Online Safety Newsletter January 2026

Sherwood Junior School Online Safety Newsletter

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Playing Online Games

🎮 Online Gaming

Online games can be fun and social, but they also come with risks. Here's what you should look out for and how to keep your child safe.

✅ Key Risks

💬 Chatting with Strangers

- Many games allow text or voice chat, which can expose children to **inappropriate language** or **grooming risks**.

- **What to do:**

- Turn off chat features or filter bad language in settings.

- Restrict communication to "friends only" and check those friends are real-life friends.

- Teach your child how to **block and report** players.

😔 Cyberbullying

- Children may behave differently online than face-to-face.

- **What to do:**

- Encourage respectful communication.

- Explain that bullying can include excluding players, criticising abilities, or ganging up on others.

💳 In-App Purchases

- Many games offer extra items or subscriptions for real money.

- **What to do:**

- Avoid saving payment details.

- Set up restrictions or require a password for purchases.

🛡 **How to Protect Your Child**

- **Set up parental controls** on both the game and the device/console.

- **Check age ratings** before buying or downloading games (look for PEGI or App Store/Google Play ratings).

- **Talk regularly** about online risks and remind your child to come to you or a trusted adult if something feels wrong.

🧷 **Further Support**

For more guidance, visit:

[CEOP Gaming Advice for Parents](#)

Reminder: Parent Controls

As many children may receive new technology or gaming gifts this Christmas, here's a quick reminder about the importance of setting up **appropriate parental controls**.

🎮 **Games & Consoles**

- 🔞 **Check age ratings** – Look at the PEGI rating for any new games. Remember: PEGI rates *gameplay*, so even if the age rating seems suitable, check whether the game includes communication features.

- 💬 **Review communication settings** – If a game allows chat or interaction with others, adjust or disable these features based on what's appropriate for your child.

- 💳 **Set device controls** – Add spending limits and other safeguards on the console itself.

- **Xbox:** https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/family-hub

- **PS5:** https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/

- **Nintendo Switch:** https://www.nintendo.com/en-gb/Hardware/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-2-Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-2873385.html

📱 **Tablets & Smartphones**

- 🔐 **Set parental controls** to block unwanted purchases, restrict age-inappropriate content, and manage privacy settings.

- 📲 **Check app suitability** – Always review any apps your child requests to make sure they're age-appropriate.

- **iPhone/iPad:** https://support.apple.com/en-gb/105121

- **Android devices:** https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738

ℹ️ **Further Information**

For more guidance, visit Internet Matters:

https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/

Cyber Security

🔐 **Cyber Security: Keeping Your Family Safe Online**

Cyber security is all about **protecting your personal information and data** from scams and cyber-attacks.

Cyber-attacks happen when individuals or organisations are targeted to **steal data** or **disable networks**—and they can affect anyone.

✅ **Top Tips for Staying Safe Online**

The **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)** offers practical advice for families, including:

🔑 Use Strong Passwords

Create passwords that are hard to guess—avoid names or birthdays.

🔒 Enable 2-Step Verification

Add an extra layer of security to your accounts.

🛡 Manage Your Digital Footprint

Be mindful of what you share online and review privacy settings regularly.

💻 Install Anti-Virus Software

Protect your devices from harmful malware.

📚 Helpful Resources

- **Protecting You & Your Family:** [NCSC Guidance](#)

- **What to Do if You're Targeted:** [NCSC Respond & Recover](#)

A guide for Parents and Carers on managing children's digital lives

🌐 Children's Digital Lives: A Shared Responsibility

Supporting children's safety online is something we all share—**families, schools, and wider society**.

For parents and carers, this role has become more challenging as children's lives are now deeply connected to the digital world.

Many parents face tough decisions:

- **How do we protect children from online harm?**

- **How do we allow access to spaces that are essential for learning, socialising, and play?**

To help with these questions, **Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza** has written a new guide on children's digital lives. It offers practical advice and insights for parents navigating this complex area.

✅ Why This Matters

- Digital spaces are central to education and friendships.

- Online risks—such as exposure to harmful content or unsafe interactions—are real.

- Balancing safety and freedom is key to supporting healthy digital habits.

📖 Read the full guide here:

Fortnite

🎮 A Parent's Guide to Fortnite

Fortnite is one of the most popular games among children and young people. Understanding the game and its features can help you **manage your child's gaming experience safely**.

✅ Key Tips for Parents

🛡 Parental Controls

Use the controls provided by [Epic Games](#) to:

- Set playtime limits

- Manage communication settings

🔒 Safety Features

Talk to your child about:

- How to **report inappropriate behaviour**

- How to manage interactions with other players. This [website](#) can help.

🎯 Understand the Game

Learn why kids love Fortnite - its social aspects and gameplay mechanics - so you can engage with your child about their experience. Click [here](#) for a user friendly guide.

📏 Set Clear Rules

Establish boundaries for:

- Screen time

- In-game behaviour

- This helps create a healthy gaming environment.

📚 Helpful Resources

Visit the **ESRB's parental controls guide** for step-by-step instructions on setting up controls across different devices.

These tips will help you **navigate Fortnite and keep your child's gaming safe and enjoyable**.

Family Gaming Database

🎲 Family Gaming Database: A Great Resource for Parents

When it comes to finding **reliable reviews for apps and games**, one of the most popular resources is Common Sense Media, which offers thousands of unbiased, up-to-date reviews—perfect for helping parents go beyond just age ratings.

But did you know there's another fantastic resource specifically for games?

The Family Gaming Database is often overlooked, yet it's packed with helpful information for families.

Currently, it includes:

- **3,485 video games** reviewed

- **197 board games** reviewed

This site is designed to help parents understand the content, suitability, and features of games so you can make informed choices for your family.

📖 Explore the Family Gaming Database here:

Family Gaming Database - Guides, Ratings and Suggestions - Family Gaming Database

Contact Us

If you have any questions regarding online safety, please speak to your child's class teacher or Mrs Burton.

Visit us on the web at www.sherwood.notts.sch.uk

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