



Dear Parents and Carers

We have been made aware, by the police, of an internet 'suicide-influencing game' called **The MOMO Challenge** which encourages children to harm themselves and is reported to be linked to several deaths around the world and is now appearing across the UK.

The following statement has been forwarded to us by The Hampshire Police Education Team:

Below is a brief summary of what the MOMO Challenge is and, with no intention to be condescending, given the horrendous nature of the MOMO challenge, I feel it necessary to advise you to consider any decision to raise awareness of it with your child as a means to safeguard them, unless necessary; as we know, with all good intentions, drawing attention to it may result in them gravitating towards it. Our intention is to make you aware of it so that increased vigilance can help us all spot any signs that any of our young people may be exposed to it.

What is the MOMO Challenge?

Mirroring the 'Blue Whale' suicide-game of 2017, The MOMO Challenge is targeted at children and young people through social media by people presenting as MOMO, a terrifying looking doll.



The doll encourages them to add a contact on messaging service WhatsApp from an unknown number, once contact is made, children are subsequently bombarded with terrifying images and messages reportedly ranging from threats and dares which encourage them to self-harm and even commit suicide.

Although known of in other parts of the world since last year, it appears to be making its way across the UK.

MOMO has been associated to multiple platforms used by children including **Youtube, Kidstube, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp.**

Police in Northern Ireland have warned parents after a mother reported finding the 'creepy game' on her 7 year old daughter's iPad; they have since posted a [message](#) about the challenge on Facebook, referring to a video of a MOMO interaction in America showing an 'ominous sounding voice recording' sent to a child, telling them to use a knife on their own throat.

Police believe the game is being used by hackers seeking and harvesting information, warning that while it is perceived as a horrendous 'suicide game' targeting children, likely to get thousands of hits, it 'misses the bigger picture'. There are now numerous variations and imitators.

NSPCC Response & Advice for Parents:

"The NSPCC publishes advice and guidance for parents on discussing overall online safety with their children, as well as promoting [Net Aware](#) - the UK's only parental guide to social media and gaming apps."

Among the most common signs to watch out for include children who:

- **Become very secretive, especially about what they are doing online**
- **Are spending a lot of time on the internet and social media**
- **Are switching screens on their device when approached**
- **Are withdrawn or angry after using the internet or sending text messages**
- **Have lots of new phone numbers or email addresses on their devices**

If adults are concerned or have any questions on how to approach the subject with their children, they can contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or [visit the NSPCC website](#). Children who are worried about their activity on apps or online games can [contact Childline 24 hours a day, online](#) and over the phone on 0800 1111.

Yours faithfully



Sarah Conlon
Deputy Headteacher, Safeguarding Lead