

# Safeguarding Newsletter



MARCHWOOD C OF E INFANT SCHOOL

SPRING 2025

Welcome to our latest edition of our Safeguarding Newsletter from Marchwood Infants' safeguarding team. This newsletter is designed to bring you the latest, relevant help and advice on issues we feel will be of importance to you. Previous editions can be found on our [website](#).

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and anyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

## What is safeguarding?

The statutory government document "Keeping Children Safe in Education" sets out the legal duties that all schools must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 in schools and colleges.

Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to ensure the best outcomes.

Safeguarding covers a wide range of different aspects. These include types of abuse and how to spot them, reporting concerns, safer recruitment and promoting the welfare of children. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is critical to safeguarding.



## Spotlight on: online games

We have had an increasing number of children talking about games with inappropriate content, including extreme violence and horror that they have accessed via platforms such as Roblox. This platform in particular poses potential risks that include exposure to inappropriate content, online predators and harmful social interaction. This is a significant safeguarding concern and we are aware that parents may not be aware of the dangers that these platforms present. Therefore we have included a helpsheet for parents and carers to help navigate these issues. An additional factsheet about horror games is also included. We have also included some top tips below about staying safe online and a link to further advice from the NSPCC.

**Talk** about staying safe online

**Explore** their online world together

**Agree** rules about what's ok and what's not

**Manage** your familiar settings and controls

Don't feel confident starting a conversation with your child about what they're up to online? Read this advice from the NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>

## What to do if you're concerned about a child

If you are worried about a child's safety, please contact one of our designated safeguarding leads (DSLs).

## MIS Safeguarding Team



Mrs Lucy Chambers  
DSL



Mrs Fleur Fisher  
Deputy DSL



Mrs Marrianne Andrews  
Deputy DSL



Mrs Claire Besant  
Deputy DSL

## Acting on Concerns

Our first priority is your child's welfare and the school is required to take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of its pupils. There may be occasions when we have reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse. This includes occasions when a child has made a direct disclosure to us. We will ensure that our concerns about a child are discussed with parents/carers first if it is appropriate to do so. On some occasions, we are not able to do this due to the nature of the concerns. In this case school is obliged to follow the Child Protection procedures established by Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and complete an inter agency referral. This is reviewed by a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) team who provide triage and multi-agency assessment of safeguarding concerns. They make a decision as to what happens next and the most appropriate intervention is agreed in response to the person's identified needs.

## If you have concerns about a child, please contact:

### Hampshire Children Services

Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm  
Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm, phone 0300 555 1384

**Keeping  
children safe  
is everyone's  
responsibility**



At all other times, contact the out-of-hours service, phone 0300 555 1373

## Know the 4 types of child abuse

### Physical

Deliberately physically hurting a child.

### Emotional

Causing a child ongoing emotional harm.

### Sexual

Any sexual activity with a child.

### Neglect

Continually failing to meet a child's basic needs.

There is a wealth of information available online. Please visit <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/home.page> to find out more.

## Family Information and Services Hub

Find information about what is going on in your area, details on how to access services, organisations and activities in Hampshire, and the advice and support that is available.



### Hampshire's Local Offer

Information, support and services for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)



### Childcare and Early Years Education

Directory of childminders, pre-schools, day nurseries, out of school clubs and holiday schemes in your local area



### Family Support

Information and resources to support parents and families



### Activities, Leisure and Play

Directory of local community groups, organisations and activities



### Young People

Information and advice for Young People, including those in care and Care Leavers



### Employment, Training and Learning

Information for Young People about employment opportunities including Apprenticeships and Traineeships



### connect4communities

Directory of local help and support for those in financial difficulty



### Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Directory of information, advice and support services to support your own and your children's emotional health and wellbeing

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# ROBLOX

Roblox is one of the most popular video games among children. In 2020, the game's developers claimed that more than half of the USA's children had played it. As a 'sandbox' title, the game lets players create their own gaming experiences with Roblox Studio to build custom levels, which can then be shared online.

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### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Roblox encourages players to interact online (including a group chat function), which could expose children to various risks. Scammers often attempt to trick young Roblox fans into exchanging their paid-for items for something which turns out to be of much lesser value – or something they never even receive. The in-game chat has some filters, but it isn't perfect: players can still send unpleasant messages, while predators can reach out to children directly.

#### PUBLIC SERVERS

Roblox has private or VIP servers which allow people to play exclusively with their friends, but this costs money – usually a one-off payment. Most Roblox players will instead be on public servers that anyone can join. Servers can host games which focus on all kinds of aspects, including direct player interaction. Some lobbies, therefore, will put children at greater risk of contact from strangers than others.

#### ONLINE DATERS

These are also called 'ODers' and are quite common in Roblox. An ODer is an individual who joins a game with the intention of finding someone to date online – and eventually meet in person. Such online dating is against the Roblox community guidelines, but this doesn't usually deter such people. Some player-built Roblox levels have even been designed with online dating specifically in mind, and this will not always be obvious.

#### IN-APP PURCHASES

Roblox is free to download and play, but bear in mind that there are some extra costs. These are usually indicated with the symbol for 'Robux' (the in-game currency). Players are encouraged to make purchases in the game using real money. People can also buy extra Robux to spend on cosmetic items in the game, and it's also possible to purchase a private or VIP server.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

#### SET PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox comes with several parental control options, which are explained well on the game's official website. It's essential to enter the correct date of birth for younger players, as that allows Roblox to automatically apply appropriate chat filters. The game also allows parents and carers to set monthly spending restrictions and monitor their child's account.

#### DISABLE PRIVATE MESSAGING

Roblox's private messaging function raises the risk of children being contacted by people they may not want to speak with – potentially leading to bullying, harassment, toxicity and scam attempts. Keep in mind that the game allows you to disable messages from anyone who hasn't been added as a friend on your account.

#### PRIVATE SERVERS

If a child has friends to play Roblox with, paying for a private or VIP server decreases the risk of contact from strangers. Even then, however, the player who owns the server could invite other people – who might not be child friendly – to join them. Additionally, private servers can be set up in such a way that any player on the host's friends list can join, so it's important to discuss who children are playing with.

#### MONITOR SPENDING

If they don't understand they're using real money, it's easy for children to accidentally spend a sizeable amount in the game. Using parental controls to place limits on their spending will help avoid any nasty financial surprises. Ensuring that two-factor authentication is enabled on any payment accounts also makes it harder for children to spend money inadvertently.

#### DEALING WITH STRANGERS

At some point in their development, children must learn how to deal with strangers online. Show them how to block and report any users who are upsetting them or asking uncomfortable questions. Talking to them about what's okay to discuss – and what they should never tell a stranger – can help them understand how to communicate more safely with other people online.

### Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



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Sources: <https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/21/21333433/roblox-over-half-of-us-kids-playing-virtual-parties-fortnite>  
<https://corp.roblox.com/parents/>

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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HORROR GAMES

Horror video games come in a such a variety that the genre can hard to define. The overlapping element is that these games are designed to scare or unsettle the player through gameplay, atmosphere, story, music, setting and 'jump scares'. The most common sub-genres are survival horror, action horror, psychological horror, jump-scare horror and reverse horror. These games originate from a range of developers, including smaller indie studios which release download-only titles (that is, they aren't physically sold in shops) and therefore aren't subject to age ratings.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### ADULT THEMES

Horror games are typically made with adults in mind, which means by definition that they often feature adult themes. Outlast, for instance, is a popular horror game series including material such as nudity and extreme sadistic violence. Other games, like Five Nights at Freddy's and its sequels, have a back-story that doesn't actually appear on screen but still hints at explicit adult themes.

### VIOLENT CONTENT

Not all horror games contain graphic violence (titles like Five Nights at Freddy's and Phasmophobia prefer a spookier, suspenseful aesthetic) but many do portray extreme brutality very realistically. Until Dawn and the hugely popular Resident Evil and Outlast franchises, for instance, feature incredibly graphic violence. The safest course of action is to thoroughly research a game in advance.

### ONLINE INTERACTION

Some horror games are played cooperatively with others online. Phasmophobia is one of the most popular titles in this category, and while it doesn't feature an excessive amount of gore, it does place a strong emphasis on online interaction – often with strangers. Dead by Daylight is another game in which frequent and prolonged online communication with other players is an advantage.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL HORROR

Rather than simply laddling on the blood and gore, psychological horror games try to scare the player through subtler mental and emotional means. For this reason, this type of game (notable examples include Alien: Isolation, The Medium and the Amnesia series) can have a longer-lasting effect on players; some occasionally 'break the fourth wall' – interacting directly with the player as if they were real.

### LONG-TERM FEAR FACTOR

Horror games are designed to be scary: most players accept this fact in advance. They can, however, include content which leaves an unwanted lasting impression. By focusing on our fears and concerns to elicit an emotional reaction, horror games can be triggering in unexpected ways for some players. It's difficult to predict when – and how – a game might have long-term effects on an individual's mental wellbeing.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### BEWARE OF JUMP SCARES

Jump scares in video games are often no worse than they are in movies. If a young person doesn't cope well with being suddenly startled by something in a film or on TV, they probably won't be able to handle horror games featuring jump scares. Some games (such as Five Nights at Freddy's) are built entirely around this technique and aren't suitable for younger children or those who are easily frightened.

### RESEARCH THE GAME

It's best to look into a horror game thoroughly if your child expresses an interest in playing it. Many indie horror titles are download only and therefore aren't required to come with an age rating – so you'll need to do some background reading and judge the game's content for yourself. Check out the game's web pages, read any wikis about it (including fan ones) and watch videos of the gameplay.

### ENCOURAGE BREAKS

It's easy to lose track of time when gaming, and horror games are no exception. A short break every hour or so is important to rest the eyes and relieve the posture – especially if traumatic situations in the game have built up tension and stress. For horror gamers, breaks also give the added benefit of feeling more relaxed afterwards, which can mean a scarier gaming session when they resume!

### IF IN DOUBT, SWAP IT OUT

If your child finds a horror game to play, but after doing some research you decide it doesn't look like the right one for them, swap it out! There are a lot of horror titles to choose from, and some will be more appropriate than others. Work together with your child to find a suitable game for them. Remember, horror games don't have to be gore-spattered and graphic to be enjoyably scary!

### STAY RECEPTIVE

Maintaining good communication with your child is vital for safe gaming. If they see something in a horror game that disturbs them in ways they didn't expect, then they should feel comfortable opening up to you about it. Try not to simply laugh it off or make light of it, and always make time to listen. It's a useful reminder that they can talk to you about any type of problem they have in the future.

## Meet Our Expert

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