

St. Francis' Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Maria Wheeler

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Dear Parents,

You may already be aware of an online game called the Momo Challenge. Momo is a viral game that encourages players to perform a series of challenges. The challenges may appear midway through Kids YouTube, Fortnite, Peppa Pig, so as to avoid detection by and National Safety on line. We have today also overheard children mentioning Momo in school today. We are concerned about this, as I am sure you are too. I have sought advice on this – please read the following:

These 'Scary Challenges', often linked to a scary picture, are known to come up regularly and are not new. They start life as a hoax or scam and become viral via rapid sharing on social media, which fans publicity and causes upset.

The challenges issued in this game do present a serious risk to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in our schools, as does the distressing content when a player refuses to carry on. With worrying similarities to the 'Blue Whale challenge', it has also been linked to at least five cases of childhood suicide.

It is recommended that we be mindful about not alarming children who may not be aware of this; as we do not want to scare children unnecessarily. The best course of action is to have conversations with the children about the content they encounter on line. Talk with the children about 'things that might upset you online', or 'what to do if someone tells/dares you to do things you don't want to' and 'who do you talk to if you are worried?'

Our School security settings have strong filters that block 'pop-ups' and they do block social media access, but do allow us access to YouTube. The Staff are in control of what is watched on YouTube which also has 'restrictions' in place. We are being extra vigilant in school at this time, including when children have the laptops and iPads for lessons. They will be reminding the children about the e-safety messages indicated above.

Below is a link to National on Line Safety, which provides more information on the challenge and lots of tips and advice on how to help keep your child safe.

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/resources/platform-guides/momo-online-safety-guide-for-parents/>

There are more general links on the E-Safety section of our website that will be supportive to parents, including the slides from our Autumn Term E-Safety Evening led by our consultant Dave Robinson.

if you have any E-Safety or Safeguarding concerns or queries please don't hesitate to contact the school to discuss with Mrs Dommett, Mrs Fawcett or myself - Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Kind regards

Mrs Wheeler
Headteacher



Diocese of Arundel & Brighton

