**ST MARY’S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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WARNING!

Dear Parent/ Carer,

A recent social media challenge targeting children and young adults, called the ‘Momo challenge,’ has created concern throughout the country due to its disturbing nature.

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of this challenge, provide you with information about it, and urge you to monitor your children’s use of social media and the Internet.

**What is Momo?**

The ‘Momo Challenge,’ is a game found on Facebook and WhatsApp and is on video content sites -such as Youtube- featuring a frightening avatar who asks its viewers to perform various tasks and provide photos as proof. The ‘Momo’ threatens those who do not perform the task. It has been around for some time although has resurfaced recently in the media.

According to the Guardian newspaper, it is the most talked about viral scare story of the year so far, blamed for child suicides and violent attacks – but experts and charities have warned that the “Momo challenge” is nothing but a “moral panic” spread by adults.The Samaritans and the NSPCC have dismissed the claims, saying that while there is no evidence that the ‘Momo challenge’ has initially caused any harm itself, however the ensuing media hysteria could now be putting vulnerable people at risk by encouraging them to think of self-harm.

Regardless of others’ views, the images/videos are undoubtedly disturbing for children. Therefore, we reiterate the importance of speaking to your children about any concerns they have whilst using the Internet and that they know the importance of following highlighted points-below.

**What do parents need to watch out for?**

* Children’s videos being hijacked (Youtube videos)
* Graphic and violent images on WhatsApp, Facebook and Youtube Kids.
* Distressing videos showing peoples’ reaction to the challenge.
* Video Apps (such as Youtube) that include an ‘up next feature’, which automatically starts playing another video based on the video just watched.

**What can I do as a parent?**

* **Ensure your children know what they are allowed to access online.**
* **Ensure your children understand the importance of not giving personal information to anyone they do not know.**
* **Tell your children no-one has the right to make them do anything they do not want to do.**
* **Use parental controls to keep children safe. (For information on this, please see our school website’s- Online Safety Tab).**

For further information, please see the attached information sheet. As a school we are not openly sharing this information with the children, to prevent them from looking into it further.

Many thanks

Mr King

Online Safety Lead