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LEWIS HAMILTON ENCOURAGES ROAD SAFETY

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Mercedes-Benz launch road safety campaign for school children



British Formula One star Lewis Hamilton launched RoadSense, a brand new road safety initiative developed by the Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy. Piloting in Surrey, the launch of the educational scheme was also supported by Surrey County Council, the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and Surrey Police who were also in attendance at the event.

RoadSense has been developed in direct response to the Department of Transport's target to reduce the total number of road deaths and injuries amongst children and young people by at least 50 per cent by 2020. It will be the first scheme of its kind to offer school children from as young as 14 the chance to learn about road safety from the drivers', passengers' and pedestrians' perspectives. The scheme, piloted in Surrey, will initially be open to all school children aged 14-18 years with the aim of rolling it out nationwide from 2010.

Introducing a unique approach to teaching road safety, RoadSense will be offered to schools as an add-on to their existing curriculum. It will provide students with a half-day interactive experience where they will learn about the importance of road safety through peer group discussions and the use of the unique driving facilities at Mercedes-Benz World.

The pilot aims to reduce the number of casualties on Surrey roads as well as add anti-social driving behaviour in the area, which was identified as local residents' greatest concern by Surrey County Council and Surrey Police.

Ian Dyson, assistant chief constable said, "We are delighted to support the launch of the RoadSense initiative and the Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy. Both complement Surrey Police and Surrey County Council's Drive SMART campaign which works to improve driving practices and challenges anti-social driving. With support of schemes such as RoadSense the public and private sectors are working together to tackle the issues that matter most to people in Surrey."

Commenting from launch day, Lewis Hamilton said, "As a Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy ambassador, I am pleased to be supporting RoadSense, it's a great initiative developed by the Driving Academy that will hopefully benefit young people and improve road safety nationwide as it rolls out in the future."

"Whether a pedestrian, passenger or driver we all have a responsibility to road safety when out on the road so it's great to see that Mercedes-Benz have created a course that will hopefully get young people thinking about it from an early age."

Dermot Kelly, MD of Mercedes-Benz Cars UK added, "RoadSense is a great initiative to teach the basics of road safety to teenagers. It highlights the responsibility that even non-drivers have to make the roads a safer place. We know from our experience with the Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy, that younger teenagers are more receptive to learning and if we can teach them about road safety early on, there is more chance that these skills will be put into practice at a later stage out on the public roads. Working with schools to offer this as an add-on to the school curriculum will mean that when pupils start to drive or be driven by their friends they have developed a responsible attitude towards driving and are aware of the wider risks involved."

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