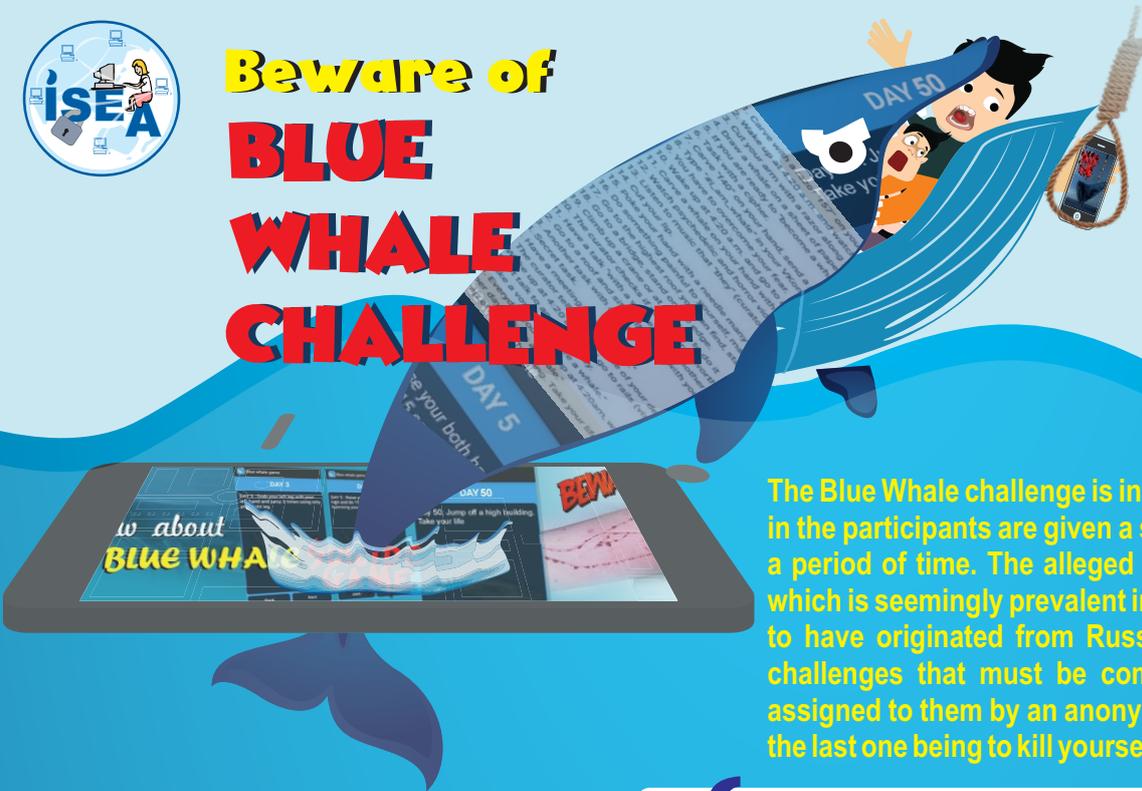




Beware of **BLUE WHALE CHALLENGE**



The Blue Whale challenge is internet/social media game where in the participants are given a series of tasks to complete over a period of time. The alleged final task is suicide. The game which is seemingly prevalent in many parts of the world is said to have originated from Russia. The game is a series of 50 challenges that must be completed over 50 days that are assigned to them by an anonymous group administrator, with the last one being to kill yourself.

Games are a great way to relax and have fun, but it is important to be careful about what you share online and keep yourself safe.

Online gaming is a fun and social way to spend time and to connect with others, encouraging teamwork and developing skills. Children see the online gaming world as a virtual playground. But it's important to understand the risks and know how to handle certain situations.

Tips for the Children

- Understand that online/mobile games are played for fun and entertainment.
- Select those types of games for enjoyment and making sure they are appropriate for your age.
- Some online games are abusing the fear around the challenge to encourage others to self-harm and carry out various dares and post the results online under the guise of some game challenge. Stop playing such games and inform your parents/ elders.
- Children should understand the pain their parents will go through if they hurt themselves.
- Play any game for limited time period, only look for games that are educational and stimulating.
- Be aware of risks involved in some games which involve some form of player interaction, multiplayer gaming, or player-generated content that children can upload and download.
- Children should be aware that some games encourage players to buy extra elements during the game without realizing at the beginning of the games.
- Children may find themselves either bullying or being bullied. Avoid those games and inform your elders.
- Most online games offer lots of free giveaways and downloads that are full of spyware and malware and will crash your computer sooner or later.
- All Internet-enabled devices need to be kept up to date to protect them from malware and other threats. Security protections are built in and updated on a regular basis. Take time to make sure all the mobile devices in your house have the latest protections.
- A strong password should be at least 12 characters long with alpha numeric special characters (think about strong and easy to remember passwords which are hard to guess.)
- Learn how to block and/or report another player if they are making you uncomfortable. Keep a record of what the other player said, but do not engage them.
- Never reveal your real name, location, gender, age, or any other personal information. Keep your user name vague and use an avatar rather than an actual picture of yourself.
- Do not use voice chat or web-cam while playing online games.
- Always put a time limit on yourself for game playing with the permission from your elders/parents.
- Never accept downloads from strangers. This includes cheat programs that may claim to help you perform better in the game, but really could be carrying malware.
- Do not meet a stranger from your gaming world in person. People are not always who they say they are.
- Never feel pressurized into doing anything to which you feel uncomfortable. If you are feeling worried, cancel the game/chat and speak to an adult you trust.



Safety tips for Parents / Teachers

CHILDREN'S ONLINE GAMING

One of the most important duty that a parent has is to keep their kids safe, basically protect them from any kind of danger online or offline. A parent should be able to find out about the various dangers that a child can face and then find out what to do to protect them from those dangers.

- Keep a watch on your child's behavior. Check few symptoms like becoming withdrawn from friends and family, persistent low mood and unhappiness, tearfulness and irritability, worries that stop them 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, problems in eating or sleeping.
- One of the best things that you can do to keep your kids safe while playing online games is for you to participate. Spend your time with your children and joining them in some of their games to find out just why they find them such fun and also to keep their gaming experience healthy. Find out what sort of games your children enjoy.
- Discuss with children who they play with online, who they meet and talk to, and what kind of language is being used in live chat. Make sure your child knows that many of the gaming sites often have ways of reporting abusive chat and excluding anti-social players. You can teach your child about what they should do if they come across cyber bullies.
- Especially for younger children, change the settings on your tablet or smartphone to 'airplane' mode so that they can play the game offline without making accidental purchases or connecting with someone they don't know
- Teach your children to protect themselves – remind them not to share personal information and to keep gaming friends in the game only rather than adding them to their other social networks.
- Read each game's advice for parents and play the game yourself to help you understand more about how the game your child is playing works and its appropriateness.
- Make sure your child knows how to block abusive comments and report content that worries them.
- Teach them to respect others online and think about comments before they post them.
- Create the trust and make sure your child knows they can come to you if they're upset by something they have seen online, tell them you trust them to do the right thing rather than over monitoring their internet use.
- If your child comes to you with an issue, stay calm and listen without judging them and don't threaten to take away their devices.
- Talk to them about how much time they spend online and make sure this is balanced against other activities.
- Advise children that some apps have gained a reputation for being potentially risky for children because of the types of technology they use and the types of communities that have formed around them.
- Put yourself in control make use of the parental controls on your house broadband and any internet-enabled devices, including your child's mobile phone.



Tips for Schools

- Ensure that children do not bring and use any gadgets during school hours.
- Ensure that children are sensitized about the pros and cons of the internet from time to time.
- Teachers need to keep an eye on falling grades and social behaviour of the students.
- Monitor the behaviour of each and every child.
- Look for anti-social behaviour and talk to such children who don't interact with other children or are aloof.
- Anything suspicious or alarming, inform the school authorities immediately.
- Teach good net etiquette and ethics.
- Create awareness on cyber safety and security for children by conducting workshops.

Watch out for signs of depression and suicidal tendencies:

- Feeling low most of the time
- Withdrawal from favourite activities
- Fear, anxiety, despair
- Addiction to social media
- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability
- Aggression
- Lethargy
- Sluggishness
- Tiredness

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