



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND SUMMIT SCHOOL DISTRICT URGE PARENTS TO MONITOR TEEN CELL PHONE AND INTERNET USE

SUMMIT COUNTY, COLORADO – Over the past few months, the Summit County Sheriff's Office has received several reports involving juveniles sharing sexually explicit photographs via cell phone and the internet. In some instances, online accounts such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and the texting app KIK were accessed by unknown individuals who then redistributed the photographs.

“These predatory individuals are smart,” explained Sheriff Minor. “They know how to use technology, and they know how to convince kids to do things they wouldn't normally do.”

Known as “sexting,” the number of young adults that are sending or posting sexually suggestive text and images is significant. In a survey conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 20% of teens and 33% of young adults are sending or posting nude or semi-nude images or videos of themselves.

In many cases, parents are unaware that their children are engaging in these activities. Sheriff Minor encourages parents to talk to their kids about the dangers of inappropriate cell phone or internet use, and to establish clear guidelines and open lines of communication *before* a problem arises.

“By the time you find out about it, it's too late,” said Sheriff Minor. “Talk to your kids about the consequences, and encourage them to speak up if anyone tries to get them to do something they are uncomfortable with.”

Summit School District addresses cyberbullying and sexting in the student code of conduct and discusses these topics with students through bullying prevention lessons. Parents and families are encouraged to discuss school safety with students, and remind them of the importance of sharing any concerns with their teachers, principals or with other staff members. Students and families may also access the Safe2Tell anonymous tip line at 1-877-542- SAFE (1-877-542-7233).

For more information and resources to help you talk to your children about a wide range of issues, including internet and cell phone safety, visit www.NetSmartz.org.

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