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Friday 1st March 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may be aware there has recently been a lot of press coverage about the Momo challenge, which involves the appearance of a horror character on the screen – apparently this challenge can appear via Facebook, YouTube, YouTube Kids, Whatsapp and also on the Minecraft game.

We have been sent the following information from the Leeds Education Safeguarding Team, which we wanted to share with parents.

Recently, the Momo Challenge has been covered extensively in the news and the disfigured avatar has been popping up all over the internet. A lot of what is reported in the tabloids may be adding to the hysteria as there's currently not much evidence of the game itself harming children. 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.

A small number of children in school have been talking about it and expressing their worries but this has been dealt with on an individual basis as we didn't want to speak to whole classes and then worry children who may not have heard anything about it.

We have reminded the children about general internet safety and told the children that if they see anything online that they are worried about they must tell an adult at home or at school.

In line with all online safety advice, we would suggest that parents:

- Ensure they know what their children can access online
- Ensure children understand the importance of not giving personal information to anyone they do not know
- Tell their children no-one has the right to make them do anything they do not want to do
- Use parental controls to keep children safe

Among the most common signs to watch out for include children who:

- Become very secretive, especially about what they are doing online
- Are spending a lot of time on the internet and social media
- Are switching screens on their device when approached
- Are withdrawn or angry after using the internet or sending text messages
- Have lots of new phone numbers or email addresses on their devices

Along with this letter, we have attached Parent Guides produced by the National Online Safety team; they provide useful information and advice about Momo and another about Tik-Tok, which I thought parents may be interested in.

I would urge all parents to read the guides attached and speak to their child about it – I am sure many of you have this already.

If anyone has any concerns or needs advice, then please do not hesitate to get in touch and we will do our best to help.

Best wishes
Sharon Percival
Headteacher