



MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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KENDRA V. JOHNSON, J.D., ED. D.

Superintendent of Schools

March 7, 2019

Dear Montclair Public Schools Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to make you aware of information about a growing social media challenge targeting children called the “Momo Challenge.” We want to make certain that you are aware of this challenge, provide you with relevant information, and ask you to be vigilant in monitoring your children’s use of the internet and social media. While the recent headlines suggest that this is being targeted at young children, we believe all ages should be aware of this potentially harmful challenge.

The “Momo” is a character who has bulging eyes and a distorted face, with a spooky smile. Recent news reports alerted the public that the character usually pops up on YouTube and YouTube Kids during popular children’s videos, and social media platforms like Facebook and Whatsapp. “Momo” is said to challenge children to participate in a variety of dangerous dares and activities that could potentially be life-threatening.

Children may be aware and scared about what they have heard regarding the “Momo Challenge.” As parents and educators it's important for us to reassure them that this is not real, they are safe, and they should always go to a trusted adult with any fears, concerns, or questions. Social media risks will continue to be addressed by our school counselors, child study team members, and administrative team members, and they are ready to assist children with any concerns they may have.

Please talk to your children even though the subject matter may be sensitive or you feel uncomfortable, as open dialogue will keep you abreast of what they or their peers are experiencing. No matter how level-headed we may think our own children are, these social media trends can be very persuasive and frightening. Therefore, it is important to let them know that trusted adults are ready to listen and assist them.

As a District, we will continue to reinforce digital safety and awareness, and we are grateful for your support in providing reinforcement at home. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child’s principal and/or school counselor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kendra Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Dr. Kendra V. Johnson
Superintendent