

27:03:24

Dear Parents/Carers,

We know Fortnite is played by young and old alike in their leisure time at home, however, when the repercussions of nasty comments and bad language affect children during their time in school, I feel it is important that everyone perhaps has a little "safety check" on their children's gaming habits, especially coming up to the Easter Holidays.

The age recommendation for Fortnite is 12 and above- if your child is under this age, it is imperative you ensure they are safe and free for online bullying behaviours. The following  three steps will help keep your child safe:

* use parental controls on your gaming device
* turn off the voice feature
* make sure your child knows how to report inappropriate behaviour

Where a child or parent has raised a concern with either myself or their class teacher regarding upsetting online behaviour,  we are advising them to report the matter using step three on how to "make sure your child knows how to report inappropriate behaviour" in the information below.

Kind Regards

Jill Funston.

Principal



**Keep your child safe on Fortnite**

**What is Fortnite?**

* Fortnite is an online video game where players compete to be the last person standing in a post-apocalyptic world. The most popular version is Fortnite: Battle Royale, which sees up to 100 players pitted against each other to stay alive on an island. Players can build and demolish structures, and collect weapons, supplies and armour to help them along the way.
* Players shoot each other using a range of lethal weapons, but the brightly-coloured, cartoon.style graphics and lack of bloodshed mean it doesn’t feel too gory or graphic.
* To play, the age recommendation is **12 and above** – although you don’t have to provide your age when creating an account, meaning younger children can unfortunately still access the game.
* Fortnite: Battle Royale is **free to download** on PC/Mac, Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch, Android and iOS devices (Apple phones and tablets).

**What are the concerns?**

You may have seen news reports or heard concerns raised about:

* **Communication between players:** they can talk to each other via messaging or a headset and microphone. Children can speak to people they know but could speak to strangers or be at risk of cyber-bullying. It is the communication between friends and acquaintances that is causing the most issues within school, name calling and derogatory comments regarding players skill and ability is spilling over into school the next day causing upset for some pupils.
* **In-app purchases:** children can build up large bills on their parents’ accounts by buying cosmetic items, like outfits for their character, and better-looking weapons (‘skins’)
* **The game’s addictive nature:** there have been stories of children staying up all night to play, and falling asleep in lessons. Some people say this is down to the communal feel of the game – you can play with your friends – and because it’s different every time you play

**3 steps to take to keep your child safe**

**1. Use the parental controls on your gaming device**

* Most devices allow you to **set time limits** on game play, **set age limits** for content, and **restrict in-app purchases**. Go to [Ask About Games](http://www.askaboutgames.com/advice/parental-controls) for links to detailed instructions on your child’s device – it covers PlayStation, Xbox, Apple and Android phones, and Nintendo Switch
* Battles in Fortnite last around 20 minutes, so make use of this natural stopping point when limiting your child’s screen time. Set a limit in terms of matches rather than hours and minutes, or set time limits in 20-minute increments

**2. Turn off the voice chat feature**

Speak to your child to make sure they understand how to use this feature safely. Encourage them to follow the steps below if they meet someone who is offensive or inappropriate in the game.

To **disable the in-game voice chat function**:

* Select the menu icon, then 'Settings'
* Select the ‘audio’ tab (it's represented by a speaker icon)
* Tap the arrows next to ‘voice chat'

To **‘mute’ individual players**:

* Pause the game
* Hover over the player you wish to mute and select the mute button (a loudspeaker icon)

**3. Make sure your child knows how to report inappropriate behaviour**

To **report** players who make your child feel uncomfortable:

* Select the menu icon, then ‘Reporting/feedback’
* On the 'Feedback type' tab, select 'Report player'
* Select the reason you want to report the player
* On the ‘Select player' tab, select the name of the player you want to report
* On the 'Submit' tab, select 'Accept' to send the report
* Select 'Send report'

**What else can I do?**

* Download and play the game to help you understand it
* Take a look at the other parental controls explained on the Epic Games website: <https://bit.ly/2o3YnaC>
* Talk to your child about what they’re doing online, and make sure they know they can talk to you about anything that has upset them. See more guidance from the NSPCC on how to do this here: <https://bit.ly/1HpjYgO>
* Check your bank statements and gaming system account balance regularly for in-app purchases you’re not happy with, and to make sure your child isn’t getting around any passwords you’ve set up

J Funston

Principal