

Fatal shortcut

A 17-year-old boy, who took his seven-year-old sister to school, has tragically died after being struck by a train.

Dannon October was a well-known soccer player in the Wynberg and Plumstead area. Relatives say the teen took his little sister to school on the train but on Wednesday the train was delayed and they decided to walk.

Dannon took a shortcut over the railway line between Southfield and Heathfield stations. He had just placed his sister safely on the other side of the line when the train hit him. Relatives believe Dannon did not see the train coming on as he stood with his back to the tracks. Dannon was a player for Battswood AFC and was due to play a match on Sunday.

His aunt, who asked not to be identified and spoke on behalf of Dannon's devastated parents, says every day, the teen would take his skateboard and carry his sister's school bag to take a train into Heathfield where the little girl attended school.

"He was due to study engineering next year and was an avid soccer player in the Wynberg and Plumstead community," the aunt says. "Dannon takes the train daily with his sister to Heathfield. He would then skateboard back. (Wednesday) he had his skateboard and had his sister's lunch bag and school bag on his back. He decided to take a shortcut and placed his sister over the tracks. As we understand it, he must have had his back to the tracks and didn't see the train coming and the wind and the force of the train must have pushed him closer to the rail line. We will be missing him very much, he was a jolly boy."

Metrorail spokesperson Riana Scott offered the company's condolences to the family and warned the public about using the tracks as a shortcut.

"Metrorail confirms a 17-year-old male was struck by a passing train while attempting to cross a railway line in the section between Southfield and Heathfield stations. The tragic incident happened at 7.20 am. We urge parents and educators to promote a safety culture amongst young people by emphasising the dangers of crossing railway lines between stations".

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