



Northumberland Middle School

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Mrs. Javornda Ashton
Principal

Mr. Patrick Simmons
Assistant Principal

March 1, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We are committed to safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of our students. As such, we want to inform you of the latest series of online challenges targeting youth and teens called the “Momo Challenge”.

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of this challenge, provide you with information about it, and urge you to monitor your children’s use of social media and the Internet. The “Momo Challenge” is a game found on Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Fortnite, Roblox, Minecraft and most recently, YouTube Kids. This challenge features a frightening avatar who asks its viewers to perform various tasks of self harm or harm to others and provide photos as proof and threatens those who do not perform the tasks.

According to experts, although the challenge appears to be more fear than fact, it’s important for parents to talk to their children about it. Parents can ask their child whether they have seen anything online that has upset or worried them, and explain that there are often things that happen online that can be misleading or frightening and that some things are solely designed to get a lot of attention. Supervise games that your children are playing and videos they are viewing to ensure that devices are restricted to age-appropriate content. Remind your children not to give out personal information online to anyone that they do not know.

As we have been working to promote healthy social media and internet usage, the students at Northumberland Middle School participated in a presentation by Northumberland County’s Assistant Commonwealth Attorney, Erin Hapgood on February 28, 2019 where she shared important information regarding social media and safety. There are plenty of good things about social media — there are also many risks and things kids and teens should avoid. Parents help us as we encourage your child to do the following:

- **Be nice.** Mean behavior is not OK. Make it clear that you expect your kids to treat others with respect, and to never post hurtful or embarrassing messages. Ask them to always tell you about any harassing or bullying messages that others post.
- **Think twice before hitting "enter."** Remind teens that what they post can be used against them. Teens also should avoid posting specific locations of parties or events, as well as phone numbers.

- **Follow the "WWGS?" (What Would Grandma Say?) rule.** Teach kids not to share anything on social media that they wouldn't want their teachers, college admissions officers, future bosses — and yes, grandma — to see.
- **Use privacy settings.** Privacy settings are important. Go through them together to make sure your kids understand each one. Also, explain that passwords are there to protect them against things like identity theft. They should never share them with anyone, not even a best friend.
- **Don't "friend" strangers.** "If you don't know them, don't friend them." This is a plain, simple — and safe — rule of thumb.

Thank you for your attention to this matter as it takes a collective community to be vigilant in ensuring student safety. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact administration and/or a school counselor.

Sincerely,

Javornda Ashton

Javornda Ashton
Principal

