THE DEAN TRUST
Blacklow Brow School

Knowsley City Learning Centres

Online Safety Newsletter Nov 2020

Fortnite

Fortnite continues to be very popular with lots of young people. **It is rated PEGI 12 for frequent mild violence which means it is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age.** It is also important to bear in mind that when rating games, PEGI do not take into consideration the chat features of a game which Fortnite does include.

What is Fortnite?

There are different versions of Fortnite, including a free-to-play Battle Royale game (although money can be spent within the game) where up to 100 players compete against each other. The aim is to battle against each other to be the last player standing!

What do I need to be aware of?

Chatting to strangers and inappropriate language:
Fortnite contains voice and text chat. Due to the nature of the game, your child may be chatting to strangers and may hear inappropriate language. Ensure your child knows how to report players for any inappropriate behaviour: https://www.epicgames.com/help/en-US/fortnite-c75/battle-royale-c93/how-do-i-report-bad-player-behavior-in-fortnite-a3276.

In app purchases:
All users can purchase V-Bucks directly through the game. This currency can be used to purchase items in the Fortnite store so make sure you don't store your payment details within the game/device and restrict purchases. More information about what in-game purchases are can be found here: https://pegi.info/page/game-purchases

Parental Controls

Fortnite includes a number of parental controls to help you make it a safer environment for your child including disabling voice chat, filtering language and setting privacy settings. Find out more about parental controls here: https://www.epicgames.com/fortnite/en-US/parental-controls. Also, remember to set up age appropriate parental controls on the device your child is playing on as well.

We always recommend playing the game with your child so you can see what they are playing and monitor the sort of chat that they are listening to/contributing to. Remind your child that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if they have any concerns.

Further information

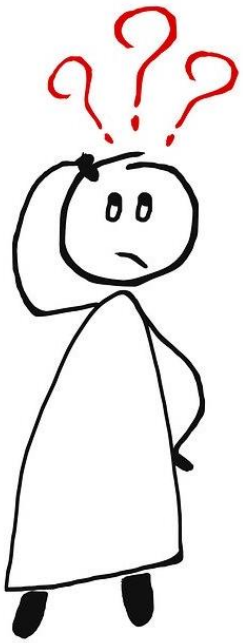
For further information about Fortnite, follow these links:

- https://parentzone.org.uk/article/fortnite-everything-you-need-know-about-online-game
- https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/fortnite-battle-royale/

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 1.11.20.

Age Ratings Do you check?

Video games



Video games are rated using the PEGI system, PEGI rates games across 5 different age groups, these are 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18. So if a game is rated as 16, it means that the game is **not suitable** for those under the age of 16. **The PEGI rating considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty.** (Source: https://pegi.info/) In addition, PEGI rate the game based on the features of the game and provide icons to easily identify what type of content is within the game, for example drugs, bad language or gambling. A full description of each 'content descriptor' is available here: https://pegi.info/what-do-the-labels-mean.

Apps/Social Media

Apps and Social media platforms are all age rated so you can check whether your child should be using them. Age ratings are clearly labeled within the App store and Play store but it is important to be aware that it can be the developer that sets the age rating so remember to review the app yourself.

What can I do?

Age ratings are there to protect your child and ensure that your child is only playing games suitable to their age and reduce any potential risks. Talk to your child about why games and apps have an age rating and set clear ground rules. In addition:

- Use parental controls to help protect your child.
- Use https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews to see their reviews on lots of different apps.
- You can download the PEGI app so you can quickly search for games to find out what age they are suitable for. https://pegi.info/app
- Use https://www.taminggaming.com/home to find suitable games for your child to play.

Further guidance

- https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/age-content-ratings-apps-games/
  https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming-whats-appropriate-for-your-child/

How to protect your child's personal information

CEOP and Parent Zone have produced this article about personal information and how you can help your child protect their personal information and recognise the risks.

https://parentinfo.org/article/your-child-s-personal-information-and-how-to-protect-it-online-primary

TikTok

Childnet have produced an updated guide to using TikTok and the parental controls available.

https://www.childnet.com/blog/tiktok-an-updated-guide-for-parents-and-carers

Supporting children and young people with SEND online

Internet Matters have produced this document which outlines some advice for parents and carers to help children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) stay safe online.

https://www.internetmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Internet-Matters-Guide-supporting-children-with-send-safer-gaming-online.pdf

Further advice can also be found here:

https://www.internetmatters.org/inclusive-digital-safety/advice-for-parents-and-carers/supporting-children-with-send/connecting-and-sharing-online/

Cyberbullying/Chatting online

If it's unacceptable offline then it's unacceptable online.

It's important to talk to your child about how they behave online, if they choose to use technology to call somebody names or spread hurtful rumours then they are involved in online bullying. Talk to your child, ask them how they would feel if the same was said or done to them?

What are your children saying online?

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your children about how they are speaking to others online. Childnet have some great advice in response to two key questions your child might ask:

What makes a good friend online?
https://www.childnet.com/young-people/primary/get-answers/what-makes-a-good-online-friend

What should I do if someone online is mean to me?
https://www.childnet.com/young-people/primary/get-answers/what-should-i-do-if-someone-online-is-mean-to-me/

What can I do if my child is getting bullied?

Explain to them what to do if somebody is mean to them online, explain that they shouldn't respond to them. Show them how to use reporting tools and emphasise they should always talk to a trusted adult. NSPCC have listed their tips on how to cope and what you should do: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/#support

Further information

There is a lot of information available online containing lots of advice and where to seek additional support.

- https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.html
- https://respectme.org.uk/adults/online-bullying/
- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/
- *https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/online-bullying/*
- https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/cyberbullying

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