North Oxfordshire Academy
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E-Safety Guidance for Parents

It is important to encourage a healthy lifestyle with regard to the use of technology, and teach students about the risks of exposure to inappropriate content or too much time in front of a screen. It is really important to ensure children stay safe in their use of technology, at home as well as in the classroom.

Introduction

All children use computers at school, at home or in places like libraries and clubs, and schools are keen to use the benefits of the internet to support children's learning. The internet provides children with excellent opportunities for learning and communicating with friends. But sometimes, children don't realise that they can be as much at risk online as they are in the real world, and many parents feel they don't know enough about the internet to protect their children from the risks.

How children use the internet

At school and at home, your child may use the internet to:

- find out information
- send messages to friends through email and instant messaging like Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat and Discord
- talk to people online in chat-rooms, blogs and forums
- share information about themselves and talk to people on social networking sites like Facebook, Xbox Live or PS4
- Share files and download music, games and film.

What we do as a school

School computer systems are designed to protect your child from many of these risks by blocking children's access to unsuitable websites and supervising computer use in the classroom.

Your child will be informed of internet safety and you or your child will be asked to sign an acceptable use agreement that sets out the rules your child must follow when using school computers.

What you can do

Faced with all these risks, parents may be tempted to just stop their children from using the computer, but most children will be able to access the internet in other places or even on their mobile phone.

The best thing to do is to teach your child how to keep themselves safe online and take the following action yourself;

- Talk to your child about the dangers of using the internet, show an interest in what they are doing and agree the 'golden rules'.
- Let your child know how important it is to tell you about any suspicious contacts or incidents of cyber bullying so you can take action.
- Teach your child the basic rules of "netiquette", behaving responsibly on the internet and keeping messages polite.
- Let them know what kind of sites they can and can't visit and try to encourage them to only use regulated chat rooms and social networking sites that are designed for their age group.
- Take an interest in their online activities; talk to them about what they are doing and who they are talking to.
- contact your internet service provider (for example; BT, Virgin etc) for advice on family security settings and parental controls that can filter internet content, block viruses or spam email to your computer or limit access to certain websites.
- If your child accidently visits an adult website or opens an unsuitable attachment, don't over-react; this may make them less likely to tell you the next time.

Golden rules

Just as you have rules to keep your child safe in the real world such as letting you know where they are going, who they'll be with and what time they should come home, it's a good idea to have similar rules about using the internet.

To make sure they stay safe online, you should teach your child:

- not to give out personal details online, such as their name, address or school, or anyone else's personal details
- not to upload photographs or information onto social networking sites unless you agree.
- not to arrange to meet people they have only met online.
- not to open attachments to emails unless they know and trust the person who sent it.
- not to buy anything off the internet without your permission.
- to only use a webcam with people they know and trust.
- to tell you if they receive any messages or material that makes them feel uncomfortable or makes them feel frightened.

Pros and Cons of Online Chat applications

Pros

- Anonymity
- The chance to meet new people with different views
- The opportunity to get perspectives from around the world
- Easy to find people based on your age, gender, interests, and goals (whether you're looking for social support or dating)
- Free and easy to use
- Offers unbiased opinions

When you speak to someone in a chat room, you may have things in common, but you don't know the person intimately like you do your friends and family. While this might sound like a drawback, it can be a benefit as well, as you can sometimes get a better perspective from a stranger than you can from someone who knows you well. Those who love you may be biased in your favour, and they might not be able to see your situation objectively.

Cons

- You can't be sure other people are being honest or that they are who they say they are
- If you are feeling vulnerable, people online might try to take advantage of you
- Building relationships online can result in your spending less time with friends and family

While most people on online forums genuinely want to help, we can't know someone's true motivation. For example, we are all aware of the problem of online bullying. Additionally, there are people who pretend to be someone else to gain others' trust. Remember not to give too much identifying information online until you are comfortable with someone. If someone is making you feel uncomfortable, you should consider ending the chat.

Useful websites

The following websites provide information for parents and children on how to stay safe online and how to report concerns. The Internet Watch Foundation also allows parents to report illegal or concerning websites.

Think U Know

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Childnet

www.childnet-int.org

Internet Watch Foundation

www.iwf.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

www.ceop.gov.uk

Social Media Checklists

https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists/

Discord

https://blog.discordapp.com/parents-guide-to-discord-c77d91793e9c

Further guidance can be found on the school website.

Fortnite: Battle Royale

National Online Safety

Top Tips for Parents

#1 LIMIT GAME TIME

Parents can use parental controls on Xbox and PC to limit the time your child is playing games on the devices. Be aware that the game is available on iOS and will soon be available on all mobiles. With this in mind, it is worth having a conversation with your child to discuss and agree how long you would like them to spend on games. Even though the games last around 20 minutes, it may be hard to take them away from a game mid play. It may be worth using a limit of the amount of matches they play rather than a time limit.

#2 RESTRICT PAYMENT METHODS

'Fortnite: Battle Royale' is a free to play game, but there are still options to make additional purchases. If you do not want your child to make payments, ensure your card is not associated with their account. If you are happy for your child to make payments in the game, but want to limit spending, we suggest using a paysafecard, or a games console gift card. These can be purchased in specific amounts, which will allow you to limit how much your child spends and removes the need for a credit/debit card to be used with their account.

#3 PREVENT THEM TALKING TO STRANGERS

There is an option to turn off the voice chat feature, which means they wouldn't be able to talk to anybody, including their friends. Your child will still be able to use the in-app chat and hear other people's conversations. To turn off voice chat, open the Settings menu in the top right of the main Fortnite page, then click on the cog icon. Open the Audio tab at the top of the screen. From there, you can turn off voice chat.

#4 SHOW THEM HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

If your child believes a player is playing or talking inappropriately, you should advise them to report them. To report a player, you can use the in-game feedback tool located in the Main Menu of the game. Additionally, you can report a player in-game when spectating them.

#5 LOOK OUT FOR VBUCK SCAMS

It is important that your children are aware of the scams that they may come across online in association with the game. Open up conversation with them about scams and how they should never share their username or password with people in order to gain anything for the game.

#6 USE A STRONG PASSWORD

It may seem like a simple tip, but it is important that your child selects a strong password when creating an account, particularly if a credit/debit card is associated with the account. This will help reduce the risk of their account being hacked.

What parents need to know about
FORTNITE: BATTLE ROYALE

MICROTRANSACTIONS

New featured items are released daily and are only available to purchase within 24 hours of their release. These are cosmetic items, called 'skins', 'gliders' and 'emotes', which change the look of the characters but do not improve the game play. Once purchased, the player has full use of these in the future. The designs are made admirable for players to purchase and even celebrities are endorsing them. Also available to purchase in the game is a 'Battle Pass'. When a new 'Battle Pass' is released, users can play a series of challenges to receive more rewards (cosmetics) by progressing through different tiers. Whatever rewards they achieve can then be used in the game.

IT CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Games can last around 20 minutes but this varies with each game. Children may feel angry if they lose the game and continue to play until they achieve the result they want. The competitive nature of the game may make it difficult for children to stop playing halfway through as it could affect their position in the game.

IT CAN BE PLAYED ON THE GO

The game was released on mobile in April 2018 meaning it can be played without a games console at home. Some schools have reported that the game is distracting their students whilst in the classroom. As the game is available outside of the home, parents may not be aware of how long their child is on the game.

HACKER ATTACKS

News site Forbes said it had seen "dozens" of reports online by people who said their accounts had been compromised by hackers. Hackers gained access to users accounts in the game and spent hundreds of pounds in fraudulent charges.

TALKING TO STRANGERS DURING SQUAD MODE

Interacting with other players in the game is part of the fun as players can communicate with their friends and other players in the game. Players will benefit from wearing headphones in the game to hear footsteps from other players trying to compromise their game. Wearing headphones makes it difficult for parents to hear what exactly is being said and children may be exposed to inappropriate language. Fortnite includes really good reporting features for players either cheating or misbehaving, and work towards having one of the best online gaming communities.

'FREE' TO PLAY

The game IS free to play. However, if playing on Xbox, you will need an Xbox gold subscription to play the game which is chargable.

NO PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED

Signing up to the game is relatively simple. Users have the option to log in with their Facebook or Google accounts or their email address. When signing up with an email address, there is no proof of age required. If your child is under the age of 12, it is important to check if your child has the game downloaded.

SOCIAL MEDIA SCAMS

There are many accounts on Facebook and Twitter which claim to give away free money (known as 'V bucks') for games which will be transferred to their Xbox Live or PSN cards. Any giveaway promotion from Fortnite will be in game. It is important to check the authenticity of these accounts before giving away personal information in order to claim 'v bucks'. The websites or accounts may ask you to share your account name and password in order to claim the money; if these offers seem too good to be true, they usually are.

WEAPONS AND VIOLENCE

PEGI has given the game a rating of 12+. Even though the game includes violence and weapons such as crossbows, grenade launchers, rifles, pistols, shotguns and more, PEGI say "more graphic and realistic looking violence towards fantasy characters is allowed. Any violence towards human characters must look unrealistic unless it consists of only minor or trivial injury such as a slap", making the game 'suitable' for children aged 12 and over.