KELLIHER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Independent School District #36
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*"Developing leaders and life-long learners in a community that promotes
rigor, relevance, and respect"*

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March 4, 2019

Dear Kelliher Public School Families,

We are committed to safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of our students. As such, we want to inform you of the many internet and social media challenges circulating. These challenges are 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.

Recently, the trend has been covered extensively in the news and over social media. While evidence of the disturbing behaviors of the game is 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.

We encourage parents who are concerned about their kids being exposed to disturbing images to have intentional conversations with them about what they encounter online. Following are some resources that have been found to be helpful tools for families to help young learners navigate the internet, as well as families looking to parent in the digital age.
● Family Online Safety Institute
● Common Sense Media
● Creating a Family Media Plan (American Academy of Pediatrics)
● Teaching Kids About Internet Safety (GCFLearnFree.org)
● Talking with Kids About Being Online (Federal Trade Commission)
● What Parents Need to Know About Momo (National Online Safety)

Thank you for your attention to this matter. It takes a collective community to be vigilant in ensuring student safety. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Kelliher School.