

May 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has come to our attention that children in our school as young as 4 are playing on games such as Fornite and Roblox.

Fornite has a PEGI rating of 12.

Roblox is a collection of games aimed at children aged 8 years and older.

At school, we are actively encouraging our children not to play games such as this.

Please find attached information taken from www.saferinternet.org.uk

As a result of this children are coming to school affected by what they are seeing. Please do consider the impact 12/15/18-rated material has on young children who do not understand the content and cannot cope with the feelings or images they are seeing.

While some games have educational content, many of the most popular games unfortunately emphasis negative themes and promote:

- the killing of people or animals
- the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol
- criminal behaviour, disrespect for authority and the law
- sexual exploitation and violence toward women
- racial, sexual, and gender stereotypes
- foul language, obscenities, and obscene gestures

It is important that our children are allowed to develop their understanding but please remember "you cannot un see something inappropriate or disturbing once you have seen it".

Games Rating Authority: <https://videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/pegi-info.html>

The Games Rating Authority is committed to providing as much helpful information as they can about video game ratings. They can't tell you how good, bad or indifferent a video game might be, but they will supply detailed content information (the amount and type of violence, bad language, sex, etc, in a game), so that you can be absolutely certain you are making the correct purchasing decision. Use the 'search for games' function to find out more information about a particular game, or check out the [Spotlight rating videos](#) on YouTube.

Family Gamer TV You Tube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FamilyGamerTV/videos>

This is an informative site which also shows love game play. Click on the magnifying glass to search for games/DVDs

Common Sense Media also provides helpful guidance: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/game-reviews>

PEGI website: <https://pegi.info/page/pegi-age-ratings> This is a database which can be searched to find more information about a game and rating.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Bayes and Mrs Turner

What is Fortnite?

Fortnite is an online game, which includes Battle Royale, where players do not have to pay to play. In Battle Royale, 100 players compete against each other to be the last person standing in player vs player (PVP) combat.

Users play against people of different ages from across the world, and can talk and interact with each other as they play through the in-game chat feature.

What age rating is Fortnite?

Fortnite has a PEGI rating of 12, PEGI have said this is due to the: *'frequent scenes of mild violence. It is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age'*.

This PEGI rating only takes into account the content in the game and not the contact element, where players may be exposed to swearing and offensive language from strangers, either through audio or on-screen text chat.

What do I need to know?

You need to create an account

In order to play Fortnite you have to create an account. To create this account you need to provide an email address (which you will have to verify) and display/user name. However you are not asked your age in order to create an account.

You are playing against other players

As Fortnite is an online game you will play against players of different ages from across the world. You cannot turn the in game chats off or choose who you play against.

You can make in game purchases

Although Battle Royale is free to play, other aspects of the game are not. There are packs which give you different access to the full game and extensions, bonuses and weapons. These start at £34.99 and go up to £119.99. The game does ask players to make additional in-game purchases whilst playing, though these are not required to play the game.

There is animated violence

Fortnite does feature violence when players are in combat with each other, the animation of the game is very cartoonish, and the violence isn't bloody or gory. However, it is worth noting that the aim of Fortnite is to defeat other players by fighting against them.

Where you can play

Fortnite is currently available on PC, Mac, PlayStation and Xbox , and will soon be available on IOS (apple products). It is downloadable from the Fortnite website, this download gives access to both the free and paid for versions of the game.

Our advice

- Have an open and honest conversation with your child
It's important to involve yourself in your child's online life and a simple and effective way to this is by talking to them about their life online. Try to maintain an open dialogue with your child and find opportunities to talk to them about what they love to do online. Parents can help children access the amazing resources the internet has to offer whilst keeping them safe online at the same time.

Asking your child about how they play Fortnite and what they like about it is a great way to start a conversation.

Our **conversation starters** can help you to have this conversation.

- Play with them

It may seem daunting, but one of the best things that you can do is to engage with the gaming environment and begin to understand what makes Fortnite so attractive to young people, as well as giving yourself an idea of the reporting tools available within the game.

- Know how to make a report

On Fortnite you can report players who are behaving inappropriately by using the in-game feedback tool located in the game Main Menu, **you can also make a report by emailing the creators of Fortnite.**

- See what other people think of Fortnite

Common Sense Media allow parents and young people to give their reviews of games that they have played. They have created a very useful **video guide to Fortnite with footage of the gameplay involved.**

What is Roblox?

Roblox is a gaming platform where multiple players interact and play together online.

The site has a collection of games aimed at 8-18 year olds, however players of all ages can use the site. Roblox is currently available on PC, phone, tablet and Xbox One.

Every game on Roblox is created by users, and there are a wide variety to choose from. These can vary from delivering pizzas, to roaming a kingdom as a medieval knight, to even starring in a fashion show. This variety is one of the reasons that Roblox is so popular with young people.

Key things for parents to be aware of

1. Communication: how users can communicate with others

Whilst the games are aimed at 8-18 year olds, there are no age restrictions. This means both adults and young people can play and communicate with each other on the platform.

All games are multiplayer and include a written chat feature, which is visible to players within each individual game. Users can also make and receive friend requests during gameplay and this means that they can chat to each other outside of the game.

You can read more about the Roblox chat features and the way that these are moderated on the **Roblox community guidelines** and **within their safety features**.

2. Content: what content is available that might not be suitable for children

The Roblox Studio is a section where players use their imagination and skills to create their own games and share these with others. The ability to create and play games can be very appealing to young people who like to create the content they see online.

However, because content is user-generated it can mean that some games might not be appropriate for young children. For example, whilst the graphics are not very life like, some of the games feature weapons and blood.

3. Costs: How children might accidentally run up costs

By creating games, users can earn Robux, the in-game currency. You can also buy Robux in the game. Players can spend money on items, such as membership to the Builders Club. .

If game creators attract players and in-game adverts, they can earn a lot of Robux, which they can convert into real money. To do this, players must be over the age of 13, have paid for Roblox's premium subscription, and have access to a Paypal account. This means that younger players would need to talk to an adult to be able to exchange their Robux for real money.

Top tips for parents

Whatever gaming sites your children use, our advice remains the same. It is important to have a conversation with your child about the sites they use and carry on having open discussions. This will encourage them to come to you with any concerns they may have.

Involve your child in discussions and decisions about online safety and their internet usage. This will help them understand the importance of staying safe whilst having a great time online. It will also help to educate them about how they can keep themselves safe online and know what to do if something goes wrong.

1. Stay engaged and have regular conversations

Show an interest in the games your children are playing. This could be **through having a conversation** about what they like to play or could be through watching them play the game. You could even have a go at playing the games yourself! If children know you have an interest in the game, they may feel more comfortable talking to you about it or coming to you for help if they need it.

2. Help them understand the importance of personal information

Check that your child understands:

- the importance of **keeping their personal information safe**
- that they should speak to an adult straight away if the chat goes from being about the game to meeting up offline, personal information or sending images.

3. Set rules around spending money in games

Have a conversation with your child to make sure they realise that it is possible to spend real money on the game. Make promises that work for your family; perhaps your child will have to ask you for permission before they make an in-game purchase.

If you want more help to create these promises for your family's internet use, **please refer to our family agreement.**

4. Make use of the safety features available

Block and report:

Make sure your child knows how to find and use the report and block functions. Use the **Roblox how to make a report page** to learn how to do this.

Safety settings: Set up the parental controls that are right for your family. You can also disable chat, set up the Parent PIN and use the Account Restrictions within Roblox. **Click here** for more information on how to use the Safety features.

Settings for under 13s:

There are additional safety features for under-13s, so it's worth checking your child's account is registered with the correct age. Players under the age of 13 have a <13 symbol next to their username on the game at all times, however this is not displayed to other players.

5. Encourage them to tell you about concerns

Remind your child that they should come to you if they ever see something inappropriate, mean comments or if anything worries them within the game. If you know how to report this type of content within Roblox, you will be in the best position to help them if they need it.