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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

B.C. PRIVACY LAW & CAMPUS SAFETY

Victoria—Media reports today suggesting that B.C. privacy laws prevent university officials from protecting students are “inaccurate and unhelpful,” Information and Privacy Commissioner David Loukidelis said today.

Some media reports today suggest that privacy laws prevented Virginia Tech officials from sharing personal information of Seung-Hui Cho, who went on a murderous rampage. Loukidelis noted that the official report into the Virginia Tech murders actually says that privacy laws allowed the information to be shared, but campus officials failed to apply the laws properly. Reacting to claims that privacy laws hinder campus safety, Loukidelis said, “B.C.’s universities can share students’ personal information to protect students from harming themselves or to protect others from being harmed. To suggest otherwise is plainly wrong and unhelpful.”

Loukidelis also noted that since B.C.’s privacy law was passed over a decade ago, universities and colleges have gained a lot of experience in privacy. “By now, all campus officials should understand that our privacy law protects health and safety, not just privacy.” He added that his office will readily consult with campus officials who have questions about sharing students’ personal information, saying, “Whenever we can, we try to help universities do the right thing.”

The web page for the official Virginia Tech report is here:

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport.cfm>

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