

Wednesday 27th February 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have been made aware that a very small number of pupils have been discussing a concerning new Internet/Whatsapp viral phenomenon called 'Momo'. This is a horrific doll originally created for Japanese film that is now being used as the 'mascot' for a group encouraging people to complete a set of extreme challenges. These challenges start out as fairly easy and non-threatening, but quickly become more extreme, threatening and sinister. The final challenge is for the child or adult in some cases to actually commit suicide. This phenomenon has been blamed for the recent suicide death of a 12 year old girl in Argentina.

As often happens, this viral phenomenon has now been picked up by other people and has apparently appeared as 'pop ups' in some children's *You Tube* videos such as *Peppa Pig*. I would ask you to be very mindful of the videos etc. that your children are watching on *You Tube*. It's worth noting that there are also other sinister viral videos that imitate popular programmes such as *Peppa Pig* and *Ben and Holly*, whereby the characters engage in self-harm or other extreme and distressing activities – these videos are often linked to proper videos within *You Tube*, so again please be vigilant and report anything you discover to the website owners through the '**Report This**' tab.

I would like to reassure you that Netherbrook takes the safety and security of its pupils extremely seriously. Images, videos or articles concerning this phenomenon or any other inappropriate or adult orientated materials cannot appear on school computers as we have robust and extensive secure filters in place. If pupils type/search for inappropriate materials, this is also immediately flagged up to myself and I will speak to the child, teacher and parents about it. However, the risk of children encountering issues such as this phenomenon at home are much greater.

Therefore, I would ask you all to please check and enhance the parental controls on your home computers, tablets and phones to make sure that any devices used by your children block inappropriate materials.

If you need any help on activating filters and safeguarding settings on your home computers or devices please click on this link: <http://www.netherbrook.dudley.sch.uk/pdfs/presentation-esafety.pdf>

The link will take you to a presentation on the Netherbrook website in the Policies and Documents section which is a helpful guide on keeping your children safe on the internet. Within the presentation is another link to all the main internet providers such as Sky, Virgin and BT and there are step by step guides on how to set up and maintain robust parental controls at home.

I have asked staff to ensure that pupils do not discuss this issue in school and I would also like to ask you to discuss this with your own children if you feel that it is appropriate, to make sure that they know; firstly, not to worry about it, secondly, not to discuss it **AT ALL** in school as it may scare others, and thirdly, to obviously never follow any links to these materials and to tell you or us if they access a website where they encounter this phenomenon.

I do not want to announce this in assembly yet as it may cause the issue to spread amongst children that know nothing about it, hence I am contacting parents to inform you directly of the issue.

Please remember that there is every chance that your child has never even heard of this phenomenon and is actually very unlikely to encounter it unless they specifically search for it, so please do not become overly worried. Do, however, ensure that all reasonable steps are taken at home to ensure your children are safe on their internet enabled devices.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Rawlings

Headteacher