

February 1, 2023

Dear Haldane Community:

Please take a moment to review the attached press release shared by the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office, calling attention to recent cases of local youths being extorted through social media.

This serves as an important reminder to be vigilant in speaking with your child about the potential dangers of social media and online gaming.

Sincerely,
Phil Benante, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Estimada comunidad de Haldane:

Tómese un momento para revisar el comunicado de prensa adjunto compartido por la Oficina del Sheriff del Condado de Dutchess, llamando la atención sobre casos recientes de jóvenes locales extorsionados a través de las redes sociales.

Esto sirve como un recordatorio importante para estar atento al hablar con su hijo sobre los peligros potenciales de las redes sociales y los juegos en línea.

Atentamente,
Phil Benante, Ed.D.
superintendente de escuelas



DUTCHESS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
KIRK A. IMPERATI, SHERIFF
108 PARKER AVE
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY 12601
845-486-3800

Local youths being extorted over social media platforms

For immediate release
Contact: Captain John Watterson
845-486-3860

The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office reports the investigation into multiple cases of local youths being extorted via social media over the past week.

The extortion begins when the perpetrator befriends the child posing as someone their age on social media, then at some point asks the child to share explicit photos of themselves. Once the photos are shared they then blackmail the child by telling them that the photos will be posted/shared with others unless money is paid. In some cases the perpetrator asks for the money in the form of gift cards, because they know that many kids still have unspent cards from Christmas and using them is less likely to alert parents and other authority figures. So far the Sheriff's Office has one (1) case in which the perpetrator did in fact post the explicit photos of the child after not receiving the money that they demanded.

If anyone has any information about these cases, thinks they may be a victim, or knows someone who may be a victim they are urged to contact Detective Cohen at 845-486-3820 or via email at jcohen@dutchessny.gov. The Sheriff's Office can also be contacted via the tipline at 845-605-CLUE (2583) or dcsotips@gmail.com, and all information will be kept confidential.

Finally the Sheriff's Office would like to ask that parents and caregivers make their children aware of these incidents and reinforce the best ways for them to stay safe while using the internet and social media.

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