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Dear Parents,

There have been a number of reports in the press of late about "Momo" and "The Momo Challenge". An image is usually associated with it depicting a disfigured face with large, bulging eyes and a smile.

Below I have put together some advice and factual information on this challenge and character which I hope you will find useful.

#### HOW ARE SCHOOL CHILDREN HEARING ABOUT THIS?

Despite people having to use WhatsApp to partake in the challenge associated with this, most younger children are discovering it via YouTube.

Although your child may well be watching safe, sensible videos on YouTube, a number of videos are being produced by YouTubers about the challenge. Due to the way analytics work on the platform, some of these videos may be appearing on the 'Up Next' lists as your child is watching something.

There have been reports of these coming up on the YouTube Kids app too, so please check carefully.

Older children may well find that their favourite YouTuber has made a video about Momo, as the producer will know this is a sure-fire way to get viewing numbers. It should be noted that some are making videos about this to capitalise on the mysticism surrounding the challenge and might be deliberately trying to blow it out of proportion to add drama. This has been picked up by some parts of the press and has led to a lot of coverage, some of which is counter-productive and is heightening a sense of moral panic - as well as heightening children's awareness to it all.

#### WHAT IS IT?

Momo is a disturbing 'mascot' for an urban myth called 'The Momo Challenge', a game which allegedly encourages children to perform acts of self-harm. There is currently a lot of misleading information swirling around the web about the challenge and it can be difficult to separate fact from myth.

It 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.

#### DO YOU NEED TO BE WORRIED?

A lot of the information about this is concerning. Even the mascot is freakish. However globally, the number of reported cases of children harming themselves because of the game are extremely low (Source: CEOP). The challenge has alleged ties to three cases of teens

killing themselves in Asia and South America, but there is nothing yet that proves that it was the direct cause.

#### WHAT WE SUGGEST

- \* As YouTube is the primary source of children finding out about this, discuss with your child what they are watching online. The vast majority of them will NOT have heard about it, so you may wish not to mention it!
- \* Turn on 'Restricted Mode' on YouTube if your child is using the 'full' version. This is on the main settings panel.
- \* If you or your child sees a video on YouTube Kids depicting Momo, report it.
- \* You may wish to restrict access to YouTube for the time being until the matter has died down.
- \* Momo, or anything related to Momo, should not 'pop up' on any device unless the device 'notifications' are set to show links to anyone/anything that are promoting it. If this happens, turn the notifications off via your settings and/or block the source of the notifications.
- \* Ensure your child is not using WhatsApp - their age restriction is 13 for this very reason.
- \* There is no reason to restrict access to school work your child may do online, such as My Maths and Spellanywhere. These are unaffected.
- \* This is not something that will be discussed openly at school by staff. However if we do hear about it, we will speak to any child about it appropriately.

If you have any questions or further concerns, please do let me know.

Kind regards,



Mr A Rall  
Headteacher