



# MALCOLM SARGENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love To Learn

1 March 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

## **MOMO CHALLENGE**

A large number of children in school are now increasingly concerned about the Momo Challenge.

There have been claims by various media sources that children who are viewing YouTube or using WhatsApp are being interrupted by a pop-up, embedded video or messages sent by a female puppet, who asks children to text message a phone number to find out how to enter an increasingly dangerous set of pranks and requests, culminating in self-harm and suicide.

This is an example of fake news, as it has been clarified to be a hoax.

However, due to the propagation by media, this news item has become viral. Unfortunately, there is now a possibility of copy-cat hackers posting materials related to the original hoax, which children may be at risk of seeing. Whilst I do not wish to add to the propagation of the original hoax, I now feel it prudent to inform you, as parents/carers, so that you can act accordingly as part of your responsibility to ensure children are sufficiently protected and supervised whilst on the internet. Please do speak to your children should they become concerned. Remind children about the internet rules you have with them, and what you do to protect them from seeing unsafe images and content online. You can adjust your internet filters to block such content. You may well wish to ensure access to certain programs is supervised, which is good practice for all internet use by children, especially on YouTube.

In school, we will take this opportunity to reiterate parts of our e-safety curriculum to which this relates, at an age appropriate level, using Momo as an example of fake news, and inappropriate content, especially as there may now be copy-cat hackers infiltrating some online programs.

We recognise that Momo is one many possible pop-ups and unwanted images and videos which children could see as a part of daily online activity, particularly on YouTube, and children should be taught how to be aware of the possibility of these incidents occurring and what to do about them should they occur. They also need to be aware of how to remain safe by not contacting people they do not know, such as text messaging a phone number that has been given to them, to an unknown person.

In school, our E-Safety Committee of children will be giving a presentation in assembly on how to manage unwanted pop-ups and what to do if you see content which they do not like and which interrupts their viewing. Their advice will be:

- Pop-ups are windows or new information which could be adverts or messages that interrupt viewing.
- Click on the pop-up 'x' and close down the pop up immediately.
- If clicking on the 'x' doesn't work, switch off the computer, phone, tablet or gaming console.
- Always tell an adult when you have seen something that makes you feel uncomfortable or distressing.
- Do not search for inappropriate content.
- Do not send messages to people you do not know.
- If you receive a message from someone you do not know, let an adult know immediately.
- Parents can use filtering systems to block certain words or phrases on search engines and on internet platforms.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Tim Cox  
Vice Principal, Upper School