



The Cedars Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 4th March 2024

Fortnite and Online Abuse

Many of the children who attend The Cedars Primary School play Fortnite regularly. The majority of children do not have any problems whilst playing the game but we are aware of some children who choose to use the interactive nature of the game to be abusive towards others online. We have set out some hopefully useful information below so that parents and carers can monitor more closely the use of Fortnite by children at home. Please do take note of the guidance below regarding the age rating, the recommended age for playing Fortnite is 12 years and above, this means that no children attending the school should be playing the game.

Fortnite—Battle Royale

Fortnite is an online game, Battle Royale is a part of Fortnite where players do not have to pay to play. In Battle Royale, the free segment of Fortnite, up to 100 players compete against each other to be the last person standing in player vs player combat.

Fortnite has a PEGI rating of 12, PEGI have said this is due to the: 'frequent scenes of mild violence. It is not suitable for persons under 12 years of age'.



This PEGI rating only takes into account the content in the game and not the contact element, where players may be exposed to swearing and offensive language from strangers in voice or on-screen text chat.

What do I need to know as a parent/carers?

Your child needs to create an account in order to play Fortnite

To create this account you need to provide an email address (which you will have to verify) and display/user name. However children are not asked their age in order to create an account.

Your child will be playing against other players who they may not know

As Fortnite is an online game your child will play against players of different ages from across the world. Players can turn this communication off in settings or choose who they play against. As a parent you are also able to block or mute other players who are behaving in an inappropriate manner, but you will need to monitor your child's use of the game in order to do this.

Your child may be making in game purchases

Although Battle Royale is free to play, other aspects of the game are not. There are packs which give you different access to the full game and extensions, in game currency and 'skins' which edit the design of your character. These start at £8 and go up to £119.99. The game does ask players to make additional in-game purchases whilst playing, though these are not required to play the game.

Fortnite does feature violence when players are in combat with each other

The animation of the game is very cartoonish, and the violence isn't bloody or gory. However, it is worth noting that the aim of Fortnite is to defeat other players by fighting against them.

Which devices can your child play Fortnite on?

Fortnite is currently available on PC, Mac, PlayStation and Xbox , and on IOS (apple products) and Android. It is downloadable from the Fortnite website, this download gives access to both the free and paid for versions of the game.

Advice

Have an open and honest conversation with your child.

It is important to involve yourself in your child's online life and a simple and effective way to this is by talking to them about their life online. Try to maintain an open dialogue with your child and find opportunities to talk to them about what they love to do online.

Play the game with them

It may seem daunting, but one of the best things that you can do is to engage with the gaming environment and begin to understand what makes Fortnite so attractive to young people, as well as giving yourself an idea of the reporting tools available within the game.

Know how to make a report

In Fortnite you can report players who are behaving inappropriately by using the in-game feedback tool located in the game Main Menu, you can also block users who are being abusive.

Fortnite and behavior issues

Parents and carers should monitor childrens' behavior when they are playing video games, especially social ones like Fortnite.

Because children can chat to each other whilst playing the game, children can be drawn into making unkind and potentially criminal comments about others. As a parent or carer you need to explain the difference between good natured chat, which is fine, and bullying and abusive talk, which isn't. You should also explain to your child that the things they are saying while they are playing can have real life consequences. Someone could take a screen capture of what your child is saying in chat, or record audio, or a friend's parent could even be in the room overhearing what they are saying. Then things may escalate, especially when children next meet in person.

You need to explain that the rules are no different in games or online. In video games when children are feeling competitive and their adrenaline is boosted, it can lead to them saying things they wouldn't normally say face-to-face. But the ordinary rules of conduct should still apply. If they are playing with someone from school then they will have to face them when they are next in school together.

Click on the image to the right to access the UK Safer Internet Centre that has more advice for how to keep your child safe online.

