



Phone: 1-306-682-2558
Toll-free: 1-866-966-2558
Fax: 1-306-682-5154
10366 - 8th Avenue
PO Box 40
Humboldt, Saskatchewan
S0K 2A0

March 1, 2019

Dear Horizon School Division Parents and Caregivers,

As a safe and caring school division, we want to share information relating to the latest viral scare that has been circulating online and in media this week. In light of the exposure this story has already received, we strongly encourage that you take particular interest in what your children are accessing online.

There have been reports this week of a “Momo” character hidden in videos and apps that appeal to children, directing them to harm others or themselves. Although many sources now debunk early reports of this “Momo Challenge”, and many news sources now claim that this particular “challenge” is a malicious hoax, this situation is a reminder of the need to be vigilant in monitoring the information and content that children access online.

It is imperative to talk to children about reporting disturbing online content to a trusted adult. It is important to make your children aware that they must immediately report any online interaction that leaves them feeling uncomfortable. It is also critical to remind your child that they will not be in trouble for reporting any such interaction or content.

Below are a few precautionary steps that can be taken to ensure the online safety of your children (*Information courtesy of School District 73 in Kamloops, B.C.*):

- Talk about how they use the internet and social media – be supportive and encourage them to let you know if they have any problems
- Get to know what your child does online and teach them to be safe – they need to know how to deal with inappropriate material and how to protect themselves from predators
- Keep the computer in a common area or have them use personal devices in your company
- Warn your child not to give personal information to a stranger online
- Contact your local law enforcement if you believe your child is being blackmailed or extorted online
- Tell your child to ignore messages from people they don’t recognize and not to visit someone in person that they meet online or via text



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I will also direct you to a number of excellent resources regarding online safety for children and families, which can be found at iamstronger.ca/resources/families.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your school principal for support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin C. Garinger', is written over a light blue circular watermark.

Kevin C. Garinger, B.Ed, M.A.Ed
Director of Education/CEO
Horizon School Division No. 205

Cc: Crandall Hrynkiw, Superintendent of Learning Services