



# **THE BEEDING ONLINE SAFETY BULLETIN**



## **WELCOME TO OUR LATEST ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER!**

You should now have a copy of Vodafone's 'Online Safety Guide For Families' produced in partnership between Parent Zone and Vodafone. The main purpose of the magazine is to provide parents with the latest expert advice to help children develop the life skills and knowledge they need to use the online world safely and with confidence. The magazine has many interesting articles in it for you to read, including how to manage screen time (page 26), the pros and cons of 'sharenting' – sharing pictures and information about your children online (page 14), and how to set privacy and parental controls on apps and online services (pages 41-45).



### **Social Media – Pros and Cons**



Social media is a big part of our day to day lives and when used correctly, can have a positive effect on those concerned. We enjoy reading comments from friends who share good news etc and as a school, we pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about Upper Beeding Primary School.

**How would you feel if you read an offensive or inappropriate comment either about yourself or an incident that involved your child?**

Here are some points about posting comments on any social media platform ...

#### **Tone**

When posting a comment on social media, the tone of content should be appropriate to the audience. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly

If you are upset by an incident that has happened in school regarding your child, then please come in and speak to their class teacher or alternatively, Mrs Linford. We would advise not to share it on social media, particularly if children are involved. Information can be posted in the heat of the moment, but once they are in the public domain, they can cause great upset to those concerned.

#### **Use of images**

Photographs of school events should not be posted on social media as we have children whose image cannot be in the public domain. Any photos we place on our website are covered through our Acceptable User Policy that all parents have signed which covers their child's primary school life, unless we hear otherwise.

## With Christmas coming up, many children will be putting NEW GAMES on their Christmas lists ...



Gaming has come such a long way in a short period of time and we should never lose sight that gaming can be hugely beneficial for children. Games such as Minecraft, used in the right way, build on the creativity of our children and young people and can be very educational. But it goes without saying that there are games out there which are hugely attractive, but are wholly inappropriate.

There are the same concerns about particular games, especially those that are rated 18. Whilst not picking on Grand Theft Auto, it is the one that gets the most mentions closely followed by Call of Duty, and with the newest release of Red Dead Redemption II that has just hit the streets in time for Christmas, it is likely that we may see issues increase.

So what is the problem? Well firstly we have to remember that age ratings on games, whether you buy them in the shops or download from the internet, are not recommendations, they are law. That law (PEGI) is in place in the UK for a good reason, and that is because the content in some games is simply not appropriate for our children, particularly when it is violent and/or sexual in nature.



**Games are not bad**, it's about choosing the right games that are appropriate for the age of our children. Here are some top tips for you to help your child keep safe when playing their games:

1. Do you know the **age ratings** of the games your child plays? With **game boxsets**, look carefully to see what games are included. Look at the age rating, as it is illegal for a shop to sell you content that is rated 18 if they know it is for a child.
2. Have you noticed any **behavioural changes** in your child? The games they are playing could be a factor in this.
3. What games are they playing round their **friend's house**? This is usually one of the most common concerns for parents, so it is worth talking to other parents about this.
4. Have you got **parental settings** set up correctly on the Playstation, Xbox, Wii or whatever device your children are using? This will prevent your children downloading or playing games that are inappropriate for their age. If you are not sure how to do it, have a look on YouTube as there are many videos that walk you through the settings and are easy to follow. For example, you can search YouTube for "How to set up parental controls on Playstation 4."
5. Similarly, if your child is getting on at you to let them play a particular game, go onto YouTube and search the name of the game. There will be lots of 'Let's Plays', which are basically parts of the game that are filmed for others to learn from, as well as for entertainment. These videos are very popular with children and young people to watch or make/upload these videos.
6. Do you know how much **time** your child spends playing games on their devices? **Time is an important factor**. Try to balance online with offline activities. Also, it has been well documented that screentime before bed has a negative effect on sleep patterns for both children and adults. No devices an hour before bedtime is a good rule to keep to. Some devices also have the facility to limit 'play time'.
7. If they're playing online, do you know who they're **talking** to? Adults want to play with other adults, not children, and many won't hold back on their use of choice language. Online gaming can also be a platform for children to be contacted inappropriately.





## **GAME HIGHLIGHT: FORTNITE**

**Fornite** is a popular strategy survival game for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows and Mac. However, not all parents realise that the age restriction is **12+**.

As part of their WakeUpWednesday campaign, National Online Safety has teamed up with MusicAlternative to launch a Fortnite online safety song. Their song encourages parents and carers to "stay switched on" to online dangers when their children are playing Fortnite. You can find it on their Twitter website at:

<https://twitter.com/natonlinesafety/status/1052469311388958720>



### **What is Fortnite?**

Fortnite combines Minecraft resource collecting and building with team based survival shooting games. The main action, in the Save The World mode, is shooting and attacking with melee weapons, but players can also build fortifications and work with teammates to defend survivors from waves of enemy monsters. This combines with exploration and resource gathering to play a little like Minecraft. Although it is just a shooting game, players will develop strategic thinking, forward planning and creative approaches to combat. It teaches a deep amount of collaboration and working together and saving team mates.



### **What is the Age Rating?**

In the UK, the Video Standards council rate Fortnite as PEGI 12 for frequent scenes of mild violence. It is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age. The VSC expand on the PEGI rating by stating that "Violence consists of you using whatever weapons you can find or make to fend off the monsters of the Storm and save the survivors. Damage is dealt by numbers and life bars, and monsters disappear in a purple flash when defeated."



### **Online Players**

Interactions with other players online are not covered by ratings. Although the game is not rated for profanity, its online nature could expose younger players to offensive language from random strangers via the voice or on-screen text chat.

Fortnite is also a game where the sound is crucial (hearing footsteps of other players in particular). This means that players will wear headphones and parents can't always hear what is being said by strangers. Because of this, it is worth setting up your console or PC to have sound coming from the TV, as well as a headset so you can hear what other players are saying to your children from time to time.

The game does push players to make additional in-game purchases, though they're not required to play the game. These mainly focus on new clothes and equipment in the online game. These are elements that don't improve a player's performance but just make them look better.



## Teach the SMART Rules!



**SAFE:** Staying safe online involves being careful and thinking about whether it is safe to give out personal information.

**MEETING:** Meeting up with someone you have contacted in cyberspace can be dangerous. Only do so with your adult's permission and when they can be present.

**ACCEPTING:** Accepting e-mails or opening files from people you don't know can be dangerous – they may contain viruses or nasty messages.

**RELIABLE:** Anyone can put anything on the Internet - remember people can lie and not be who they say they are in chat rooms.

**TELL:** Tell your adult or teacher if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.

## USEFUL LINKS

Created as part of Childnet's work in the UK Safer Internet Centre, the newly published hot topic (October 2018) looks at Digital Wellbeing, giving guidance to parents about the impact that the online world can have on the lives of children and young people.

[https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/digital-wellbeing-%E2%80%93-guidance-parents?fbclid=IwAR1dBrFtyAwZIBJ3bJ\\_r2Wt1z0SNjY4i7dwEU1vOi8oc20WFwsOhNae0kQU](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/digital-wellbeing-%E2%80%93-guidance-parents?fbclid=IwAR1dBrFtyAwZIBJ3bJ_r2Wt1z0SNjY4i7dwEU1vOi8oc20WFwsOhNae0kQU)



Many broadband providers give you access to parental controls (internet filters). These are not a replacement for good education and parental guidance, but can help in some circumstances:

<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls>



Lots of fantastic advice for parents and carers of children of all ages from Childnet. There is also lots of advice and guidance for setting up parental controls on games consoles, advice for mobile phones etc.

<http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>



A huge resource for parents that lets you find out things like age-ratings, advice for particular apps that children are using, minimum ages, content and so much more.

<https://www.common sense media.org/>



One of the most useful resources for parents. Do you need to find out how to set parental controls? Need to see what that game is all about that your child keeps asking you for? How about setting privacy and security settings on social media apps, or just finding out what those apps can do and why they're so popular? YouTube is fantastic for all of this. While you're at it, find out how to use YouTube Safety Mode (it's at the bottom of every YouTube page).

<https://www.youtube.com/> 

If you have any concerns regarding online safety, please talk to us! Contact your child's class teacher, Mrs McCauley (Foundation Stage and KS1 Computing Leader) or Mrs Wellby (KS2 Computing Leader).

