

SOCIAL GAMING NOTES/RESOURCES:

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Today's Trending online gaming and chat platforms:

- **Discord:** a free voice, video and text chat app for teens and adults ages 13 and up. It was created to bring people together through a love of gaming. Teens can access Discord via their PC, browser, or mobile phone. Users can control every aspect of who can message them, image safety levels, and even what content is allowed in their server (with bots). Discord may not seem safe, but the safety falls on the user.
- **Fortnite:** Unlike most popular online games, Fortnite offers players the chance to make use of multiple player skills, most of which are optional. At its core, it's a game about shooting people.
- **Minecraft:** players are given limitless resources to build whatever they can imagine. They create their world out of blocks. They can also explore the world and mine its resources to feed, house and defend themselves.

*TIP: look up the latest online gaming and chat platforms on YouTube to learn about what they are and how they're used.

Chatting in games does differ from game to game, but there are ways that you can support your child to stay safe if they chat whilst gaming:

- **Have ongoing conversations** with your child about who they are talking to online. Discuss whether they know them in real life and what they share with them.
- **Take time to explore games with your children.** Ask them to show you what they like about the game and take an interest. Speak with them about making their profile private if possible and talk with them about information that is safe to share e.g. nicknames as opposed to full names. This can also promote:
 - Bonding – what could be better than spending time with your kids?!
 - Seeing what they are actually viewing and how they interact with it
 - Teaching them, through your actions, how to interact appropriately through the gaming platform.
- **Be aware of the chat platforms your child is using.** Ask your child about what they would do if someone within a game asked to talk to them in private whether that's on another platform or within the game. Help your child to identify this warning sign and explain what they can do can help them to keep safe.
- **All young people need support to make safe decisions online.** It is recommended that primary aged children remain under adult supervision whilst gaming, for example ensuring an adult is within earshot of conversations and able to see any chat taking place.

Gifts within gaming: Some games and apps allow users to make purchases (tools, weapons, coins or cheats). Since many kids don't have accounts or money to make purchases, it can be tempting to accept 'in game currency' in the form of 'gifts' to help them progress.

Offenders can use gifts in gaming to encourage children to trust them. Others may try to use gifts as 'leverage' to persuade young people to do something such as moving to a different online platform, going on webcam or taking a photo of themselves. Educate your kids about gifts:

- **Speak with your child about bribery and 'too-good to be true' offers.** Encourage them to question anything they are offered online from someone they do not know offline, and remind them that it's always better to check in with a parent or primary care person if they are unsure what to do if offered a reward or gift.
- **Speak to your child about 'warning signs'.** Talk to your child about the feelings they might get when something doesn't feel right, or be specific with examples. These might be inappropriate words that someone could use in a conversation (e.g. sexually explicit language) or behaviors such as asking for lots of personal information.
- **Young people can sometimes feel complicit in abuse if they have chatted with someone they feel they shouldn't have or accepted a gift and something has gone wrong.** Reassure your child that no matter what might have happened you are always there to confide in and it is never their fault. Ongoing reminders that it's never too late to get help are important.



Top tips for gaming:

- Explore parental controls on games consoles. Most games consoles enable parents to apply settings that can help to manage a child's online activities. For more information on enabling parental controls visit Internet Matters. - <https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/tech-guide/gaming-consoles/>
- Get to grips with the blocking and reporting functions on the games your child plays, and ensure they know how to use these. It's helpful to sit with your child and go through this together.
- Continue to have conversations with your child about gaming and their online activity. Reassure your child that they can always talk to you about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable- whether it's the game content or something they've heard when chatting with other users.
- Learn more about gaming and the PEGI age ratings. <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming-whats-appropriate-for-your-child/>
- Bullying is never okay. If your child is experiencing name calling or harassment while gaming, visit Childline for helpful advice on getting help and support. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/online-gaming/#3>

Learn about trending Apps for teens:

<https://yourteenmag.com/technology/the-most-popular-apps-for-teenagers>

Learn about DNS Protection:

<https://cleanbrowsing.org/>

<https://www.opendns.com/home-internet-security/>

Learn about setting up Phone Restrictions (applicable to many other devices):

<https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT201304>

<https://www.techadvisor.co.uk/how-to/google-android/android-parental-controls-3461359/>

Learn about Game Ratings:

<https://www.esrb.org/ratings-guide/>

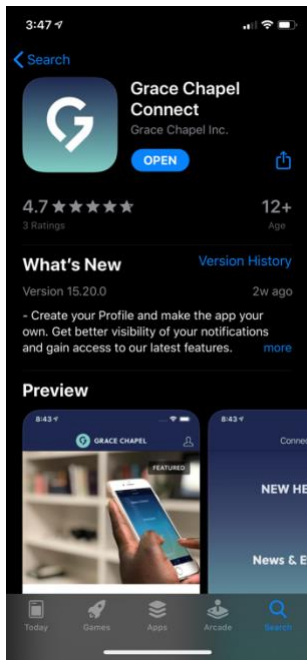
<https://www.pbs.org/kcts/videogamerevolution/impact/esrb.html>

Education for you and your kids on keeping yourself and your stuff safe online.

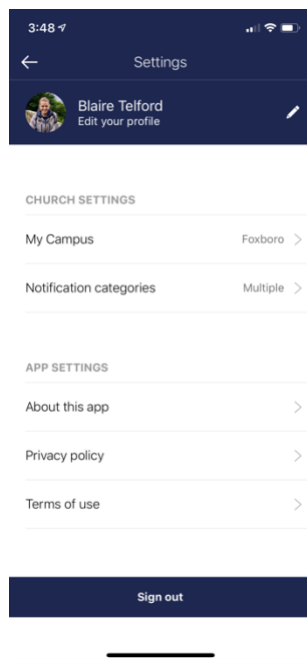
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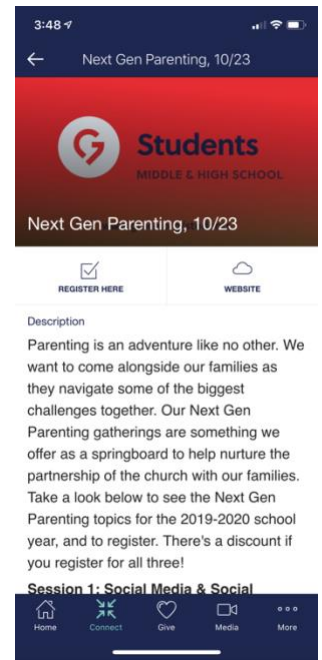
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