

## Setting up parental controls.

Besides checking PEGI ratings to help choose suitable games, parents can activate parental controls. This is much easier than it sounds and links to instructions can be found on our school website 'Parents' pages for many of the latest generation of game consoles - including Xbox 360, Wii U™, Sony Playstation 3 and PSP, Apple and PC controls.

Using these controls, you can restrict the rating or level of content that your child can play, and in some cases who your child plays with online and for how much time.

Parental controls ensure that your child has a fun and secure gaming experience.

## Making sure your child's video game experience is safe and secure.

At **Mountfields Lodge**, we ensure that the children know how to keep themselves safe online and what to do if they feel uncomfortable about any content they might see.

The children also learn how to behave responsibly online **both at home and at school** in order to make everyone's online and gaming experience a good one.

We follow the SMART rules, which can be found on our school website.

The infographic is titled "Be smart on internet" and features the Childnet Professional logo and the website www.childnet.com. It lists five rules: **S SAFE**: Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information... **M MEETING**: Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous... **A ACCEPTING**: Accepting emails, IM messages, or opening files... **R RELIABLE**: Information you find on the internet may not be true... **T TELL**: Tell your parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable... At the bottom, it includes the website www.kidsmart.org.uk and the KidsSMART logo.



Mountfields Lodge School



## *A Parent's Guide to Video Games and Online Safety*



## A guide for parents about choosing age appropriate games, setting up parental controls, and making sure your child's video game experience is safe and secure.

Video games are a great source of learning and entertainment, but it is important for parents to appreciate what playing games today involves in order to keep their children safe.

A large number of games can be played over an internet connection. Being aware of the tools at a parent's disposal are crucial to ensure that children are safeguarded from inappropriate content and encounters with other players.



Some widely available video games contain graphic violence, virtual sex, violent and gory scenes, partial or full nudity, drug use, portrayal of criminal behaviour or other provocative and sensitive material.

Online gaming platforms often offer text chat, the use of headsets or even video for live communication with other players. Unfortunately, the anonymity of online gaming seems to encourage some players to post obscenities and unsuitable material which are difficult to control.

A survey of Year 5 and 6 pupils at **Mountfields Lodge** has shown that over half of the children are playing games with a higher age rating than their own age (e.g. a 12 rating or higher). It also revealed that 72% of children play games that can be played with others over the internet, and that 1 in 5 of our Year 5 and 6 children have experienced something that they have felt uncomfortable about whilst playing video games.

## A Parents' and Carers' Guide to Video Game Ratings

It is probably true that most parents have grown up with the video or DVD classification system. However, this is not always the case with video games. All too often, the child is more adept at using the computer or games consoles and parents do not know how to access what he or she is playing. As a result, it is important to have something to guide parents when making a decision about whether a game is suitable or not.

### The PEGI System (Pan-European Game Information)



From the summer of 2012, the PEGI system has been used by UK law for age rating video games. The age ratings 12, 16 and 18 are mandatory and it is illegal for a retailer to supply any game to someone below the age specified.

It is important to note that the **age ratings relate to the content of the game** and not how difficult it is to play. So, for example, a chess game would be too difficult to give to a 3 year old but it will have a '3' rating as the content is inoffensive. Likewise, a game which is easy enough for a 10 year old to play will be given an '18' rating if the subject matter or content is only suitable for adults. Therefore, a '3' or '7' rating does not mean that the game will be too easy for your child but that the content is suitable for primary age children.

Descriptors shown on the back of the packaging indicate the main reasons why a game has received a particular age rating. There are eight descriptors: violence, bad language, fear, drugs, sexual, discrimination, gambling and online gameplay with other people.

Further information on the PEGI ratings can be found at :  
<http://www.pegi.info/en/index/id/33/>