

Dear School District of Philadelphia families,

As many of you have already learned through the evening news, the **Momo Challenge** has resurfaced. In addition, a couple of days ago there was a different news story about a mom finding YouTube Kids' videos with hidden suicide plans for kids. *You can read more information about that story [here](#).*

Our children are surrounded by electronic devices with numerous apps. Please be sure to be vigilant about your child's online activity and talk to them about online safety. Below you will find tips and resources to help you educate your children about the Momo Challenge and internet safety.

The Momo Challenge: What can you do?

- If you are concerned that your child has been exposed to the Momo Challenge (or any similarly dangerous internet trend), ask them about it. Do they know what it is? Have they tried it? Listen calmly and without judgment, and if needed, talk to them straightforwardly about the dangers associated with the challenge. Discuss a plan that includes what they can do if they receive a message with the Momo Challenge
- Check your child's electronic device. The Momo Challenge is not the first challenge to encourage kids to participate in dangerous activities (the Slenderman and the Bluewhale challenge are similar challenges that were popular several years ago), and it will not be the last. If your child or teen is engaging in the Momo Challenge, or any other similar challenge, they will probably not volunteer that information to you. Remember you are your child's greatest protector and you have every right to know the apps your child is using and have every right to check their electronic devices.
- Take social media seriously, do not downplay its power in our kids lives. Social media can be a means of building friendships and connecting, but it is also where most of our kids are bullied, lose confidence, feel isolated, and are exposed to porn and other unhealthy media. Even if they aren't sure what the Momo Challenge is, they may come upon this in the future, or other bizarre or dangerous "challenges." Educating our kids will empower them to stay away from challenges such as this, and even encourage them to help their friends.
- Keep your relationship with your kids strong and solid. Spend time with them daily, allow them to talk with you about their interests, their friends and their fears. Keep the flow of communication open and consistent. Make sure they know and feel how much you love them.
- Have a social media contract with your kids! If your child is on social media, they need guidance and accountability. Knowing what is appropriate to share, what photos to post, and how to respond to other's social media postings takes practice—and parents are the right people to set an example and teach their kids.

This comprehensive safety guide for healthy social media use for families includes a sample contract designed for teens at the end.

For more information about internet safety please visit <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/privacy-and-internet-safety>.

Struggling to keep up with the media and tech your kids are using? **Common Sense's Parents' Ultimate Guides** can help keep you up to date and answer your questions about all the latest apps and trends.

Please feel free to email us if you have any other questions or concerns about this topic.

Regards,

School Counselor