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NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF WHITTINGTON ADDRESSES ISSUE OF YOUNG PEOPLE SENDING OR RECEIVING NUDE PHOTOS OR VIDEOS

Bossier Sheriff Julian C. Whittington
Bossier Parish Sheriff’s Office

We have received complaints from parents in recent days about a serious issue involving children. Young people are sending or receiving nude or partially nude photos to and from their peers on their cell phones, computers or social media sites. My office currently has ongoing cases involving youth in our area that could result in criminal charges and arrests. As the chief law enforcement officer of Bossier Parish, I am deeply concerned with this trend and want to inform parents and young people of the seriousness of this type of behavior and its consequences, which could ultimately land a child in jail.

I am working closely with the District Attorney’s Office, Bossier Parish School Board and city law enforcement agencies to ensure we are pro-active in addressing this issue. We know this type of behavior is not unique to Bossier Parish, but rather an issue that is rampant throughout our nation. Our school resource officers have informed me that it has been escalating in our schools over the past few years.

Over the upcoming days, we will take actions to educate children and parents why sending nude photos or videos of themselves, other young people or possessing any nude photo can have devastating consequences. Not only have young people been exploited, violated or embarrassed, but we have seen across the nation where these actions have led to suicide, a truly horrific end of a precious life. These actions are also criminal and can lead to charges of sexting and pornography involving juveniles, which can, and will result in jail time.
We will work together to combat this type of behavior among our young people in an effort to keep any more kids from getting in trouble, and with the support of parents and guardians, we can succeed. In addition to this letter to parents, our school resource officers and Bossier Sheriff’s Office detectives will reinforce to students about the seriousness of this matter. The school system will also use its websites and School Loop to inform parents and students of this problem. My hope is this will prompt a discussion between parents and their children.

Here are some tips parents can take to help prevent sexting and child pornography.

- First, be their parent and get involved in their lives. Talk to your children, get in their business, and if you know they are engaging in sexting or child pornography, let them know you will not tolerate this type of activity.
- Monitor your child’s use of their cell phones or computers. Set boundaries on their cell phone use or even limit the number of texts that can be sent per month.
- Teach your children about the dangers associated with sexting and child pornography, such as criminal charges they could face.
- Encourage your children NOT to respond to or forward any sexting messages or videos they receive.
- Help your children understand that once they post a photo or video to a social media site or send to a ‘friend’, the photo or video is now out there for others to see, even if they delete it from their own source.
- Sexting may be a way your child is crying out for help. Again, it goes back to the first point – be their parent and get to know what is going on in their lives.
- If your child or another child you know is a victim of sexting or child pornography, please contact your local law enforcement agency to report it. Don’t delay.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:
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