



28 February 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

## Online Safety - The MOMO Challenge

As part of our commitment to working in partnership with external agencies, parents and students, I am writing to ensure you are aware of an internet 'suicide-influencing game'. The MOMO Challenge, which encourages children to harm themselves is reportedly linked to several deaths around the world and is now appearing across the UK.

Over the past couple of days this has been reported on news sites and internet/mobile phone feeds. This alone has naturally increased attention towards it and it will result in more young people gravitating towards it. More often this will likely be out of curiosity.

Access is generally made via the messaging service WhatsApp, coming from an unknown number, although it has also been associated to multiple platforms used by young people including Youtube, Kidstube, Instagram, Facebook. Once contact is made and the contact is added to the phone, children are subsequently bombarded with terrifying images and messages. These reportedly range from threats and dares which encourage them to self-harm and even commit suicide.

I feel it necessary to advise parents to personally consider any decision to raise awareness of it to your child. General advice to parents is to encourage an active interest in their children's online activities, speak to them about what they are viewing and make sure that their children speak to them if they see anything upsetting. How easy it is to go from a child's video to explicit content by following links in comments or recommended videos.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/parents-warning-over-terrifying-kids-15888142>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/what-is-the-deadly-momo-challenge-and-what-you-need-to-know/articleshow/65562548.cms>

This is the advice from the police

*Police have appealed to parents to not simply focus on Momo, urging them to:*

- *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*

If you are concerned about this, then please do not hesitate in contacting the safeguarding team (Mr John, Mrs Dickens or Mr Thompson), here at the College.