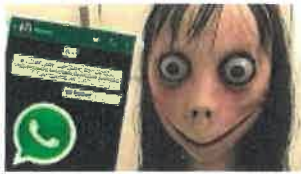




## The Momo Challenge.

### What is it?

Momo is a new viral game that encourages players to perform a series of challenges in order to meet 'Mother Bird'- a disfigured character inspired by Japanese art, with bulging eyes and untidy black hair on a chicken-like body.



This game seems fun and light-hearted at the beginning but quickly darkens into progressively risky and dangerous challenges. The game has been coined the 'suicide challenge' because the doll encourages players to self-harm and the ultimate post tells them to take their own lives.

### Who is it targeting?

The game predominately targets teenagers but that is not to say younger children will not be at risk. It uses social media platforms, such as Whatsapp to contact children. It has been known to appear in the middle of Youtube videos, such as Peppa Pig and has been reported to come through Fortnite. Players are asked to provide their mobile number so a series of challenges can then be given by text or Whatsapp. If a player refuses it can trigger severely abusive messaging and hacking of their mobile phone.

### Why does it appeal to children?

The level of interest in this game has been significantly increased because of the commentary on Social Media sites. This has resulted in children becoming intrigued and curious about what happens in the game. However, this is a game which is targeting vulnerable children and young people. The challenges and distressing content in this game seriously risk the safety, welfare and wellbeing of young people.

## What can you do?

A person does not have to be searching for Momo to be exposed to it. We have a collective responsibility as teachers and parents to continually reinforce online safety. By doing this we encourage children and young people to make the right choices online, in this case it would be to avoid the game. We must ensure that our children see the importance and have the confidence to say "no" to invitations to play games from strangers.

### NSPCC Advice.

- Parents should talk with their children and emphasise that they can make their own choices and discuss ways of how to say no.
- Children can find it difficult to stand up to peer pressure but they must know it's perfectly okay to refuse to take part in crazes that make them feel unsafe or scared.
- Reassuring a child that they can still be accepted even if they don't go along with the crowd will help stop them doing something that could hurt them or make them uncomfortable.

### Advice from the police.

Research has shown that the aim of this game is for hackers to obtain personal information from their players. The police have appealed for parents to not simply focus on Momo but to urge them to:

- Ensure they know what their children can access online.
- Ensure children understand the importance of not giving personal information to anyone they do not know.
- Tell their children no-one has the right to make them do anything they do not want to do
- Use parental controls to keep children safe