

Shirley Infant School

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Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day

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1st March 2019

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Online Safeguarding

As parents, you may already be aware of news reports regarding something called the 'Momo challenge'. The concern regards online encouragement of a series of frightening and dangerous challenges that are passed through social media. We have been notified that parents are unable to block this on parental controls and therefore would ask you to consider discussing the dangers of engaging in such challenges.

The following link will provide parents with more information if required;

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/three-minute-briefing-momo-challenge>

With no intention to be condescending, given the horrendous nature of the MOMO challenge, Hampshire Police feel it necessary to advise professionals and parents to seriously consider any decision to raise awareness of it to children and young people as a means to safeguard them, unless necessary; as we know, with all good intentions, drawing attention to it may result in them gravitating towards it. In light of this, **the school do not plan to discuss the matter directly with the children and will leave this for parents to individually decide the appropriate approach for their child.**

- Consider talking about online challenges with your child and ask them if they have heard of any
- Discuss the dangers of challenges and remind them that such things are not fictional characters but rather a real person with negative intentions
- Teach your children never to communicate with strangers online or on their mobile phones and to never share personal information online
- Remind your child that they can always talk to you or another trusted adult about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable on social media
- Learn about viral social media challenges before your children so that can help keep them safe
- Encourage your children to only use social media as a tool to improve their digital footprint and have fun with friends in a safe way

The constantly evolving digital world means a steady influx of new apps and games and can be hard for parents to keep track of. That's why it is important for parents to talk regularly with children about these apps and games and the potential risks they can be exposed to.

The school are following the advice of Hampshire Police in bringing this matter to our parent's attention but do not wish to cause alarm. Incidents such as this allow school's to remind parents of some very important online safeguarding advice.

Please find further guidance below from the NSPCC regarding supporting your child with social media and gaming apps. It is at your discretion as to whether you share this guidance with your child. The NSPCC publishes advice and guidance for parents on discussing overall online safety with their children, as well as promoting [Net Aware](#) - the UK's only parental guide to social media and gaming apps.



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

If adults are concerned or have any questions on how to approach the subject with their children, they can contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or [visit the NSPCC website](#). Children who are worried about their activity on apps or online games can [contact Childline 24 hours a day, online](#) and over the phone on 0800 1111.

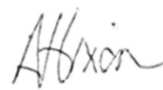
Yours faithfully,



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