

The Ramsey Academy, Halstead

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Headteacher:
Rob James

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Dear Parents/Carers

One of our key priorities is to ensure students are safe, both in and outside of school. We educate them to consider their behaviour and be aware of the situations which may lead to them being placed in danger.

In an ever changing world, in which technology plays a greater role, understanding the dangers faced by young people is becoming more difficult.

A particular area of concern is 'e-safety', which involves the use of social media, websites and numerous interactive gaming sites. This aspect of safeguarding is delivered to students via lessons and assemblies. However, despite this, numerous students still take unnecessary risks and become involved with people online, about whom they know very little, often becoming 'friends'.

To develop students' awareness of the real dangers involved about using the internet, we have arranged a workshop, which will be delivered by Lorin LaFave, founder of the Breck Foundation. Teachers and support staff will also be involved in a professional development workshop after school to ensure a consistent message is delivered to students.

The aim of the Breck Foundation is to raise the awareness of playing safe whilst using the internet. Breck Bednar was a 14 year old boy, from Caterham, Surrey who loved technology and online gaming. He was groomed via the internet and murdered on February 17 2014 by someone he met online. The Foundation has been set up in his memory to help other young people enjoy playing online but crucially to be aware of some simple rules to stay safe. To always remember that the friends that are made online are not like your real friends.

To support you in recognising the signs of inappropriate use of social media and suggest actions to take if you are concerned about the behaviour of your child, we would like to invite you to a presentation on Tuesday 16 October from 4.30 – 5.30 p.m. Lorin, Breck's mother, will talk to you about her experiences, offer advice and there will be an opportunity for a question and answer session.

The presentation will specifically cover the following areas:

- Scrap the stereotypes – we are all vulnerable and therefore at risk of patient predatory tactics
- How and why did Lorin suspect grooming of her son – what are the warning signs?
- Having that awkward parent-child conversation, gaining trust and sharing your concerns about online safety
- Where to find helpful resources, awareness and supporting each other
- What to do if you are worried – how to report concerns

Year 7 students will have participated in a presentation during the day and all other year groups have met Lorin during the past two years. We would encourage parents from any year group to attend and as we expect the event to be well attended, we ask that only parents attend in the evening. I hope you feel this is an invaluable opportunity to support the work we are doing to raise the awareness of responsible internet use and the dangers it can present to young people.

Yours sincerely


Rob James
Headteacher