

Headteacher: Miss S Reed

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Dear Parents/Carers

Online safety

Whilst the internet is a wonderful resource, it can also be extremely dangerous if not used appropriately. Children often speak in the classroom about their use of technology at home and their online behaviours. **Many** children have spoken about having or using *Facebook/Snapchat/WhatsApp* and other social networking sites. Children also spoke about having computers and mobile devices in their bedrooms with no direct adult supervision. One of the other things that children often speak about in school is playing online games on the X Box or PlayStation, some of which involve games with age ratings that make them unsuitable for young children including Fortnite.

Net-aware and the NSPCC have produced the following guidance about the use of Fortnite which we as a school would recommend:

Age ratings (for Fortnite):

The PEGI rating for this game is 12 years old. However, PEGI does not take chat features into consideration when rating games.

Fortnite: all you need to know - *The multiplayer action survival game, Fortnite: Battle Royale, has received a lot of media coverage recently due to growing popularity amongst children – and also emerging safety concerns. Use of the game has grown rapidly amongst children and young people since the launch of the mobile game in March 2018. The game involves 100 players fighting each other in real time to be the final survivor.*

What features and risks are there on Fortnite?

Fortnite: Battle Royale has several features that can be fun, but there are also risks. These risks include:

- *Players can add friends in the mobile game if they have an account with Epic, the game's developer.*
- *There is a chat feature in the game that allows users to contact each other using voice or text.*
- *There is cartoon violence in the game. You can use a variety of weapons to kill other players, such as guns and axes.*
- *There are in-app purchases, which can become expensive.*

The following is additional guidance to support you to decide what your child should be allowed to access and how. **Social Networks** have a minimum age restriction, **usually age thirteen**. Parents should talk to their children about the reasons behind the age restriction as they are there for a reason. Accessing such sites too early can expose children to unnecessary bullying.

Set boundaries

Supervise children's internet access and set boundaries about what they can and cannot do online is to create an agreement with them. If a child breaks the rules, restrict internet access for an agreed period of time.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved.

Advice for (parents and) children

The following are some things that parents may wish to consider teaching their children about using the internet safely:

- *Make sure you use the privacy settings.*
- *Always respect others – be careful what you say online particularly what pictures or videos you upload. Once a picture is shared online it cannot be taken back.*
- *Only add people you know and trust to friends/followers lists online. When talking to strangers, keep your personal information safe and location hidden.*

If your child talks to a member of staff about online gaming and the use of social network sites we may consider this a Safeguarding concern and ask to speak to you. Please support your child and the school by considering how they access the internet, when and with what support and put measures in place to ensure that they are safe.

Thank you for your support.

Miss Reed

Headteacher

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