

For Immediate Release

## **“Social” studies: addressing the risks online-savvy students face at back-to-school time**

**Vancouver, BC (September 5, 2019)** – School’s back – friends reunite – and the first thing they’ll do is start checking their phones, even before homeroom. They’ll be on Snapchat, Instagram and all the rest to contact new acquaintances and keep up with their online friends they’ve been in touch with all summer.

So now’s the time for every parent to remind them to find Wi-Fi, be careful about what they post (a future employer may find it online just when you need that job), and make sure they follow some basic tips to maintain their privacy, and safety.

Each year, Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers’ “*See Something, Say Something*” [school program](#) goes into Lower Mainland classrooms to provide students in grades eight and 10 with education on safer communities and anonymous reporting around cyberbullying and other criminal activity. To date, the program has reached almost 30,000 students.

A few key tips are also listed here courtesy of TELUS and Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers.

### **“BACK TO SCHOOL” TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA**

TELUS’ free digital literacy education program called [TELUS Wise](#) helps everyone have the most positive experience they can as digital citizens, and contains some home truths for parents, including:

- Most social media apps require users to be at least 13 years old, but it’s common for pre-teens to circumvent the rules and be active in social media much earlier. Children with their first new phones need to be closely monitored to ensure their privacy and safety
- Age alone is no predictor of whether someone will send a “sex”, however a survey conducted for TELUS Wise suggests about a quarter of 16-year-olds send “sexts”, and more than half of them have received one.

“If your student encounters offensive content or is bullied online, save all available evidence and know where to report the incident - whether it’s the school, the online service provider, the police, or Crime Stoppers. Reporting a criminal to Crime Stoppers or police can lead to charges and an end to the intimidation.” says Linda Annis, Executive Director of Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers. “And to help prevent privacy breaches, show an interest in the apps your kids use, and have the chat that encourages them to make positive choices and avoid revealing personal information online.”

TELUS Wise also lists advice for parents to address some of the privacy pitfalls specific to some popular apps:

### *Instagram*

- Make your account private so you can approve anyone who wants to follow you and see your posts.
- Think twice about posting photos of documents that reveal name, address, or phone number.
- Hundreds of people are injured and/or die trying to take the perfect selfie. No photo is worth putting yourself in danger's way.

### *Snapchat*

- Since the "snaps" on Snapchat disappear quickly, they may encourage the posting of inappropriate messages and content
- Watch for behavioral signs that Snapchat is becoming all consuming, trying to maintain a "streak" of posts is common for Snapchat users
- Don't use geofilters that reveal your location to strangers.

### *TikTok*

- Encourage youth to use privacy settings that limit who can interact with them, and help prevent the possibility of cyberbullying through the short videos that stream on TikTok
- Consider saving your TikTok videos to your device first, and then sharing them via email or text, instead of posting it on the app
- Avoid creating videos that offer up personal information.

### *Twitch*

- The live streaming video on Twitch often has mature content and language. Block users who try to make contact through private messages or "whispers" in chats
- Think twice before paying to "subscribe" to Twitch. Subscriptions are not required to use Twitch and consume its content.

### *YouTube*

- Post videos as "private" if you want only a close circle of followers to see them
- Disable comments or moderate them to control what appears on your channel.

To learn more, download the [TELUS Wise guide](#) to popular social media and messaging apps.

### **About Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers**

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is a non-profit society and registered charity that offers rewards for anonymous tip information about criminal activity and provides it to investigators in the communities of Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

People can leave anonymous tips in a variety of ways including Crime Stoppers' smartphone app, calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477, online at [solvecrime.ca](http://solvecrime.ca), by following the link on the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers [Facebook page](#) or using the new Crime Stoppers tip reporting app.

Crime Stoppers accepts tips in 115 different languages. If the information provided results in a charge or an arrest, a cash reward may be offered. Tipsters stay anonymous by using code numbers to collect their rewards.

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is not the police and operates solely on funds donated or generated through fundraising events. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully received anytime by accessing the “donate” link at [solvecrime.ca](http://solvecrime.ca). Follow us on Twitter: [@solvecrime](https://twitter.com/solvecrime).

### **About TELUS Wise**

As a leading provider of smartphones and internet services, TELUS is dedicated to ensuring the digital space is a safe space. TELUS Wise® is an industry-leading, free-of-charge digital literacy education program that offers informative workshops and resources to help Canadians of all ages have a positive experience as digital citizens. Having reached over 230,000 Canadians through its workshops since TELUS Wise launched in 2013, the program empowers Canadians to stay safe in our digital world. Workshop topics include protecting your online security, privacy, and reputation, rising above cyberbullying, and using technology responsibly. Learn more and gain access to free TELUS Wise online workshops for youth [here](#).

-30-

For media inquiries or interviews please contact:

#### **Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers**

Trevor Pancoust

[tpancoust@pacegroup.com](mailto:tpancoust@pacegroup.com)

604.646.3567