



THE RICHARD CLARKE FIRST SCHOOL

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27th February 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

As a school we are well aware of the present online dangers and the risks when using the internet. In school, children have access to a range of technology, but always under supervision. We ensure children have regular e-Safety sessions as well as e-Safety assemblies where we cover a range of issues including current concerns and also prepare children with how to live in the modern technological world.

Today, we have had some parents raise concerns regarding the YouTube 'Momo' challenge, which you may/may not have heard of through the news. Here at The Richard Clarke First School, we are very concerned about this.

The YouTube video uses a creepy-looking avatar to pretend to communicate with children via social media, YouTube itself and gaming systems. These avatars are linked to the YouTube video and not the game. Police have informed us that children who come across 'Momo' are encouraged to make contact with it. They will then receive frightening images and violent messages encouraging violence, self-harm and/or suicide. The avatar attempts to blackmail children by telling them that it has damaging information and will release it if they don't play the game. Children are then asked to post photos or videos of them committing violent acts. According to cyber experts, the challenge is nothing but a hoax that aims to steal personal data and torture children physically and mentally.

Police say children should never respond to unidentified messages on social media and parents should advise their children to never share personal data, photographs or phone numbers freely on the internet.

Here are some tips on keeping children safe online:

- Start discussing online safety at an early age
- If you wouldn't do it face to face - Don't do it online
- Teach children to beware of strangers bearing gifts
- Once you've written something you can't delete it
- Never, under any circumstances, browse unaccompanied
- Try and be vigilant and monitor what you can
- Become friends and contacts in your child's social media
- Anything that is put online should be assumed to be permanent
- Learn about something yourself if you don't know
- Follow the same rules you would follow in the real world

Thank you for your co-operation on this matter. As ever, your children's safety is our number one concern.

Kind Regards,

D. Hindhaugh (Mr.)
Assistant Headteacher