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Dear Parents,

Online safety

We regularly write to all our parents – no matter which class your child is in – about the importance of E safety. It is something we take very seriously at St Michael's and we know that it can affect everyone in the family. It has been brought to our attention that there is a new online game, known as 'Momo'. This 'game' is naturally spreading concern amongst parents and professionals and we feel it is important that parents are aware and our children are kept safe.

MoMo is a sinister looking female avatar that is part of a game. It is understood that the child may need to create an account to access MoMo fully. The 'game' can be accessed via websites or apps such as Whatsapp. Whatsapp is currently only allowed for those over the age of 16 years old. Facebook is for those over 13 years old. Momo gives instructions to the players as part of the game. The game eventually results in the avatar suggesting that the person takes their own life. There is much reported information in the media and the real threat that MoMo possesses is unclear, which is why we need to be vigilant.

Even without the game downloaded, MoMo references and images can be found on sites such as YouTube and through search engines so an awareness of what your child is doing online is essential in protecting them. Although talking to your child about 'Momo' may not be necessary, we strongly recommend that you speak to your children about keeping themselves safe online and you may also want to check your parental controls and search histories. Please be mindful of videos your children are watching on YouTube or YouTube Kids.

It has come to our attention that some of our children are talking about "Fortnite". We have been made aware of a safeguarding risk relating to "Fortnite" which we would like to draw your attention to. This relates to how the children use the voice and text chat function when playing the game and its potential for child grooming. Fortnite has an age rating of 12 due to the: *'frequent scenes of mild violence. It is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age'*. This age rating only takes into account the content in the game and not the contact element, where players may be exposed to swearing and offensive language from strangers in the voice or on-screen text chat.

Many excellent tips and guidance can be found on the NSPCC's website on how to do this. These can be accessed at www.nspcc.org. On Facebook, there is also a resource 'EST E-Safety' which can give you, as parents, excellent tips to keep your child safe online. Finally, CEOP has many superb resources to help your child understand e-safety in a fun, interactive way and there is also a section with advice for parents: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>.

Please do let us know if you have any questions on keeping our children safe online – either at home or school.

Yours sincerely

S Duncan