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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

## T, school officials warn Brighton students after brake pranks

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Transit police officers and a Green Line supervisor wait at the B Line's Warren Street stop as part of an effort to deter further mischief.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

After a wave of emergency brake pulling pranks on the Green Line, MBTA and Brighton High officials are warning students that further incidents will not be tolerated and could result in [the revocation](#) of all students' T passes.

Transit police made their presence felt at the Warren Street T stop today as dozens of Brighton High students waited and boarded the B line, which was plagued by [three brake pranks](#) at stops in Allston yesterday afternoon. Officials said they suspect the brakes were pulled by Brighton High passengers. They booted over 100 students from the trolleys after yesterday's incidents.

The problem of students pulling inbound Green Line e-brakes cropped up four or five years ago and prompted the addition of four school buses to pick up Brighton High students at dismissal to bring teenagers downtown, said MBTA

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Transit Police Lt. Michael Shea.

Since adding the buses, such incidents were less frequent, said Shea. But, perhaps due to a jump in enrollment at the school this year, he said transit police have seen a new round of incidents since the start of this academic year.

The acts can cause injuries to passengers and slow service, Shea said, adding that "The MBTA really can't afford to have the Green Line shut down for 20 minutes at a time."

"The hope is that peer pressure [from students' classmates] will police themselves," said Green Line Supervisor Paul Gerrish at the Warren Street stop today alongside Shea and three other transit officers.

Shea met with two school police officers and an assistant headmaster this morning to discuss the problem and also spoke with the school's headmaster by phone – conversations Shea said were "very positive."

An announcement was made to students today and parents will be notified of the incidents, Shea said. Pulling an emergency brake when there is no emergency is not only an inconvenience and dangerous to others, but also a criminal offense under state law, said T General Manager Richard Davey.

However, he said the goal is to see the incidents stop without the need for arrests.

"The school administration took [the issue] very seriously," Davey said. "We're going to use this as a teaching moment at this point."

T and school officials "were able to devise a course of action to deal with this," said the city's school department spokesman Matthew Wilder.

"We look forward, as we always do, to working with the MBTA and MBTA Police," he said.

Uniformed transit police will be waiting at the Warren Street when students board shortly after 2 p.m. weekdays at least through next week, Shea said. Officers – uniformed and plain-clothed – will also be riding the Green Line to deter the pranks from continuing.

Students at the stop yesterday declined to identify themselves, but they said an announcement from the school's headmaster warned that the entire student body could have their passes revoked if another incident occurs. Shea said it is an option that is being considered.

"It says on the passes that we have the right," to take them away, he said.

Most students – several of whom said they were among those forced to walk home after the brake was pulled on the train they were riding yesterday – said the pranks are more annoying than funny.

Yesterday, over 100 area high school students were kicked off after three separate incidents on inbound B line trains – two at the Boston University West stop and another at the Packard's Corner stop, Shea said.

"Of course, none of the students would identify those responsible for the immature and foolish behavior. So Transit Police did the only thing they could do: they ejected more than 100 students from [the] trains," forcing them to walk home, T spokesman Joe Pesaturo said yesterday.

The pranks delayed each train for about 10 minutes, he said.

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Several students said the move to kick all students off was unfair to those who were not involved and did not see who pulled the brakes. The teenagers said the four buses that bring students downtown are often too packed so they ride the T inbound instead.

However, Shea said while the buses can be crowded, there should be enough room for all students headed into the city to board the buses. T officials said they have not received any complaints about the action taken yesterday and stand by the move.

“Were students lumped together yesterday? They were, but they were given the opportunity,” to tell T officials who had pulled the prank, Davey said. “I think the action we took yesterday was very measured.”

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