

Dear Parents and Guardians,

District 300 would like to inform you about a controversial internet fad called the Momo Challenge. According to CNN, the Momo Challenge is described “as a ‘suicide game’ which combines shock imagery and hidden messaging, and it supposedly encourages kids to attempt dangerous stunts, including suicide.”

The Momo Challenge has been rising in popularity. This week, “Momo” was the top new trending term on Google in the United States. There has also been an increase in viral postings linking the Momo Challenge to children who have inflicted self-harm or committed suicide.

It has come to our attention that District 300 students have become aware of the Momo Challenge. The district’s technology department has worked to prevent students from searching for the Momo Challenge or watching related videos on their Chromebook devices.

Additionally, several media outlets have identified the Momo Challenge as a hoax, including these articles from [WGN Chicago](#), [CNN](#), and [The Atlantic](#).

While the Momo Challenge is a hoax, the topic of self-harm and suicide is incredibly serious. As such, should the Momo Challenge (or anything else) prompt your child to discuss self-harm or suicide, we encourage parents to engage in a healthy dialogue. As such, the district would like to provide the following tips:

- Reassure your child that talking openly and honestly about emotional distress (their own or a friend’s) with a trusted adult is okay and encouraged. Let them know who they can turn to if they ever need support – you (the parent), a school counselor, social worker, or teacher, another family member or trusted adult.
- Take the time to talk about the people and resources available to support individuals with depression, suicidal thoughts, and mental illness.
- For any immediate concerns about your child, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-TALK, or text START to 741741.

In addition, you can inform your students (as our teachers and staff do) that they can always speak to a staff member at school if they are having any thoughts about self-harm or suicide. Our district’s social workers and Education Services department are always available to support our students in navigating self-harm, suicide, or other serious topics.

Students who may be aware that another student is considering (or inflicting) self-harm or having suicidal thoughts can report that information to a teacher, an administrator, or anonymously through the Safe School Tip Line available on our [website](#) or by calling 847-551-8477.

Sincerely,

Fred Heid