Online Safety Newsletter

June 2022

Family Settings

Do you need help managing your children's accounts and devices? You can use Google Family Link or Apple Family Sharing to help you.

Google Family Link

This is a parental control app from Google that lets you:

- See activity reports showing how long they spend on each app.
- Approve or block new app downloads.
- Set screen time limits.
- Find their location (using their device).

You will need to download an app and then decide appropriate settings.

Further information available here: https://families.google.com/familylink

Apple Family Sharing

You can set up Family Sharing in the settings of your device. Family Sharing allows you to:

- Share Apple subscriptions.
- Share purchases from the App Store.
- Approve what children purchase/download.
- Limit screen time.
- Share locations and find devices.

Further information available here: https://www.apple.com/uk/family-sharing/

Minecraft

Check the age ratings: Minecraft is rated by PEGI as 7+ or 12+ depending on which game version you are playing. The App store rate it as 9+ and the Google Play store rate it as 10+.

It is important to remember that when rating games, PEGI do not take into consideration the communication features of a game. Minecraft does include a chat facility, which adds further risks.

Minecraft remains ever popular and can be a great learning tool that is often used in schools to teach planning skills, recreate famous buildings in 3D and coding. Players use building blocks to create their own worlds.

Which mode?

You can choose between Creative or Survival mode - creative mode removes the survival elements of the game (no mobs appearing at night) so may be a more appropriate mode for your child to play (particularly when played in single player mode).

What should I be aware of?

- **Multiplayer –** children can interact with others (including strangers), you can switch this option off within settings or choose to play offline.
- **Chat facility** – you do have the option to switch this off.
- **Block and report players** – if your child is playing with others, make sure they know how to block and report players within the game.
- **Additional purchases –** be aware of in app purchases and the purchase of additional items (skin packs) to support (although not needed) game play.

In addition, protect your child's privacy by using a nickname (don't include their age/birth year) rather than their real name for their profile and chat to your child to make sure that when playing online they know not to share personal information. Also, make sure they know they can talk to you or a trusted adult if anybody or anything is making them feel uncomfortable.

Do not forget to make sure you have set up appropriate parental controls on the device your child is using to play Minecraft as well.

Further information

https://help.minecraft.net/hc/en-us

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into.
Current as of the date released 1.06.22.

Call of Duty

Call of Duty games are predominantly rated 16+ or 18+ by PEGI (https://pegi.info/), which means you should **be over these ages to play** them. Many of the games receive this rating because they contain **bad language and graphic violence**. You should also be aware of in app purchases and in game chat. As with all games, make sure your child is aware of how to block/report other players within the game and that they know to talk to you or another trusted adult if anybody or anything is making them feel uncomfortable.

Call of Duty can be played across a range of devices, such as Xbox and PlayStation.

Further information is available here:
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/parents-guide-call-duty-warzone

Grand Theft Auto (GTA)

GTA is rated 18+ by PEGI (some earlier versions are rated 16+), this is largely because of bad language, violence, glamourisation of crime and the depiction of drugs. **GTA is not suitable for those under this age.**

Grand Theft Auto can be played across a range of devices, such as Xbox and PlayStation.

Grand Theft Auto Online is a multi-player version of the game and is included with Grand Theft Auto 5. Players can play this version alone, or they can invite players to a game, or be involved in games with random players. The settings can be changed so you only play with those on your approved friends list.

What do I need to be aware of?

- Mature content – content can be unsuitable for children (which is why it is rated as 18).
- In game chat – this can be disabled and other players can be muted. This will depend on the device and version.
- In game spending – make sure your bank account details are not linked to the device your child is playing on.

It is important to talk to your child regularly about what they are playing online and make sure that they know that they should always talk to you or another trusted adult if they have any concerns.

What can they play instead?

You can use this database to search for games based on your child's age:
https://www.taminggaming.com/cgi-bin/taminggaming.cgi

Gaming Communities

Have you heard of Gaming Communities? These are online places where players can meet to chat about different games. Parent Zone have published this useful article discussing what they are, the risks and what parents do. You can read the article here:

https://parentzone.org.uk/article/gaming-communities-%E2%80%93-what-you-need-know

Dove Self Esteem

Dove has a whole host of articles, videos and activities on their website as part of their self-esteem project, the aim of which is to boost the self-esteem of young people. The free resources are designed to help you communicate with your child on a variety of subjects including the effects of cyberbullying and social media.

https://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project/help-for-parents.html

Media use and attitudes report 2022

This report from Ofcom looks at media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 3-17. The report shows what children and young people are doing online. It provides an interesting read to help our understanding in how we can support our children and young people further.

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2022