



working to protect children

## Immediate Release

# Keep children safe online this Christmas

**23<sup>rd</sup> December 2009:** Residents in Surrey and Hampshire are being urged to help keep their children safe online over the festive period and into the New Year.

The call comes from child protection charity the Lucy Faithfull Foundation which delivers internet safety seminars to parents, teachers and pupils across the Surrey and Hampshire areas.

Director of Research and Development at the Foundation, Mr Donald Findlater, says it is vital that parents keep a watchful eye on what their children are doing online over the holidays: "The holiday season presents children with the opportunity to spend more time online and although the internet provides young people with fantastic opportunities to learn, to communicate and to have fun, there are also dangers on the World Wide Web that parents and carers need to be aware of."

The Foundation offers internet safety talks with parents, teachers and pupils across Surrey and Hampshire to help spread important messages about internet safety. During the 08-09 academic year seminars were delivered to over 50 schools and reached over 1500 parents across the two counties. 99% of those attending stated they felt more confident about keeping their children safe online as a result.

"Parents expect schools to offer a safe place for their children to go online. And by and large they do," said Mr Findlater. "The greatest online risk to children then, is in their home or in the homes of their friends. We need to give straight forward advice to children of all ages about keeping safe online and behaving responsibly themselves. It is also crucially important that parents take an interest in their children's online activity and the SMART rules are a great way to raise some key issues."

The Foundation is encouraging all parents and carers to teach their children the following SMART rules:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| S – SAFE    | Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information to people who you don't know or trust online – such as your name, email, phone number, home address, or school name. |
| M – MEETING | Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents'/carers' permissions and when they can be present.                            |

- A – ACCEPTING      Accepting emails, IM messages or opening files from people you don't know or trust can be dangerous – they may contain viruses or nasty messages.
- R – RELIABLE        Someone online may be lying about who they are and information you find on the internet may not be reliable.
- T – TELL              Tell your parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.

“We want children and young people to enjoy their holidays and have fun, but we want to make sure they do it safely,” said Mr Findlater.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is looking to arrange 50 Internet Safety Seminars across Hampshire and Surrey by July 2010. Anyone interested in attending a seminar, or schools that are keen to host an event, can contact Seminar Coordinator, Steph Hunter on 01372 847160 or email [shunter@lucyfaithfull.org.uk](mailto:shunter@lucyfaithfull.org.uk)

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### **Notes to Editors**

**Director of Stop it Now! UK and Ireland, 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.**

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)