



Bolney CEP School | Online Safety Newsletter– December 2020

Dear Parents



As we approach our two week break for Christmas in which the children may be receiving more technology to explore, we would like to remind you of ways to help keep our children safe online. Have a great Christmas!

Games our children might be talking about...

We know that around 93% of children in the UK play video games and this leisure time has benefits for their development. We want to promote the use of technology as long as we know our children's online behaviours.

Through discussion in class and with our colleagues that are also parents of young children, there are 2 games that we need to be aware of that could be a danger to our children.



The first is called **Among Us**. **Among Us** is a multiplayer game that centres around a group of characters who are on a spaceship, trying to get home. The reason this has been highlighted to teachers is that is popular with children that like to talk to others whilst gaming. The appeal is also that it's simple to play, 'extremely social' and involves a lot of teamwork and interaction with others which is the key ingredient for the success of other multiplayer games. You can change avatars and the game itself as well play this game on a variety of platforms (mobile and PC). Why should we as parents and teachers be concerned? This game has been given a rating of 9+ and although there are filters and settings, the children might see inappropriate content, hear bad language as well as talking to strangers.



The second is a free game being advertised on social media which glamourises drug running and exploitation. The game is called "**Cunch line chronicles**". **Cunch-Line Chronicles** is a simple 2-dimensional game which promises users a realistic depiction of 'London gang life'. Cunch is a slang word for county and the game plays like a Super Mario style. The real danger to our children when playing this game is that although the makers state that; *'This game is completely satirical and the actions depicted should not be replicated in real life'* it will seem more plausible for vulnerable children to fall into this way of life and see this as 'accessible' crime. This game is also given an age rating of 17+ therefore is inappropriate for our children. It features adult themes and is **not suitable** for children in any way.



As mentioned on our previous newsletters, for more information regarding this and other games: <https://www.common sense media.org/>

And as always on Internet Matters.Org: <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/is-among-us-multiplayer-game-safe-for-children/>

Please talk to your children over the Christmas break and find out what they are doing online and why they are doing it.

A fantastic article about how parents can cope with their children's use of tech; particularly in a holiday time can be found here: <https://thisisgalway.ie/how-to-cope-with-kids-tech-this-christmas/>

Other news...



West Sussex County Council would like to bring to our attention the Real or Fake News debate. At this time of year and in this particular year we need to be aware of Fake News. Fake News can be false information, photos or videos purposefully created to confuse or misinform. It can also be genuine information that has been manipulated in order to deceive. Let's teach our children to become critical thinkers and to not believe everything we read! They need to know how to distinguish between what is real and not real. Encourage them to ask questions and discuss what they read.

The brilliant website Think U Know has also written an article about these 3 key areas: viewing, sharing, chatting and friending. These are the areas that they feel if we as parents focus on, we will help them stay safer online.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/parents-guide-being-social-online/>



As always, if you would like further support or have any questions, please contact me by email at:

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