



Greenway Primary
& Nursery School



Crossways, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 3NH
Tel: 01442 866249

Head Teacher: Katharine Ellwood

Dear Parents

28 February 2019

Online safety

It has been brought to our attention that there is an inappropriate challenge circulating on the internet called the 'Momo Challenge.' Although it has been suggested that this could well be a hoax, it is an important reminder to ensure that you are watching over your children whilst they are online. It is possible that the scary image displayed to cause compliance when the challenge is initiated, which is in fact part of a Japanese sculpture, may be embedded within videos online, including, reportedly, YouTube Kids. It is likely that this would appear within (for example) Minecraft tutorials where videos have been copied, edited and reposted. It encourages children to take part in inappropriate challenges through a suggestion that the viewer will come to harm if they do not follow certain instructions, including self-harm. Regardless of the truth behind this particular threat, edited and seemingly 'harmless' videos can be highly inappropriate and emotionally damaging.

Please speak to your children about the importance of having adult supervision when they are using the internet and do try to ensure that they are not alone when they are online. Adopting an open-door policy and not using the internet in their bedrooms is important. Encourage your child to talk to you or another adult they trust if they see anything inappropriate pop up on their screens and not open associated hyperlinks.

We have had an assembly for KS2 children today to raise awareness of online safety and to reassure the children that they can talk to us at school and trusted adults at home if they are worried. We have explained the dangers and how to try to avoid them with the children, such as telling an adult, not watching the videos and not trusting an online stranger telling you to do things. We have also made it clear to the children that we do not want them to discuss the online challenge with their peers.

We expect that it will be the older children who are more likely to be at risk, unless your KS1 child has unrestricted access online. Please can we remind you to check your settings, age limits and restrictions on apps and games. Please be aware that YouTube has a 13+ age restriction on signing up, yet that doesn't stop children from accessing videos directly from a browser. Please also be aware that many upper KS2 children report that they have access to WhatsApp, which is for 16+ only.

If you have any further questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards

Katharine Ellwood and Amy Crockett (e-safety lead)

