



**BEACON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

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**Dr. Matthew Landahl**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

February 3, 2023

Dear Beacon Families:

In this email, there is important internet safety information from the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office.

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 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](mailto:jcohen@dutchessny.gov). The Sheriff's Office can also be contacted via the tipline at 845-605-CLUE (2583) or [dcsotips@gmail.com](mailto:dcsotips@gmail.com), and all information will be kept confidential.

Beacon families should also contact the Beacon Police Department at 845-831-4111 if they feel that are a victim of this.

Please review internet and social media safety with your children. Here are a couple of websites that help and reach out if you have any questions.

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/social-media-smarts.html>

<https://www.safesearchkids.com/a-teens-guide-to-social-media-safety/>

Sincerely,

Matt Landahl