“Our advice to parents and school children has not changed.

“At any time, and anywhere in the country, it is always wise that children walk in groups, avoid taking unfamiliar routes or shortcuts and are encouraged to let parents know their whereabouts at all times.

“In order to provide further reassurance, additional police officers are patrolling relevant areas and I would urge anyone with any concerns to approach their Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

“Dorset is a safe place and, while we would always encourage members of the public to take a common sense approach to their personal safety, there should be no reason for additional alarm.”

**Anyone with concerns should contact their local Safer Neighbourhood Team. Details can be found on the Dorset Police website.**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

- Issued by the Media Relations Department on 01202 or 01305 223893. Visit our website at [www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk)
- For the latest news updates, call the Dorset Police 24 hour media relations voicebank on 0871 550 3004

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