Parents E-Safety Newsletter

www.stopthinkdorset.co.uk

@stopthinkdorset on twitter

How to stay safe with online gaming

One of the most popular online activities for children and young people is gaming via tablets, phones, consoles or laptops. However, we know from talking to young people, parents and professionals working with the young people, there are some potential risks.

- *Inappropriate content* – many quite young children are watching or playing games rated at 16 or 18+, for example: Call of Duty, Grand Theft Auto and Halo. These games often have a lot of violence, bad language and sexual content not suitable for children. While it is not illegal to allow your child to play these games, it can be harmful to them and lead to them thinking these kinds of behaviours are normal and re-enacting these behaviours at school. Games for consoles are clearly marked using the PEGI games rating system.

Games for mobile and apps are often not rated so you will need to check what the content is to see whether it is suitable.

- *Inappropriate contact* – many online games have chat facilities, even those such as Minecraft, Moshi Monsters and Club Penguin that are intended for small children. Before allowing your child you go on a game, check who they will be able to talk to and who will be able to contact them. We are aware of a number of young people who have been approached on games by adults, some of whom have attempted to have inappropriate conversations or request images from young people.
- *Accounts being hacked* – there are a number of scams whereby someone can take over your child's online gaming

account. This is usually done by telling the child that they can get a special reward or bonus by changing their password to a particular word. The scammer then takes over your child's account and changes the password so your child cannot access it. A child or young person should never share their password with anyone apart from you.

Top tips for protecting your child while gaming

- Only allow them to play or watch age-appropriate games. Don't play these kind of games in front of your children
- Talk with your children's friends' parents about any games you do not want your child playing when they are at somebody else's house
- Most games create a profile similar to social networking. Some of the profiles are not private and allow strangers to contact the child or young person. Ensure that their profile only shows to people your child has accepted as a 'friend'.
- Make sure your children are only playing online games with people they actually know – check their 'friends'/contacts list and delete or block strangers. Sometimes people online are not who they say they are.
- Talk to your children about what they share online – they should never give away personal information like their name, address, age or school and they should be careful what images they share.

Vodafone Digital Parenting

The newest edition of **Vodafone Digital Parenting** magazine is now available – order yours from http://www.theparentzone.co.uk/vodafone_digital_parenting_order_form/5248

Contents include:

- *Selfies and the risks of sending a revealing self-portrait*
- *How to set up parental controls on iOS, Blackberry, Android and Windows phones*
- *How our kids are growing up online*
- *Cyberbullying: what you need to know and why you're never alone*

ooVoo

We have had a number of enquiries about the video messaging app ooVoo. The main feature is free group video calling for up to 12 people. This free app also allows for texting and sharing videos (including recording) and messages and contains adverts. The paid version of the app does not contain adverts. Contact is made via an ooVoo ID or email address.

There are privacy settings to control who can find you: low (everybody), medium (only via ooVoo ID or email) and high (nobody). However, a number of police forces are investigating instances where strangers have contacted children and made inappropriate comments and either sent or requested inappropriate images.

Low privacy accounts will show a picture, ooVoo ID and display name to everyone.

Users are supposed to be 13 years old.

Top tip: when you buy your child a mobile phone, you can opt out of them being able to receive adult content – each provider has slightly different procedures so contact your provider for details

NSPCC Share Aware

The NSPCC recently launched the Share Aware campaign aimed at parents of children who are 8-12 years old which includes a downloadable guide.
There is also lots of other useful information about Online Safety on the NSPCC website.
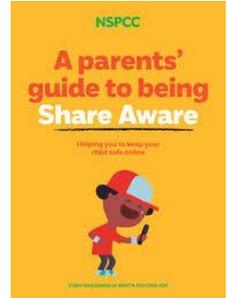
- **Net Aware** contains reviews of games, apps and websites by parents and children and young people. The reviews look at Signing up, Reporting, Privacy settings and Safety advice and can help you decide whether something is suitable for your child.
- Parental controls – information about controls on broadband, devices, gaming platforms, search engines and mobile networks.
- How to talk to your children about what they are doing online
- What to do if you are concerned

Here are the NSPCC's top tips for keeping your children safe online

1. Have the conversation early and often
2. Explore online together
3. Know who your child is talking to online
4. Set rules and agree boundaries
5. Make sure that content is age appropriate
6. Use parental controls to filter, restrict, monitor or report content
7. Check they know how to use privacy settings and reporting tools

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety

Check out the Lucy and the boy video which shows the danger of talking to strangers and giving away too much information.