



Supporting, Striving, Inspiring, Succeeding

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Online Safety

Dear Parents/Carers,

The information in this letter regarding 'MoMo' or the 'MoMo Challenge' has been shared across South Gloucestershire schools. Even though infant-age children should not be accessing this type of online content I thought it would be useful to share with you to raise your awareness for yourselves and older siblings.

The 'MoMo challenge' was originally a hoax scam - including the message which is circulating on Facebook.

The MoMo hoax was reported as a new viral game that encourages players to perform a series of challenges in order to meet 'Mother Bird' - a disfigured character with bulging eyes and untidy black hair. The hoax says that this game quickly darkens, absorbing players who are encouraged to perform acts of violence and self-harm through a series of progressively risky challenges. The hoax says that the game originated in Mexico (although the original image was taken from a Japanese animation), it is easily accessed through social media shares (predominantly Facebook and YouTube) and is rapidly spreading across the world.

The challenges issued in this game present a serious risk to safety, welfare and well-being of children, as does the distressing content when a player refuses to carry on.

What dangers does a child face?

The hoax says that:

- Players are encouraged to contact MoMo and provide their mobile number;
- They will then receive instructions to perform a series of challenges, via SMS or WhatsApp;
- Player refusal can trigger severely abusive messaging and their mobile device being hacked;
- The final challenge is to commit suicide in order to meet 'Mother Bird'.

In reality:

- Players are encouraged to contact MoMo and provide private information;
- This is a Phishing scam to try and harvest private data by encouraging children to click on the link;
- Different cyber-criminals are using this hoax to scare children into giving away private information. Threats and abusive messages might be used to convince the child that the hoax is real.

What to do?

A person doesn't have to be searching for MoMo themselves to be exposed to it and, unlike other games that children enjoy, there is no positive side to this.





Parent/Carers need to:

- Ensure children's access to online gaming etc is supervised and appropriate parental controls are in place.
- Make sure children know that (if they mention it) the MoMo game warning started as a hoax but that other people have copied the idea to try steal private information. They need to tell an adult if anyone sends them anything to do with this and not click on any links.
- Educate/reinforce online safety, and in this way encourage children and young people to make the right choice and avoid this game.
- The importance of confidently saying 'no' to invitations to play games from strangers.
- Knowing why they should not click on unidentified links.
- Knowing how to 'block' unknown numbers and friend requests.

As part of our Online Safety programme we encourage the children to tell a grown up if they see anything online that concerns them and to ask if it's ok to play/access something online **before they do it.**

If your child mentions MoMo, please support them by reiterating the above information. Please contact the school if your child accesses MoMo so we are aware. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Ruck
Headteacher



