



Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Dear Garden Place Academy Families,

We are writing to let you know about a game called the "Momo Challenge," similar to a game that circulated last year called the "Blue Whale Challenge." The Momo Challenge is an online challenge game that urges participants to commit various acts of self-harm that increase in severity with each new activity. For each activity, they are encouraged to upload physical evidence to an online site. The final task urges participants to kill themselves.

We have discovered to our concern and chagrin that the "Momo Challenge" is being talked about in our fifth grade classes. Here at Garden Place Academy we are implementing a *Riding The Waves* curriculum that addresses social emotional issues and is the District's approved suicide prevention program for fifth graders. The District uses *Signs of Suicide* for 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Both of these programs are developmentally correct and are presented throughout the schools each year.

We encourage you to determine whether your child is involved in games like the "Momo Challenge" or the "Blue Whale Challenge" and discuss the dangers of playing similar games. Please explain to your child that games like these may seem harmless at first, and that they should be wary of any online game that requires them to interact with others they do not know.

In a time when social media is constant and present in our children's lives, it's important to talk to them about the dangers of online games. As a reminder, the terms of service for all social networks prohibit anyone under 13 years of age from using the services. This applies to Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and all other social networks. As an additional resource to learn more about cyber-safety as a parent, we encourage you to visit [Commonsensemedia.org](http://Commonsensemedia.org), a partnership we have forged through Denver Public Schools. As a school community, we will continue to work with our students to empower them to understand online safety and cyber-citizenship.

Additionally, if your student has warning signs of depression or suicide, don't be afraid to ask them if they have thought about harming themselves. Raising the issue of suicide does not increase the risk. Instead, it decreases the risk by providing an opportunity for help. Remind your student to tell you and an adult at school if they know of peers that are hurting themselves or talking about suicide.

Denver Public Schools works to provide access to safety programming in all of our schools. Programming includes the Signs of Suicide (SOS) curriculum and Safe2Tell programming. Our school psychologists, school nurses, social workers and counselors are trained in suicide prevention and supports and take **all reports seriously**.

If you have questions, please reach out to our Garden Place Academy Mental Health Staff. If your child is in need of immediate assistance, please call 911 or access one of the crisis supports shared below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Rentería".

Andrea Rentería, Principal

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1. National Crisis Line, 1-800-273-8255, 1-800-273-TALK
2. The Trevor Project (GLBTQ) 1-866-488-7386
3. Safe2Tell 1-877-542-7233

