DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

DR. CHRISTINA M. KISHIMOTO
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAI`I
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96804

February 27, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are committed to safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of our students. As such, we want to inform you of the latest series of online challenges targeting youth and teens called *The Momo Challenge*.

It is essentially "played" over a digital social media platform, where contact is initiated by searching for a phone number online and sending a message. The player then enters into a conversation that involves directions to complete challenges that can include self-harm and even suicide. There have been reports that bullies have been posing as *Momo* — a nightmarish character with bulging eyes and a chilling smile — on platforms to bully others into harming themselves or others.

Recently, the trend has been covered extensively in the news and over social media. While evidence of the disturbing behaviors of the game are limited, the coverage has understandably caused concern for parents and staff.

According to experts, although the challenge appears to be more fear than fact, it's important for parents to talk to their children about it. Parents can ask their child whether they have seen anything online that has upset or worried them, and explain that there are often things that happen online that can be misleading or frightening and that some things are solely designed to get a lot of attention.

It's also recommended that parents review the online safety and security features on their child's devices. With many students having online access on their own devices, parents are encouraged to be proactive and foster an atmosphere of openness and transparency about their child's online activity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. It takes a collective community to be vigilant in ensuring student safety.

Sincerely,

Complex Area Superintendent