

**GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
(HEALTH -III BRANCH)**

To

**All the Principals/ Head of Institutions of
Medical/ Dental/ Ayurvedic/ Nursing/ Homeopathy/
Physiotherapy Colleges/ Institutions,
State of Punjab.**

Memo No. 11/152/2017-3HBIII/ 3426

Dated, Chandigarh the: 18/09/2017.

Subject : Advisory on Protection of Children from "Blue Whale Game".

Your kind attention is invited on the above caption subject.

2. Government of Punjab has prepared an Advisory regarding protection of Children/ students from the said "Blue Whale Game". It has strongly been felt that there is an urgent need to safeguard children/ students from this online Internet menace. A copy of the Advisory issued by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India is enclosed for wide circulation in all the aforesaid institutions under Department of Medical Education and Research, Government of Punjab.

3. It is requested that this Advisory may please be circulated to all students as well as Faculty of the College/ Institute. Such a horrendous menace can be tackled only when we, both individually and jointly, take it head on.

Secretary, Medical Education & Research.

Endst. No. 11/152/2017-3HBIII/ 3427-29.

Dated : 18/09/2017.

Copy forwarded to following for information and necessary action :

1. Director, Research and Medical Education, Punjab, Mohali.
2. Vice Chancellor, Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot.
3. Vice Chancellor, Guru Ravi Dass Ayurved University, Hoshiarpur.

Secretary, Medical Education & Research.

Endst. No. 11/152/2017-3HBIII/ 3430.

Dated : 18/09/2017.

Copy forwarded to PS to MERM for kind information of Hon'ble Medical Education and Research Minister.

Secretary, Medical Education & Research.

Advisory on Protection of Children from "Blue Whale Game"

A) Background

The Blue Whale Game also known as "Blue Whale Challenge", is an internet game. This game is spreading in many countries at a very fast speed. The game allegedly consists of a series of tasks assigned to players by administrators during a 50-days time period, with the final challenge requires the player to commit suicide. The term "Blue Whale" supposedly comes from the phenomenon of beached whales, which is linked to suicide.

The known/ available details of Blue Whale Game:

- The game allegedly consists of a series of tasks assigned to players by administrators during a 50-days time period, with the final challenge requires the player to commit suicide.
- Once a player has been accepted by the administrator, he is allegedly assigned first of 50 daily-challenges. These challenges can be anything like: watching unsettling videos at 4:20 am, listening to a certain song repeatedly, cutting words or whale symbol into the skin etc.
- Every time the player is done with a particular task he has to send a photograph or video proof of the completion to the administrator.
- As mentioned earlier, finally the player is asked to commit suicide which tantamounts to abetment to suicide.

B) Steps taken by the Government of India to block usage of Blue whale

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has written to major technology firms, including Facebook India, Google India, Instagram, Microsoft India, WhatsApp and Yahoo! India, to remove links of such games from their platforms.

C) Technical Limitations for blocking use of Blue Whale game.

- Government of India has asked tech giants like Google, and social media players like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other to delete all Blue Whale links from their platform.

- Since this game is introduced with a new hash tag every time to every user, the tech giants are also finding it tough and near impossible to block the contents related to this game as the tech giants do not exercise full control over the content hosted by the designers of this game.
- As Blue Whale is not a app available for download and also there is no website, therefore, it is not possible to block at the level of APNIC (Asia Pacific Network Information Centre), Bengaluru.
- This is a game that happens on the basis of a one-on-one interaction between the curator (Game developers) and the player.
- The conversation may happen anywhere, on any social media platform or via messages and no one will even get to know about it. Blue Whale game isn't available on any open platform.
- The curator and the player use certain 'code' hashtags to find each other. Even if these hastags are blocked, the curators can create and develop new hastags, therefore it is not possible to block such hastags used in this game.

D) A few State Governments have taken following steps till now:

- Odisha (Police Department) has circulated guidelines in all their SSPs/DCPs for checking the menace of online "Blue Whale Challenge Game". The guidelines to field police officers include
 1. Convening of meeting with Principals/ Head of Schools & Colleges and appraise them the dangers associated with the lethal online game "The Blue Whale Challenge".
 2. Immediately respond to reports/ incidents associated with lethal game.
 3. Taking immediate steps in identifying the links/ mobile based applications containing Blue Whale challenge game and furnish the same to CID branch for taking prompt steps in removing these steps from internet.
 4. Requesting all Educational institutes to convene Parents-Teachers meeting to sensitize the parents and make awareness campaign among the students in their educational institutions.
 5. Frequent checking of cyber cafes and their computer systems for availability of any links/ websites pertaining to such online games and take immediate steps in removing these links & formatting of those computer systems.

6. Issuance of advisories/ guidelines for parents and teachers.

On the similar lines; advisories have been issued by Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Government of Uttar Pradesh, MHRD GoI etc. to Educational Institutes, Field Police officials, other concerned officials etc.

E) Advisory to all Medical/ Dental/ Ayurvedic/ Nursing/ Homoeopathy/ Physiotherapy and other Institutions related to Medical Education in Punjab.

1. There is an urgent need to safeguard children/ students of the State of Punjab from this online Internet menace.
2. A copy of the Advisory issued by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India is enclosed for wide circulation in all the aforesaid institutions under Department of Medical Education and Research, Government of Punjab. It is requested that this Advisory may please be circulated to all students as well as Faculty of the respective institute.
3. Such a horrendous menace can be tackled only when we, both individually and jointly, take it head on.

Advisory Issued by Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MEITY, GoI)

ADVISORY ON "BLUE WHALE CHALLENGE GAME"

Blue whale game (The suicide game) is abetment to suicide. It is understood through various internet reports that it is shared among secretive groups on social media networks. The creators seek out their players/victims who are in depression and send them an invitation to join. The basis of the challenge is that an anonymous "group administrator," otherwise known as "the curator," hands out 50 tasks to selected "players" that must be completed, documented and posted during a 50-day period. Players of the challenge can't stop playing once they've started; they are blackmailed and cyber bullied into completing the "game".

Look out for following Signs and symptoms:

- Becoming withdrawn from friends and family
- Persistent low mood and unhappiness
- Child seems to be worried that stops him from carrying out day to day tasks
- Sudden outbursts of anger directed at themselves or others
- Loss of interest in activities that they used to enjoy
- Visible marks like deep cuts or wounds on any part of the body of the child.

How to protect your child from this game:

- Check in with your child, ask how things are going. Ask if there have been things stressing them, or anything that has them worried. If your child is talking about any level of distress, do not hesitate to ask them about changes in mental health.
- Unless there is reason to believe your child already knows of or has played the game, don't discuss about the Blue Whale game. By doing so, you increase the chance that your child will search for it on their own.
- Monitor your children's online and social media activity to ensure they are not engaging with this game.
- Keep your eyes open for:

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- Unusually secretive behaviour, mostly related to their online activity
- A sudden increase in the time they spend online, especially social media
- They seem to change screens on their device when approached
- They become withdrawn or angry, after using the internet or sending text messages
- Their device suddenly has many new phone numbers and email contacts
- Install a good cyber/mobile parenting software which helps them in monitoring your children.
- Parents should take reports from child counsellor present in the school at regular intervals.
- If you fear your child may be at risk, get professional help right away.
- Remind your child that you are there and will support them as they face life challenges.
- For further information, You may visit the following URLs :
 - <http://ncpcr.gov.in/showfile.php?lang=1&level=1&sublinkid=1267&lid=1499> (link is external)
 - <http://infosecawareness.in/Know-About-Blue-Whale-Suicide-Game> (link is external)
 - http://unicef.in/Uploads/Publications/Resources/pub_doc148.pdf png-image0 bytes
 - <http://goapolice.gov.in/documents/adv.pdf> png-image0 bytes
 - http://meghalaya.gov.in/megcms/sites/default/files/press_release/Press%20Release_0.pdf png-image0 bytes