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PARENT SOUNDS THE ALARM ON STUDENTS' ONLINE PRIVACY THROUGH USE OF ONLINE APPS

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While looking over the shoulder of his 11-year-old daughter, one Burlington father noticed that something was not right.

His daughter was on the computer at home, signed in on YouTube with a username containing her first and last name, accessed using a profile created on her behalf by the Halton District School Board (HDSB).

"I noticed my children and their classmates were able to post comments on videos using their usernames containing personal and identifiable information," he said.

The parent, who spoke to the Independent on the promise of anonymity, said that he soon learned the YouTube application, along with a host of others, was connected to his daughter's G Suite for Education account - a Google suite of applications used by school boards across Ontario.

G Suite, which has been vetted by the Ministry of Education, aims to provide online learning tools for

students growing up in a digital world. In the HDSB, the suite is connected to each student's school profile, which includes the student's first and last name, grade, school location and email - information that is then provided directly to Google.

"We don't like that. It's kind of a punch to the gut," the father said, adding that he was never asked to consent to his children's use of this suite or its services, or the disclosure of their personal information online.

Toronto cyber lawyer Imran Ahmad says it is important for schools to offer cyber hygiene training to protect students from online predators and cyberbullies they could encounter through use of certain applications, such as the additional ones offered through G Suite.

"At (a young) age, I don't think they can discern and appreciate what the impact of putting their personal information online would be," he said. "So take the example of a YouTube account. Viewing a video is one thing, but recording your-

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"When you give your personal information or you sign up for an account it's premised on the user giving their consent and so the question then is, is a child who is under the age of the majority able to give informed consent," cyber lawyer Imran Ahmad said.

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