



## **Immediate Release**

# **Safer Internet Day 2010 – taking the message to adults and children in Surrey**

**5 February 2010:** Parents and children in two Surrey schools will receive vital internet safety messages next week as part of Safer Internet Day 2010 (February 9). The Lucy Faithfull Foundation will mark the national day by delivering the seminars for 70 parents and carers.

“Barely a day goes by when we don’t hear about a child being harmed through their use of the internet and Safer Internet Day is a great way for us to publicly highlight some of the very real dangers posed by the World Wide Web,” said Donald Findlater, Research and Development Director at the Lucy Faithfull Foundation who directs the Stop it Now! UK and Ireland campaign. “Many parents feel out of their depth or look to technical safeguards such as filters and blocking software to help protect their children. But technical solutions can only ever deal with a part of the problem and parents, whatever their technical ability, need to make time to understand the risks and get practical advice on steps they can take to keep their children safe.”

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation seminars are not technical events, but instead focus on practical advice. They cover areas such as:- how to help children understand the importance of not giving out personal information; how to respond to worrying or abusive contact; the difference between real world friends and ‘online friends’ or ‘e-buddies’; the importance of children knowing not to meet people they have only met online and how to encourage children to talk to a trusted adult if anything or anyone causes them concerns.

Sue Croft, Head teacher of Cleves School in Weybridge, which has hosted a number of seminars for parents, carers and pupils, says she believes it’s her duty to ensure adults are informed of the risks posed by the internet. “We have been hosting parent internet safety seminars for several years and have invited those from other schools as well. If we are using Information Communication Technology much more in

classrooms then there is a moral duty on the school to educate parents about the dangers. These seminars give practical advice and strategies to parents so that they feel empowered at the end of the session,” she said.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation also seeks to ensure children themselves receive information to help keep them safe online and has delivered sessions to hundreds of children, including year 5 and 6 students at Cleves School.

“The online risks posed to children can be greatly reduced if they themselves are equipped with information and knowledge to help keep safe,” said Mr Findlater. “This is why it’s so important we talk to our children about their online activity. It is also equally important that children learn to act responsibly so they do not cause harm to others.”

The seminars also cover cyber bullying, something which can be far more damaging than the playground taunts experienced by the older generation. “In the past, bullying often stopped when the end of day bell rang. Now it can continue 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, both online and through mobile phones,” explained Mr Findlater.

And the school agrees, saying it’s an important area to cover. “We did have a couple of instances where children made websites to 'get at' other children. This was not done in school but obviously impacted upon relationships here,” Mrs Croft said.

A video component of both the parents’ and children’s seminars tells the story of a boy who was bullied continually through emails, websites, text messages and telephone calls. His life is made utterly miserable.

“It’s important children understand that their actions can have huge impact and cause great upset, even if they don’t intend this. It is equally important that children also learn that once they have posted something online or sent a text message, there is no getting it back,” said Mr Findlater. “These videos are a big eye-opener to parents too. They show how easy it is for things to go wrong.”

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is looking to arrange 60 Internet Safety Seminars across Hampshire and Surrey by July 2010. Anyone interested in attending a seminar, or schools that are keen to host either a parent or student event, can contact Seminar Co-ordinator, Steph Hunter on 01372 847160 or email [shunter@lucyfaithfull.org.uk](mailto:shunter@lucyfaithfull.org.uk). Information on the Stop it Now! campaign can be found on our website at [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk). People looking for advice or information can call our confidential, free phone helpline on 0808 1000 900.

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## **Notes to Editors**

**Mr Donald Findlater is available for interview. Please contact Deborah Denis on 01372 847160 or [ddenis@lucyfaithfull.org.uk](mailto:ddenis@lucyfaithfull.org.uk) to arrange.**

1. Named after its founder, Baroness Lucy Faithfull of Wolvercote, the Foundation is a child protection charity operating UK-wide and specialising in safeguarding children from sexual abuse. The Foundation's policy is to collaborate with individuals and agencies internationally to develop a more child sensitive and offender aware culture in our societies. The Foundation contributes to legislation and to policy and procedure reviews concerned with safeguarding children in faith communities, in schools, in leisure facilities, on the Internet and living away from home. [www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk](http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk)

2. Stop it Now! UK and Ireland aims to prevent child sexual abuse by increasing public awareness and empowering people to act responsibly to protect children. Stop it Now! believes that it is the responsibility of all adults to take positive action to prevent the sexual abuse of children. Stop it Now! is an alliance of leading children's charities, working with the government and child protection agencies, to promote public education and prevent child sexual abuse. The Stop it Now! helpline has been operating since 2002 and aims to prevent child abuse by encouraging abusers and potential abusers to seek help and by giving adults the information they need to protect children safely. The helpline is funded by the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Children, Schools and Families. The Stop it Now! campaign in Wales and Scotland are supported by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Government. [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk).