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PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Online Safety: What Every Educator Needs to Know

Cincinnati, OH, January 2007 – The days of spreading rumors and passing notes in the hallways are coming to an end as technology becomes increasingly prevalent in our schools. Today, students are straying from these “old school” techniques and moving toward the digital world of cell phones and the World Wide Web. In fact, an independent research firm reveals that 79% of school principals and administrators see danger for students on the Internet increasing.

Many of today’s students have never known a world in which most communication wasn’t instantaneous and portable. “Cell phones allow students to send and forward text messages, pictures and videos anytime, anywhere. Even though these activities usually occur outside of school, the impact can be seen in the classroom,” says Brian Taylor, CEO of Scenario Learning, the developer of the SafeSchools.com training and tracking system.

Many classrooms do not have computers or internet access, but educators must know that most students carry a personal computer with them at all times. Wireless devices, such as cell phones, have the capabilities to text message, instant message, e-mail text, images and video clips, access the internet, take photos and record video. Students also have access to a new generation of phones called “smart phones.” These have even more computer-like abilities. For example, they have miniature keyboards, computer screens and can work with wireless headsets.

These popular technologies are increasingly being exploited in dangerous ways. For example, free services, such as MySpace, Facebook and Friendster, make it easy for anyone to create a personal Web page. Recent research by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children on teen online behaviors revealed that 61% of children between the ages of 13-17 have personal profiles on a social networking website.

While most students’ social networking pages are just a fun way to communicate with friends and family, this technology can be exploited by cyberbullies, online predators and even students involved in criminal activities such as drug dealing. Even though these activities may originate outside of the classroom, school safety can be impacted. Educators who are knowledgeable and trained can help minimize the dangers by knowing basic online safety rules and reporting any dangers.

SafeSchools.com, a leading provider of school focused safety training, recently announced the release of *Online Safety Primer: What Every Educator Needs to Know*, the first of four online safety training courses. The Online Safety Series covers the various means of communication as well as the growing dangers that can entrap students when they're online including *Cyberbullying, Predators and Threats of Violence*.

"Online safety is a topic that is in desperate need of attention from schools. Technology gives students the means to harm others in a matter of minutes or even seconds, and educators need to know the facts about what their students are doing," says Steve Holland, President, Holland & Associates and author of *Online Safety*. "This is a substantial problem in today's schools and needs to be addressed by all staff members."

Training for schools and districts can often be time consuming and difficult to track, but the SafeSchools.com training and tracking system offers a hassle-free solution to this task. Serving hundreds of districts in all 50 states, SafeSchools.com uses the approach of presenting a scenario and giving descriptions of possible outcomes from which a school employee can choose. The program then tracks progress, assessment scores and completion allowing schools to easily maintain current records of their safety training.

SafeSchools.com offers a variety of other social behavior courses addressing issues including: Bullying, School Violence, Sexual Harassment, Conflict Management, and Child Abuse. All courses are authored by leading experts in their field and are delivered in a way that is proven to boost long-term retention of the material.

SafeSchools.com offers all courses online or in CD-ROM formats and can be found at <http://store.safeschools.com>. For more information or a free 30-day preview of any SafeSchools courses, please call 1-800-434-0154 or email info@safeschools.com.

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