



Dear Parent/Guardian

We are writing to make you aware of a concerning internet trend called the "Momo Challenge". Similar to the Blue Whale Challenge in 2017, the Momo Challenge is a viral social media trend with children and young people. The challenge encourages young people to contact an unknown person called "Momo" via social media.

What is the Momo Challenge?

- Throughout the challenge, children are sent violent and graphic images and texts. If children want to stop the challenge "Momo" threatens to leak their personal information
- Then, the stranger asks children to share photos and videos of themselves completing certain tasks
- At first the tasks are small. For example: face a fear, wake up at weird hours throughout the night
- The tasks escalate until the final task which encourages children to kill themselves
- WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook are the primary networks for the challenge
- The Momo Challenge is not specific to one country, it is global

Why should we be concerned?

- Children who partake in the Momo Challenge are actively communicating with unknown persons and may be encouraged to self-harm
- The Momo Challenge can feel real for children and may push them to harm themselves this is a particular concern for vulnerable children
- Children are often exposed to violent and graphic images throughout the challenge
- Some children have reported that it is easy to come across "Momo" on Facebook and YouTube and that it is easy to connect with the character on WhatsApp

What can parents do?

- Talk to your children about this
- Ensure your children understand the importance of not giving personal information to anyone they do not know
- Discuss with your child that no-one has the right to make them do anything they do not want to do
- Use parental controls to keep children safe
- If your child does receive a Momo message, encourage them to tell you immediately they receive this and remind them that while it looks real, Momo is not a real person and does not exist in any form. Discuss that the message is computer generated and is most likely an app 'phishing' for information. Tell them not to respond, at all. Then block any number that may appear.

As with the Blue Whale Challenge most of the concern arose through the media hype that surrounded the challenge rather than children actually being exposed to risk. However, the constantly evolving digital world means a steady influx of new apps and games and can be hard for parents to keep track of.

We advise parents to talk regularly with children about these apps and games and the potential risks they can be exposed to. There is further information available on Internet Matters: <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/momo-challenge-what-parents-should-know-about-online-crazes/>

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Kind Regards

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