



**SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER – MAY 2023**

Welcome to our Safeguarding newsletter for the Summer Term. We hope that you continue to find it useful and informative.

**Safeguarding Leads.**

Safeguarding is an integral part of school life and it is the responsibility of all involved in the lives of children to ensure that they are safe.

We have three Safeguarding Leads in school at this time – you can contact any one of them to discuss any safeguarding concerns or questions that you may have.

Name	Role	Safeguarding Role
Mr. B. McGregor	Head Teacher	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mrs J. Davies	Deputy Head Teacher	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mrs D Blundell	HLTA/ Whizz Kids	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Attendance**

Just a reminder that as part of safeguarding procedures, we ask that all parents contact school if their child is absent, please call the school office on **0151 677 4788** and leave a message on the answer machine or email [schooloffice@woodchurchpri.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@woodchurchpri.wirral.sch.uk) with the reason your child will not be at school. Please be aware, it is also part of our responsibility to ring parents during a child's absence, even if you have notified us of their absence.

In addition, if your child arrives late and needs signing in, we ask that they are accompanied by a parent or adult to the school office.

**Dropping off at school**

Morning drop off continues to be very busy and we would like to reiterate the importance of giving careful consideration to where you park or stop to drop off your children.

Please do not park or stop on the zig zag lines, or stop in the middle of the road to let children out of the car.

We also ask, that if you are dropping your children off outside school, that they are supervised crossing the road in a safe manner.

**Summer Sunshine**

With the improved weather and warmer, sunnier days, we ask that that you apply sun cream to your children before they come to school. Where possible, children should have a sun hat or cap to wear when outside. We also ask that all children are provided with a filled water bottle (water only – no juice or fizzy drinks) each day so that they can keep hydrated.

**Online Safety**

Below is one of the latest guides from National Online Safety in relation to the latest update of Fortnite.

Visit [@natonlinesafety](https://twitter.com/natonlinesafety) twitter feed for more information.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# FORTNITE

CHAPTER

4



Fortnite may be something of a veteran in gaming terms (having launched back in 2017), but it remains massively popular – with more than 250 million people playing online every month. That's partially due to the competitive nature of its player-vs-player combat, its pop culture crossovers and its constantly shifting map. Significant updates are rolled out with each new version of the game – known as 'chapters' – and within these sit shorter 'seasons', which bring more subtle changes. The latest iteration, Chapter 4 Season 2, adds a cyberpunk-themed city and anime-style areas, for example, along with new weapons and characters.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### ALWAYS ONLINE

There's no single-player offline mode in Fortnite: it can only be played online. Internet access can sometimes be an issue when you're out and about (both in terms of connectivity and using up data), so you may find that dedicated young Fortnite players are often less enthusiastic about trips away of a certain length – such as days out and holidays – than you might have expected.

### IN-GAME COSTS

Fortnite is free to download and play, but it does offer various additional purchases – cosmetic skins, rare weapons and so on – which don't really impact on gameplay, but can cost quite a significant amount. These items are bought with game's currency, V-Bucks – which can be earned through playing, but are also often purchased from the game's store for real-world money.

### POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Part of Fortnite's appeal is its ongoing crossovers with other popular franchises, ranging from movies and TV shows like *The Walking Dead* to comic book characters including Batman to other games such as *Street Fighter*. This means you could find your child asking questions about the creature from *Alien* or who Geralt from *The Witcher* is a little sooner than you'd possibly anticipated.

### CROSSPLAY AND PARTY CHAT

Fortnite is popular with vast numbers of gamers – of various ages. Crossplay lets friends play with and against each other, regardless of whether they're on an Xbox, PlayStation or PC – while party chat allows them to communicate during the game. This chat feature can also, therefore, put youngsters at risk of hearing inappropriate language from older players in the heat of virtual combat.

### VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

At its core, there's no avoiding that Fortnite is about shooting other players to eliminate them. That said, there's no blood or gore: the violence is generally rendered in a cartoonish style, and there are frequent comical touches to lighten the mood (fishing mini-games, for example). The machine guns, shotguns and other weapons often look and behave realistically, however, so discretion is advised.

### FREQUENT UPDATES

The game's developers release content in 'seasons' that usually run for around ten weeks. Each fresh update sees items added to the in-game store, changes to the environment's map and a different over-arching theme (such as 'medieval', 'pirates' or 'party'). These regular renewals help to hold players' interest – but also give young gamers plenty of reasons to keep returning to their screens.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### MATCH GAMING TIMES

Younger players tend to want to play Fortnite alongside their friends. With this in mind, it could be worth speaking to the parents and carers of your child's social group and trying to coordinate their gaming around certain hours of the day. Safety in numbers is obviously a factor here, but it will also help your child feel that they're getting adequate opportunity to socialise with their friends online.

### SET SPENDING LIMITS

Fortnite's rotating store is a not-so-subtle mechanism for coaxing players into splashing out on those sought-after items before they disappear again for weeks. This could potentially lead to surprise outlays on your card if your child is tempted into an impulse purchase. You could consider setting up a prepaid card for them to use – or ensuring that any online purchases require adult authorisation.

### USE UPDATES AS REWARDS

Fortnite's seasonal updates are free – but each also brings the option of a 'battle pass', unlocking exclusive rewards for playing the game and completing set challenges. The passes cost around £8 (and are available as part of larger bundles) and can be an effective reward to young Fortnite fans for good behaviour or academic performance, or as an incentive for chores like tidying their room.

### BE WARY OF SCAMS

The immense popularity of Fortnite with more trusting younger audiences means that there's no shortage of scammers looking to fraudulently obtain passwords and other personal data through techniques like phishing. As the developers point out on many of Fortnite's loading screens, they never ask for a player's account password outside of the game: make sure your child knows this.

### ENJOY FORTNITE TOGETHER

Fortnite also offers split-screen gameplay, meaning that two people can play simultaneously via the same TV or computer. That's ideal for siblings or when your child's friends visit – but it also offers you an opportunity to spend time doing something fun with your child, while also being able to make sure they're playing the game safely. Who knows, you might even teach them a thing or two!

### Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRacon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A long-time gamer, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



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