

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Increased reporting of sexual exploitation of children on the Internet: the SQ and the SPVM urge parents to be vigilant

Montréal, April 9, 2020 - The Sûreté du Québec (SQ) and the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) are warning parents about the dangers of the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet. As children are spending more time online during this lockdown, the risks associated with this type of crime are increasing. Police teams from the SQ and the SPVM who fight against the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet are asking parents to be on the lookout for this type of activity.

The sexual exploitation of children on the Internet may take different forms. Some cyber predators persuade the child to produce material of a sexual nature (photos or videos) by either manipulating or threatening them. Others pretend to be in the same age group or try to pass themselves off as trusted adults to gain the child's confidence in order to meet and, ultimately, exploit them. Sometimes, it can be the youngsters themselves who produce and share intimate personal images on various web platforms, not realising the consequences that could arise from this type of behaviour.

Any form of content of a sexual nature implicating minors, whether it is the work of a cyber predator or a personal initiative, is illegal.

It is important for parents to be vigilant and pay close attention to the use their children are making of electronic devices and of their activities on the Internet.

Here are some suggestions to protect children from sexual exploitation on the Internet:

- Warn your child of the dangers that they can be exposed to on the Internet, which includes sexual exploitation, and let them know how they can protect themselves.
- Remind them never to give out any personal information without your permission (name, address, telephone number, etc.).
- Tell them they must never agree to meet an Internet friend in person.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about what they are doing on the Internet in the same way as you would talk to them about their friends and non-virtual activities.
- Activate the privacy setting to the highest level possible for online games, electronic devices and apps.
- Install the computer in a room that is used by all of the family.
- Supervise Internet activities, among others, by preselecting sites of interest yourself.
- Tell them to inform you if a person asks them for photos of themselves or asks them to engage in activities of a sexual nature.

For further information and prevention advice:

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Securite-des-enfants-sur-internet> (available in French only)

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Cyberpredateur> (available in French only)

<https://www.cyberaide.ca/app/en/index>

If you suspect that an online activity is potentially dangerous or if you do not know what to do when you are faced with a situation that involves your child, do not hesitate to contact your local police.

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Information:

Service des communications et de la prévention

Sûreté du Québec

Montréal – General Headquarters

514 598-4848

<https://www.sg.gouv.qc.ca/en/the-surete-du-quebec/>