

Hearsall Community Academy

Online Safety Newsletter: December 2018

What games are your children playing?

Children often ask to play games based on what other children are playing which may mean they ask to play a game that is not always age appropriate for them. Childnet recommend that you talk to other parents first because you may find that actually whilst a lot of children are talking about a game, they're not actually playing it! Childnet also suggest that in order to make an informed decision about whether your child should play a game you should:

- 1) **Research** – what is the PEGI rating for the game? Can people contact your child through the game? Childnet recommend looking at other parent reviews on <https://www.common sense media.org/>.
- 2) **Discuss** – talk to your child to find out why they want to play the game and maybe offer some more age appropriate alternatives.
- 3) **Explain** – Childnet stress how important it is to talk to your child and explain to them why you have deemed a game unsuitable.

(Source: <https://www.childnet.com/blog/answering-parents-online-safety-questions->)

How does your child behave online?

One of the issues we see spilling over into the classroom is friends being unkind to each other whilst playing online. The very nature of online games means that it is very easy to send a nasty message in the heat of the moment and not think about the immediate consequences. **How do you think your child would behave when they lose at their favourite game?** Talk to your children about losing, talk about how they communicate online, sit with them whilst they play their games and review their online conversations to make sure they are being positive digital citizens.

Know your PEGI ratings:

All games within the UK are given a PEGI rating of age 3, 7, 12, 16, or 18. This tells you who the game is suitable for based on the type of content you'll see when playing. Further indicators on the game's packaging explain why it's been given its rating. Find out more information here:

<http://www.askaboutgames.com/pegi-rating/>



What video games are suitable?

Ask About Games have compiled this great list of video games by PEGI age rating so you can find a suitable game to buy based on your child's age:

<http://www.askaboutgames.com/discover-2018s-amazing-video-games-for-your-family/>



Fortnite update

Fortnite is still a big obsession with lots of young people and as a result of this popularity, lots of fake websites now exist offering free V bucks. V bucks are the in-game currency that can be spent within Fortnite to unlock additional content or purchase items.

Some sites have been created to try and obtain personal information such as usernames and passwords and even credit card details all under the pretense that you will receive free V bucks. These websites should not be trusted and it is important you talk to your children about how to spot and avoid scams online.

This article details how to protect your child from potential "Fortnite" Scams:

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-protect-your-kid-from-fortnite-scams>

The T Shirt Rule



Parental Controls

Christmas often means our children receive new technology so when setting up any item, make sure you set up parental controls to help keep your child safe. Parental Controls help you control what your child is able to access on line so by setting up these controls, children are less likely to see things they shouldn't.

Internet Matters have created over 70 parental control 'how-to guides' for major networks (e.g EE), devices (e.g Xbox, iPad) and entertainment providers (e.g. Netflix). These guides provide you with simple step by step instructions and are available here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

Parental Controls are important in order to minimise risks online, but no system is completely effective so ensure your child knows that they can talk to you about anything they see online.



What are you sharing online?

In a recent report, 'Who Knows What About Me' the Children's Commissioner found that:

- Parents share around 71 photos and 29 videos of their child every year on social media.
- By the age of 13, a child's parents will have posted on average 1,300 photos and videos of them to social media.
- Many parents share their photos with strangers: a fifth have public Facebook profiles and over half of parents are Facebook friends with people they do not really know.