



SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

FACT SHEET

Internet Bullying (self-harm) Game - “Momo Challenge”

Adapted from Communiqué Prepared by the YRDSB Mental Health Lead

What is the Momo Challenge?

Momo begins with an anonymous person - hiding behind a haunting avatar - sending violent images to the victim over the Internet including messaging apps, games and social media e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, Youtube, Fortnite, Minecraft. Momo then gives orders, and threatens the receiver if they don't follow them.

The game targets children and youth. The Momo Challenge is a form of cyberbullying where Momo asks to be contacted through a social media site and then asks the person to perform a series of dangerous tasks including self-harm. A number of students in our system have already reported that they have viewed this and were scared by it.

Board Response and Support

Psychology and School Counsellor staff are available to consult with schools regarding any students who experience emotional upset regarding this game.

The SMCDSB Information and Communications Technology Department will continue to monitor this situation to minimize student exposure while students are at school and using board issued devices.

A fact sheet has been shared with all staff in our board so that they are equipped to respond to any concerns that arise at the school level.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Be a Good Listener and Observer

Let children guide you to learn how concerned they are or how much information they need. Depending on your child's age and maturity level, you may wish to check with your children and speak to them in a general sense about any untrue and scary messages they may be exposed to on the Internet, Apps and social media. Be available to answer their questions to the best of your ability. Young children may be hesitant to tell you about scary content they have received. Pay attention to changes in their behavior or social interactions. Keep the dialogue open - encourage your children to be open with you and ask freely about what they see on the Internet.



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Reinforce a Sense of Safety

Students may feel scared, threatened, or unsafe. Be reassuring. Children take their emotional cues from the significant adults in their lives. Your reactions are most important. Recognize that some children may be concerned about threats to selves and others that are contained in the messaging. Encourage your child to talk to you if they have concerns about their safety. Here are some tips to help ensure the safe use of technology in your household:

- Use parent control tools
- Do not let your child send confidential information over the Internet and teach them not to share information that might identify them
- Make it very clear to children that in the virtual world, not every person is a friend, and that some people may even want to hurt them
- Teach them that not everything you see online is true and not all the information that can be found on the Internet comes from a reliable or safe place

Reach Out

Reach out to your school's Principal if you feel that your child may be displaying a significant reaction to this material.

Suggested Resource:

https://www.cybertip.ca/app/en/internet_safety