

**COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
NEW YORK**



POLICE DEPARTMENT

GERALDINE HART

ACTING POLICE COMMISSIONER

September 25, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Mathew Lewis and I am the Commanding Officer of the First Precinct which covers the Town of Babylon. I am writing this letter to bring a safety concern to your attention. In recent months we have responded to dozens of 911 calls reporting groups of "youths" operating bicycles in a reckless manner or creating a hazardous condition. What likely started as youthful mischief has devolved into a dangerous situation. These incidents have occurred on public roadways such as Deer Park Avenue, commercial parking lots and at the Tanger Mall in Deer Park. The activities include:

- Taking over public roadways by riding in the traffic lanes
- Zipping through commercial parking lots coming dangerously close to pedestrians and vehicles, seemingly on purpose and in some cases throwing items at pedestrians
- Riding through Tanger Mall en masse in violation of mall policy while verbally harassing customers and security personnel

These actions create a true danger to the cyclist and to the public. It is only a matter of time before a bicyclist is hit by a vehicle and/or a pedestrian is injured by the cyclist's actions. Obviously, the individuals involved in this activity comprise a small percentage of the student population but I felt compelled to write to all of you so that you are aware and can speak to your child if you think they may be involved. The New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) Article 34 contains laws pertaining to the operation of bicycles. Among the provisions is one that states: Traffic laws apply to persons riding bicycles or skating or gliding on in-line skates. Every person riding a bicycle or skating or gliding on in-line skates upon a roadway shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle by this title, except as to special regulations in this article and except as to those provisions of this title which by their nature can have no application. Simply put, bike riders are subject to most of the same regulations as those driving a motor vehicle such as stopping for a red light. The VTL further states that bike riders are to ride near the right-hand curb (section 1234) and those under 14 years of age must wear a helmet.

The intention of my letter is to educate you and your child in order to prevent a possible tragedy.

Respectfully,

Inspector Mathew Lewis
Commanding Officer, First Precinct



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