

For Immediate Release

Back-to-school is fun - as long as you and your kids know how to avoid risks like gang recruitment and online bullying

Vancouver, B.C. (September 7, 2022): Back-to-school is a time of renewal. Last year's friendships are rebuilt, new ones begin, and entering the next grade means new challenges.

Unfortunately, it can also mean the return of some common risks today's students face. Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is urging parents and students to become aware of how to avoid these risks, and call Crime Stoppers if you want to report a crime anonymously.

This goes for students as well as parents.

ONLINE

The recent conviction of Dutch national Aydin Coban for harassing Port Coquitlam teenager Amanda Todd online illustrates just how far cyber risks can go. Todd eventually committed suicide in her own home.

"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 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."

Now's the time for every parent to remind students to:

- Think twice about posting photos of anything that reveals name, location, phone number or email address
- Encourage youth to use privacy settings that limit who can interact with them
- Post You Tube 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, consider downloading a resource like the [TELUS Wise guide](#) on popular social media and messaging apps.

GANGS

Schools are also a favourite spot for gangs to recruit new members. The most common age for students to be recruited is 16. That's when many of them get their driver's licences. At that age, they can get be recruited to deliver drugs for gangs - and often take the rap on their own if they get caught.

(more)

As in previous years, Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers' "See Something, Say Something" [school program](#) will resume going into Lower Mainland classrooms this fall to provide students in grades eight and 10 with education on safer communities and anonymous reporting around gangs, cyberbullying and other criminal activities. To date, the program has reached more than 46,000 students.

"Students may feel uncomfortable about reporting these kinds of crimes, fearing their personal or family safety will be compromised," Annis adds. "We are not the police, but we let students know that if they secretly type what they know into our "P3" Crime Stoppers phone app, for example, we're able to take their information anonymously and immediately pass it on so investigators can right the wrong. You will never be called back or asked to identify yourself."

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, 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. Follow us on Twitter: [@solvecrime](https://twitter.com/solvecrime).

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