

A brief guide to keeping your child safe online.

Welcome back and hope you've had a wonderful Summer

Each term I would like to write and offer some help and advice in keeping your child safe whilst online. In this brief guide I will introduce what PEGI ratings mean in gaming. There is a good chance that many of you may have received a new game over the summer, and I would like to look at key safety concerns that you may have to support happier, safer gaming for your child.

What is PEGI?

The PEGI system is designed to inform the public of what's suitable and what's not for different ages. It can be a helpful tool in helping you to decide what games are appropriate for your child.



How are games rated under PEGI?



All games released in the UK will have one of the following PEGI age ratings on the packaging: 3, 7, 12, 16 or 18.

The rating means that the game shouldn't be played by a young person under that age.

Why? Because there may be content within the game which could potentially be harmful, frightening or worrying to children. As well as an age rating, PEGI also uses icons showing content descriptors, letting you know if a game contains: violence, drugs, bad language, discrimination, fear, gambling, sex, or in-app purchases.

Is PEGI legally enforceable?

Yes - in the UK, the PEGI 12, 16 and 18 ratings are legally enforceable. This means that retailers cannot sell or hire these games to those below these ages. However, this only applies to the retailer, it doesn't stop an adult or someone older from buying the games for a child.

A brief guide to keeping your child safe online.

3 ways in which you can keep your child safe whilst gaming.

1. Talk with your child about gaming. Understand and learn about the games that they like to play, its content and features.
2. Learn together. Read through the games tasks, understand the games ratings and what the game will be about before playing it.
3. Set boundaries and safety settings. Think about how much time your child spends gaming, which games they access and if they are playing games that have a higher PEGI rating than their actual age. If you allow in-app purchases, check what they are buying in the game. Is it suitable?

Finally...

Consider your child's individual needs, emotional maturity and experiences to support the decisions you make around gaming. For example, a game may be rated age appropriate but have content that you know your child will find frightening or won't understand.

Many people struggle with understanding what ratings mean on games and allow their child to play any age rated game without understanding what the game content might be about.

Stay well, Stay safe and happy gaming.

I hope you find this first issue useful.

Mr R Elson
Techie Tips!