

E Safety update

Dear Parents

While scrolling through the news or social media, you may have glanced an image depicting a stretched, disfigured face with bulging eyes and large smile, attached to a bird's body. This freakish creature has become the mascot for an obscure urban myth called the Momo Challenge, a game which allegedly encourages children to perform acts of self-harm. There is currently a lot of misleading information swirling around the web about the challenge and it can be difficult to separate fact from myth. In this article we answer some of the questions you may have about the Momo Challenge.

What is the Momo Challenge?

The Momo Challenge is a game played over WhatsApp where participants contact the character Momo and are then told to do a series of challenges, with the final challenge allegedly being suicide.

How do children get to know about it?

Despite people having to use WhatsApp to partake in the challenge, that is not how most people find out about it. Many prominent YouTubers create videos of themselves trying to reach out to Momo which get many views through, for example, sharing on social media.

Why would children be drawn to it?

Children who see their favourite YouTuber doing the challenge might be drawn to trying it themselves in order to follow their example. It should be noted that a lot of the people making videos about this are capitalising on the mysticism surrounding the challenge and might be deliberately trying to blow it out of proportion to add drama.

Do I need to worry about it?

Although a lot of the information about the Momo Challenge is rather concerning, the number of reported cases of children harming themselves because of the game is extremely low.

How do I keep children safe from it?

Make sure that they know that they should not be trying to contact strangers via social media platforms and instant messaging apps. It could be useful to show them how to enable privacy settings and disable location sharing so that they don't fall victims to scams.

It has also come to our attention that pupils are accessing Slenderman. Another game that is not suitable for children. Please can I urge parents to be extra vigilant when their children are accessing the internet. We are arranging a parents e safety information evening shortly.

To help with further information regarding online safety, The National Online Safety website provides parent guides for many popular apps that children can access.

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/resources/platform-guides/>

Kind regards

Mrs Hollis