



**Dear Parents,**

**August 29, 2017**

The Internet and social media provide incredible opportunities for children to learn, participate and socialize but they also bring significant challenges for the protection of children from abuse and violence.

- The Blue Whale challenge is a deadly game has spread all over the globe, and in India there have been reports of children harming themselves and in a few cases even committing suicides, The game is named so because sometimes whales beach themselves intentionally and die.
- Blue Whale is not a freely downloadable game, application or software. Children cannot access it on their smartphones through app stores or on social media platforms like Facebook. It is shared among secretive groups on social media networks. The creators seek out their players/victims and send them an invitation to join.
- Although the government has asked companies such as Google, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Microsoft and Yahoo to immediately take down any links leading to the deadly game it is unclear how these companies would make the game inaccessible.
- Also, it is now available under different names such as A Silent House, A Sea of Whales and /Wake Me Up at 4:20 AM. Alternatively, there could be other similar games available as well.
- Tweens and teens (i.e. 12-19 years) the most vulnerable group of Social Media, are most prone to Blue Whale Challenge.
- Most child psychologists say when a child tends to stay by himself/herself, stops interacting with family and friends, often talks about running away from home or even death, or changes eating and/or sleeping habits he must be immediately given special attention.

**Here are a few tips on how you can keep your child safe online:**

- 1) Having correct information about an issue is extremely important. The media reports on this issue do not make it clear that the role of this game/challenge in the recent cases of suicide has not been verified yet. Your child probably knows about the Blue Whale Challenge because of the media frenzy around this issue. Having said that, due to the uncertainty around this issue, there is a need to take certain measures to inform children and interact with them to avoid any mishaps.
- 2) Make sure that your child has access to age appropriate online sites which do not promote unethical behavior or violence.
- 3) Always ensure that your child accesses internet from a computer placed in the family space.
- 4) Talk to your child more often. Explore the online world together and engage in interesting activities demonstrating ethical and safe online behavior.
- 5) Use parental controls on all the devices used by your child. Monitor the screen time and keep an eye on his/her online activities.
- 6) Be a role model to your child. Be conscious of your own online activities.
- 7) Talk to other parents, share concerns if any and discuss best ways to help your children.
- 8) Keep yourself updated with recent internet phenomena.
- 9) Observe your child's behavior closely. Be alert to any unusual changes like moodiness, less or no communication, lack of interest in studies and falling grades. If you notice any such changes, closely monitor his/her online activities, talk to school authorities or consult a child psychologist.
- 10) If you find out that your child is already playing the Blue Whale Challenge, immediately stop him/her from using the internet from any devices.
- 11) Inform your local police authority about what has happened and seek their advice on the next safety measures.

**Our children are precious. Let us be aware, make them aware and help them be SAFE!**

Thanks & Regards,

**Ms. Meenu Goswami**  
**Principal**