

February 27, 2019

Dear Horseheads Parents/Guardians:

I would like to alert you to an alarming social media challenge targeting children and young adults called the Momo Challenge. This challenge originally surfaced in other communities several months ago and has caused concern among schools and parents across the country because of its disturbing nature. We would like to share information about this challenge and urge you to monitor your children's use of social media and the Internet. We also ask that you remind your children not to accept any invitation to play an online game from an unknown person or number, nor click on unidentified links.

The Momo Challenge is a game found on platforms including YouTube, Facebook, and the app WhatsApp. It features a frightening character asking viewers to perform tasks that may harm them and provide photos as proof. The Momo threatens those who do not perform the tasks. Some of the challenges suggest performing them while in school. This phenomenon is especially disturbing because it targets children.

Our administration and staff work closely with our technology specialists to address Internet safety and appropriate use of technology, and will continue to do so regarding this challenge. Our counselors, social workers, and school psychologists are ready to assist if necessary. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's principal and/or counselor.

Here is a link that provides information on the Momo Challenge, along with tips on how to talk to children about the dangers of this challenge: <https://www.heart.co.uk/lifestyle/parenting/momo-challenge-safety-tips/>.

Additionally, here is a link from New York State with resources to assist you in guiding your students to appropriate use of technology and the Internet: <https://its.ny.gov/keeping-kids-safe>.

Thank you for taking the time to read this important information and to work with us to keep our students safe and accurately informed. Again, if you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's principal and/or school counselor.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools