



212 Fourth Avenue, SE
Decatur, AL 35601
Telephone: 256-552-3000
Email: Superintendent@dcs.edu

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Decatur City Schools (DCS) is proud to partner with Parents and Children Together (PACT) to provide child abuse prevention programs to all 7th grade students. The goal is to help children recognize, react to, and report dangerous situations. The program teaches that adults are responsible for children's safety, but there are things children can do to keep safe, it is NEVER too late to tell, and that abuse is NEVER the child's fault.

Why does your child need a safety program? These statistics compiled by the Monique Burr Foundation for Children provide insight:

- 10% of children are abused before their 18th birthday,
- 14% of children have been solicited online,
- 22% of students have been bullied,
- 73% of children under 17-years-old have viewed explicit material online.

The MBF Teen Safety Matters® program from the Monique Burr Foundation for Children is evidence-based and is currently being used in the seventh grade. The interactive curriculum speaks to children in a way they can best learn and respond. The program empowers students to spot and respond to bullying, cyberbullying, the four types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect), relationship abuse, digital abuse, and other digital dangers and provides tools that children can use to be safe. This program uses the following components:

- Age-appropriate scripts and corresponding videos for students in the seventh grade.
- Fun games and activities to reinforce concepts.
- Take-home items to remind children and parents of the lessons and the 5 Safety Rules: Know What's Up, Spot Red Flags, Make A Move, Talk It Up, No Blame/No Shame.

When children are taught safety information and rules to help them stay safe, they perform better in school and enjoy healthier, happier, and safer lives as reported by research synthesized by the Monique Burr Foundation for Children. MBF Teen Safety Matters® also meets the legislative requirements of Erin's Law, which requires public schools to implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program and is endorsed by Erin Merryn, child sexual abuse survivor and founder and president of Erin's Law.

Programs are presented throughout the year to various grade levels. For more information about PACT's Student Awareness program or to find out more about other services PACT provides, you may visit www.pactfamily.org or call 256-355-7252.

DCS recognizes and respects the fact that some parents/guardians would rather introduce such topics at home or at a later age. If this applies to your family, you may simply complete the information below and return this letter to your student's principal, who will "opt-out" your child from attending such presentation.

Parent/Guardian Opt-Out

I do not wish for my child, _____, to participate in the PACT program.

Child's Grade: _____ Child's Teacher: _____

School: _____ Parent's signature: _____