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Video games and keeping your children safe:

E-safety - Key information for Parent/Carers

Drew Primary School is committed to keeping our children safe and to promoting the safe, responsible use of the technologies available.

Some primary children play age inappropriate video games. The age rating is a clear indication of the suitability of content and we suggest, if you wish to treat your child to a game, that you ask them to choose a title which is appropriate for their age.

1) Ratings denote the content and appropriateness of games

Since 2003 games have been rated under the Pan-European Game Information (PEGI) system which operates in the UK and over 30 countries of Europe, in addition, where a game showed realistic scenes of gross violence and sexual activity the game had to be legally classified and received one or other of the BBFC classification certificates given for videos/DVDs.



The PEGI system has been effectively incorporated into UK law and video games will be age rated at one or other of the following age levels; which you will find on

video game sleeves. Ratings do not denote the difficulty or enjoyment of a game, but that it contains content suitable for a certain age group and above.

The PEGI age ratings enable parents and carers to make informed choices when purchasing games for their children.

It is important to note that the age ratings 12, 16 and 18 are mandatory and that it is **illegal** for a retailer to supply games to anyone below the specified age. The age ratings 3 and 7 are advisory only.



An 18 rated game is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes gross violence and/or includes elements of specific violence. **In general terms it is where the level of violence is so visually strong that it would make the user react with a sense of revulsion.**

This rating is also applied where the level of sexual activity is explicit which may mean that genitals are visible. Any game glamorises the use of real life drugs will also probably fall into this category.



2) Content Indicators



In addition to age ratings, video games will include indicators of the type of content and activities that the game includes in it

The descriptors are fairly self-explanatory but should be read in conjunction with the age rating given for a video game.

A violence descriptor with an 18 rated game will indicate a more extreme level of violence than a violence descriptor with a 12 rated game. Similarly a sex/nudity descriptor with an 18 rated game will indicate sexual content of a more explicit nature where as on a 12 rated game will probably indicate sexual innuendo.

3) Parental responsibility

- The PEGI rated system helps you make informed decisions about which video games to choose for your family.
- A PEGI rating gives the suggested minimum age that you must be to play a game due to the suitability of the content.
- As parents/carers you can take direct control of what games your children play at home, how they play them and for how long through parental controls on video games such as the Xbox or PlayStation.
- Choosing and playing video games as a family is the best way to understand and enjoy them together.
- The www.common sense media.org website is a great source for parents to check suitability of not just video games but also apps, films, music and books.
- We also recommend that parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information about keeping your child safe online www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- For detailed guidance on all the different types of controls you can use visit www.internetmatters.org and use their online tool. Their tool gives you the opportunity to set up a personalised list of controls used in your home on all your different devices. There is also access to videos with step by step instructions on how to set up parental controls www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/interactive-guide/.