

BY EMAIL



Haryana Government
Secretariat for Information Technology

हरियाणा सरकार
सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी सचिवालय

Subject : Hon'ble Supreme Court Order.

Will the Additional Chief Secretary to Government Haryana/ Principal Secretary to Government Haryana, Education, Technical Education, Skill Development & Industrial Training Departments kindly refer to this office letter no. Admn/61/1SIT/ 6125 dated 18.01.2018 on the subject cited above?

Enclosed please find herewith a copy of advisory prepared by the Electronics & Information Technology Department on the basis of different media reports and other States advisories for information and necessary action.

Sr. Administrative Officer
for Principal Secretary to Government Haryana,
Electronics & Information Technology Department.

To ✓ Additional Chief Secretary to Government Haryana/ Principal Secretary to Government Haryana, Education, Technical Education and Skill Development & Industrial Training Departments. *Higher Education*

U.O. No. Admn/61/1SIT/ 6210

Chandigarh dated, the 12.02.2018

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ADVISORY

Blue Whale Game and similar games (What Parents/Teachers need to know?)

1. What is Blue Whale Challenge why should parents be concerned about this game?

- I. The Blue whale challenge is an online game. The game is named so because sometimes whales beach themselves intentionally and die.
- II. In this game, an online administrator assigns tasks to its participants. The participants are given a period of 50 days to complete each task. The players are expected to take photos of them undertaking the challenge and upload them as proof for the curator's approval. The last challenge is to commit suicide. Players of this game cannot stop playing because they are blackmailed and cyber bullied into completing the game.
- III. This 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 suicide, which are allegedly linked to Blue Whale Challenge.

2. Where can children access this game?

Blue Whale is not a freely downloadable game, application or software children cannot access it on their smart phone through app store or on social media platforms like face book. It is shared among secretive groups on social media network. The creators seek out their players/victims and send them an invitation to join.

3. What kind of challenges do the players face in this game?

Some of the challenges in this game are listed below. It may not be a standard list of challenges and it is possible that curators of the game may come up with new ones.

- I. Carve with a razor "f57" on your hand; send a photo to the curator.
- II. Wake up at 4.20 a.m. and watch psychedelic and scary videos that curator sends you.
- III. Cut your arm with a razor along your veins, but not too deep, only 3 cuts, send a photo to the curator.
- IV. Draw a whale on a sheet of paper, send a photo to curator.
- V. If you are ready to "become a whale", carve "YES" on your leg. If not, cut yourself many times (punish yourself).
- VI. Task with a cipher.

- VII. Carve "f40" on your hand, send a photo to curator.
- VIII. You have to overcome your fear.
- IX. Wake up at 4:20 a.m. and go to a roof (the higher the better)
- X. Carve a whale on your hand with a razor, send a photo to curator.
- XI. Watch psychedelic and horror videos all day.
- XII. Listen to music that "they" (curators) send you.
- XIII. Cut your lip.
- XIV. Poke your hand with a needle many times
- XV. Do something painful to yourself, make yourself sick.
- XVI. Go to the highest roof you can find, stand on the edge for some time.
- XVII. Go to a bridge, stand on the edge.
- XVIII. Climb up a crane or at least try to do it
- XIX. The curator checks if you are trustworthy.
- XX. Have a talk "with a whale" (with another player like you or with a curator) in Skype.
- XXI. Go to a roof and sit on the edge with your legs dangling.
- XXII. The curator tells you the date of your death and you have to accept it.
- XXIII. Wake up at 4:20 a.m. and go to rails (visit any railroad that you can find).
- XXIV. Don't talk to anyone all day.
- XXV. Every day you wake up at 4:20 a.m
- XXVI. Watch horror videos
- XXVII. Listen to music that "they" send you
- XXVIII. Make 1 cut on your body per day
- XXIX. Jump off a high building. Take your life.

4. The authorities have directed internet companies to ban the game. Should parents still be concerned?

- I. Although the competent the authority has asked companies such as Google; Facebook; WhatsApp, Instagram, Microsoft and Yahoo to immediately take down any link leading to the deadly game, it is unclear how these companies would make the game inaccessible. It is a social media phenomenon where conversation about this takes place secretly in closed social media groups. You can only be part of the game if an administrator contacts you and enlists you as a potential whale, or candidate.
- II. Also, it is now available under different names.
- III. Alternatively, there could be other similar games available as well.

5. Which age group is most prone to participating in this game?

Tweens and teen (i.e 08-19 years) the most vulnerable group of Social Media, are most prone to blue Whale Challenge.

6. What are the signs in teens that might indicate their inclination towards this game?

Most child psychologists say when a child tends to stay by himself/herself, stop interacting with family and friends, often talks about running away from home or even death, or changes eating and/or sleeping habits must be immediately given towards participating in this online game.

7. How can parents prevent their children from participating in such deadly online games or intervene?

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

- I. 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.
- II. Make sure that your child has access to age appropriate online sites which do not promote unethical behaviour or violence.
- III. Always ensure that your child accesses internet from a computer placed in the family space.
- IV. Talk to your child more often. Explore the online world together and engage in interesting activities demonstrating and safe online behaviour.
- V. Use parental control on all the devices used by your child. Monitor the screen time and keep an eye on his/her online activities.
- VI. Be a role model to your child. Be conscious of your own online activities.
- VII. Talk to other parents, share concerns if any and discuss best ways to help your children.
- VIII. Keep yourself updated with recent internet phenomena.
- IX. Observe your child behaviour 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.
- X. If you find out that your child is already playing the blue whale Challenge, immediately stop him/her from using the internet from any device.

- XI. Inform your local police authority about what has happened and seek their advice on the next safety measures.

8. How can teachers help?

- I. Teachers need to keep an eye on falling grades and social behaviour of the students.
- II. They need to monitor the behaviour of each and every child.
- III. They should look for anti-social behaviour, they should personally talk to such children who don't interact with the other children much or are aloof.
- IV. If they observed something that may seem suspicious or alarming, they should inform the school authorities immediately.
- V. Teachers should also ensure that children do not use any gadgets during school hours.
- VI. They should ensure that children are sensitized about the pros and cons of the internet from time to time.