



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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AG and School Resource Officers Announce Statewide Internet Safety Initiative

Florence Sheriff Joins McMaster's Internet Predator Task Force

Florence, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster today unveiled a new Internet safety initiative designed to teach children and teens how to stay safer on the Internet.

Approximately one out of every five children who use the Internet regularly, have received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet in the last year, according to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC). One in four had an unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex in the last year.

Starting today, the state's school resource officers will begin utilizing the [NetSmartz Workshop](#) as the interactive, educational safety resource for children and teens in school's across the state.

The announcement took place at a training session for the state's school resource officers hosted by the Florence County Sheriff's Department and conducted by NetSmartz and the Attorney General's Office. School resource officers were trained on how to use NetSmartz 30 minute Internet safety presentations for grades K-12, and parents/communities.

McMaster also announced that the Florence County Sheriff's Department has joined the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) state task force dedicated to catching sexual predators online before they can abduct or assault a child.

Using the Internet predator law he pushed through the General Assembly last year, McMaster and the ICAC task force have aggressively investigated and prosecuted child cyber enticement cases. The law makes it a crime to stalk, lure or entice a child for abduction or sexual assault.

"Using the state's new Internet predator law, our undercover stings have been very successful in targeting these monsters before they can target our children," said McMaster. "But that's only half the battle. We must also teach our children how to avoid these predators before they become a victim in the first place."



“The state’s school resource officers and the Florence County Sheriff’s Department will provide a strong deterrent to would be predators,” McMaster added.

NetSmartz combines the newest technologies available and the most current information to create high-impact educational activities that are well received by even the most tech-savvy kids. Parents, guardians, educators, and law enforcement also have access to additional resources for learning and teaching about the dangers children may face online. NetSmartz was created by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) and Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA).

With the help of make believe characters, children learn Internet safety concepts through interactive, 3-D, animated, online activities that are fun and educational.

“Clicky,” the friendly and hip spokesrobot, teaches young children in very simple terms about the possible dangers on the Internet, how to avoid them, and how to practice good "netiquette." After introducing basic uses of the Internet, “Clicky” introduces children to the "Webville Outlaws." These villains represent different Internet dangers.

Webville Outlaws like “Wanta-Know Wally” try to get personal information, while “Potty-Mouth Pete” uses bad language online, and “Look-at-Dis Louie” tries to show kids pictures of "things kids don't want to see." Another Outlaw, “Meet-Me Mack,” wants children to meet him in person.

Other characters like “Nettie and Webster,” two Internet cyber-siblings, talk about online risks and introduce children to the "WizzyWigs," creepy characters who represent Internet dangers.

“Follow-You Fiona” shows children that people may not be who they say they are on the Internet. “Spamozoid” sends junk E-mail to lots of people, usually stuff that kids don't want to see.

Teens are taught Internet safety principles through real-life stories told by teens. Two of the pieces, "Amy's Choice" and "Julie's Journey," are actual recordings of victims recounting the consequences of their online choices.

McMaster was joined at today’s announcement by Florence County Sheriff Kenny Boone, Twelfth Circuit Solicitor Ed Clements, Executive Director of the South Carolina branch of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) Margaret Frierson and representatives from the state school resource officer’s association.

As part of the state ICAC task force partnership the Florence County Sheriff’s Department to will receive federal ICAC funding and training from the Attorney General’s Office to conduct local proactive undercover Internet predator sting operations.

The Attorney General’s Office will prosecute the Internet predator cases with the local Solicitor prosecuting other child exploitation crimes.

The Florence County Sheriff’s Department joins the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Department, the City of Aiken Department of Public Safety, the Aiken County Sheriff’s Department and the York County Sheriff’s Department on the statewide task force.



The South Carolina Task Force is part of a federal Department of Justice ICAC network dedicated to assisting state and local law enforcement agencies' efforts to combat child cyber enticement and child exploitation. Locally, it is operated by the Attorney General's Office in partnership with the State Law Enforcement Division and the South Carolina Computer Crimes Center.

MORE INFORMATION

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