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Dear Parents and Guardians:

Many of you have heard or read about an online game called “Momo Challenge,” a game that encourages children to attempt various challenges, including self-harm. Some reports are saying the self-harm challenge portion of the game is a hoax or is overblown. Nonetheless, I felt that it was an opportunity to reach out to you with a reminder to be vigilant about our children’s online activity.

The Archdiocese of Washington’s Catholic Schools Office has pulled together a few practical tips for online safety. Each family has different levels of accessibility for online content with their children, and while the following points are not comprehensive, they do serve as some common sense tips to help us be vigilant:

- Keep computers and online devices in an open area. It is recommended that children not be permitted to use internet-enabled devices in a bedroom or in unsupervised areas.
- Be aware of what apps your children are using or what games they are playing. If they are password protected, you should have record of the passwords and be sure to monitor their online activity.
- Parents should be aware of apps and games that allow “friend” requests to be sent and received, as well as, those that permit online conversation or chats.
- Talk with your children about the importance of immediately reporting any inappropriate activity that is presented to them online.
- Know the warning signs of distress, changes in behavior, fear, sadness, depression. If your child is in distress, please seek medical attention immediately.

If you would like more detailed resources on the topic of online safety, please feel free to reach out to me, and I will be happy to provide you with additional material. Thank you for your continued partnership as we work to keep our children safe in the digital age.

Sincerely,

*Mary Bartsch*  
Mary Bartsch