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ClevelandMetroSchools.org

Dear CMSD Educators:

I am writing you today to let you know our plan to address the recent car thefts and how you can assist in this citywide problem.

As you may know or not know, The Cleveland Division of Police has made several arrests as it relates to car break-ins and vehicle thefts. Even with the arrests, we know this continues to be a problem. CPD has increased their patrols and their Violent Crime Reduction detectives are conducting investigations in each neighborhood. They are also working with the County Prosecutor since this is an issue throughout the entire area.

We understand and share the same concerns about the problem of vehicle thefts in Cleveland, including some that have taken place on and around District properties. We monitor our buildings with surveillance cameras and, where possible, in person. Safety & Security is also working with Cleveland police in their efforts to fight this citywide problem.

Together, CPD and CMSD are actively working to curb car thefts occurring across the city. As we tackle this issue, it’s essential that we work in partnership with the community. Below are actions you can take individually to support this effort.

**Individual Action:**

1. Lock your doors

Keeping your doors locked is the first step in deterring a thief. It's good to get into the habit of checking your car doors.

2. Remove your keys from the vehicle

Never leave your keys in the ignition. If your key is in the car, a thief can simply break a window and drive off. We also caution against leaving your car running, even if you're just going into a store for a quick errand. A running vehicle may be an easy mark for a thief, especially if it is unattended or unlocked. It is also a municipal code violation.

3. Do not leave a spare key near your vehicle

The CDP also recommends taking your keys with you when you leave your car. Some people keep a spare key under the car or in the glove box just in case they get locked out — but thieves know where to check for an extra key. While getting locked out of your car is a pain, think about the potential hassle of your car getting stolen.

4. Close the windows

Keep your windows closed completely. A thief can simply reach into your car through an open window taking what they can reach or unlocking the door to gain full access to your vehicle and everything in it.

5. Park in open designated parking areas, and well-lit areas (early morning/evening hours).

If there is designated parking for staff, please do so. Staff are encouraged to park as close to the building as possible if designated parking is not available. Avoid parking in areas that are poorly lit or places that are not immediately seen by passers-by.

6. Install an audible alarm system and anti-theft device

CDP recommend installing an audible alarm system, if your car did not come with one, and using a visible anti-theft device. An audible alarm is designed to emit a loud noise, often the car's horn, if someone attempts to enter the vehicle while the alarm is on. The unwanted attention attracted by the noise may chase off a potential thief.

7. Don't leave valuables in your car

One way to attract a thief is to leave a purse, cell phone or another high-value item in a highly visible area of your car. It's best to leave anything of value at home, but, if you must have something important with you, keep it out of sight. CDP also recommend putting valuables in the trunk before you get where you need to be, as some thieves scope parking lots looking for people who are moving items to their trunk. Once you've left the vehicle, they'll break into the trunk to grab whatever you stashed away.

8. Be alert

Be aware of your surroundings when you park your car. If you are wary of the safety of your car or see someone loitering around the parking lot, it's best to notify CMSD Division of Safety and Security.

9. Be ready

If you are a victim of crime, have important information available to make a report. Have make, model, and color available. Have the license plate and Vehicle Identification Number written down for quick access. This information will be needed alert others quickly before the officer arrives.

Again, please do not hesitate to call Safety and Security Central Command Center at 838-7777. Together we can address this growing concern.

Thank you