



Billingshurst Primary School
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Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been brought to our attention that there are a large number of children playing the multiplayer action survival game Fortnite: Battle Royale. We would like to make you aware that the game is rated aged 12+, not suitable for primary aged pupils. We are particularly concerned about a function in Fortnite, which automatically allows users to speak to other players through voice and text chat functions. It means children can be contacted by anyone else who is playing the game. Users can disable voice chat in the game via the setting menu, but the text chat function cannot be turned off.

Research from NSPCC reveals that that one in four children have been contacted online by someone they don't know. The research is based on reviews by children and parents of the most popular apps, sites and games currently on the market, featured on the Net Aware app and website. Net Aware advice on Fortnite warns parents the game features cartoon violence, where players can use a variety of weapons, such as guns and axes, to kill other players, despite being rated as suitable for players aged 12+ by The App Store. There have been a number of cases around the country of young children needing emotional support due to being exposed to violence in this game.

The NSPCC is offering parents the following advice:

- Talk to your child regularly about what they are doing online and how to stay safe. Let them know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset by anything they have seen.
- Explore your child's online activities together. Understand why they like using certain apps, games or websites and make sure they know what they can do to keep themselves safe.
- Agree your own rules as a family when using sites, apps and games.
- Manage your technology and use the privacy and parental control settings available to keep your child safe.

Players can be reported to the Player Support team if you are concerned about any online activity or behaviour. Anyone looking for further online safety advice can contact the O2 NSPCC online safety helpline on 0808 800 5002. The CEOP website offers support about online safety for parents at <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

The Net Aware app can be downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play. It can also be accessed online at www.net-aware.org.uk.



If you have any worries or concerns about online safety and want to talk to someone at school, please make an appointment to speak to me, or any of the DSL's who will be happy to support.

Yours sincerely



Helen Williamson
Headteacher

