

### 3 steps for parents to ensure safer gaming:

1. **Understand the capabilities of gaming devices** and how you as a parent can support your child to be smart and safe in their gaming.
2. **Find out about the parental controls available** - it helps if you are the one to set up the gaming device so you are in control of these. Gaming devices have parental controls to help parents manage their children's gaming, for example, to prevent internet browsing or restrict access to age-restricted games.
3. **Talk with your child about safe and responsible gaming and agree a set of family rules.** Perhaps you could agree rules with your child about how long they are allowed to play for, how they should behave towards other gamers and agree rules about not meeting up with people they have only met online.



### Keeping children safe.

Parental controls will never make the internet 100% 'safe'. They should not be used as a substitute for communicating safety messages to your child. Make sure that you talk to your child about their behaviour online and remember your home is not the only place they will be accessing the internet!

Internet safety advice applies directly to gaming devices and mobile phones that children use because of the risks of;

**Content • Contact • Conduct • Commercialism.**

For more information on internet safety try these useful websites.

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/)

[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

[www.theparentzone.co.uk](http://www.theparentzone.co.uk)

[www.askaboutgames.com](http://www.askaboutgames.com)

Speak to your school they can arrange internet safety awareness sessions for parents through the local Police Locality Integration Officer.

You can get this document on tape, in large print and various other formats by contacting us.

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## DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR CHILDREN ARE WATCHING?

Parent's guide on DVDs and video gaming.

All parents would agree that their primary role is protecting their children from harm and keeping them safe.



Parents are often very careful in choosing their children's toys so they are suitable for their age and development.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century modern 'toys' also include DVDs, video games, phones and internet access. Most parents have rules in place for their children's use of television, internet, mobile phones and gaming.

However a recent survey of parents reveals a large number do not;

#### Internet.

- Only 1 in 4 parents of children who use the internet at home use any of the 'technical' parental controls.

#### Mobile phones with internet access

- 1 in 3 parents whose child has a mobile phone that can be used to go online have limited their access to the internet to exclude websites aimed at over 18's.

#### DVDs

- More than 1 in 3 parents had allowed their children to watch a film classified above their child's age.

#### Video games

- 1 in 4 parents allowed their children to play games classified above their child's age.
- Parental controls are unlikely to be in place for handheld games or consoles connected to a television and the internet.

#### Games consoles/ MP3 players/ mobile phone

- 1 in 6 parents said they had bought their children a device which they themselves did not fully understand how to use.

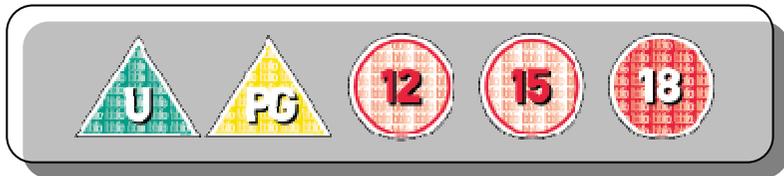
## DVDs

Age ratings ensure that entertainment content, such as films, videos, DVDs, and computer and video games, is clearly labeled for the minimum age group for which it is suitable.



They provide guidance to consumers to help them decide whether or not to buy a particular product. DVDs are classified according to whether the content would harm a child, and whether through watching the DVD, a child may cause harm.

You'll see the following classifications marked on sleeves and labels.



*(There is no 12A . This is for the cinema only).*

It's important to note that videos and DVDs classified PG and U may be legally supplied to children and other people of all ages.

The 12, 15 and 18 classifications restrict supply to people of and above the specified age. It is a serious criminal offence for a shop owner to supply a video or DVD with an age-restricted classification to someone below the specified age.

Classifications are given to enable parents to make an informed choice as to what you allow your child to watch. Video and DVD titles classified 12, 15 and 18 are considered unsuitable for children or young teenagers below the specified ages.

**Remember to keep inappropriate DVD's in your home out of children's reach.**



## Video games and children's safety

The last 10 years has seen an explosion in the use of video games. The main issue for parents is that the devices which play games can connect to the internet and therefore can be played online. This means the same online safety rules that apply to internet use, such as social networking, should also apply to gaming i.e. your children should not disclose any personal information, such as their age or whereabouts, to strangers.

It also means you need to get a handle on what your children are up to at other people's houses - there's not much point in you imposing stringent controls at home, if they're playing wildly age-inappropriate games at friends' houses.

## PEGI age ratings and parental controls

Every game published in the UK has an age rating displayed on its packaging. The PEGI (Pan-European Games Information) rating on a game confirms that it's suitable for a certain age group and above.

*Note\* The age rating is not a recommended difficulty level of a game.*

PEGI labels also provide icons describing the content. These icons indicate the type of content in the game: drug references, bad language, sexual, violent, discrimination or fear. So if you're buying a game for children under the age of 18, check out the age rating. For example a '7' game is suitable for everyone who is seven or older while an 18-rated game is deemed suitable only for adults.

