

ONLINE SAFETY



Online Gaming update

Apex Legends: What you need to know

Apex Legends is the new gaming sensation everyone's talking about, gaining 50 million players within just a month. It's a free-to-play Battle Royale game where players can team up with two other players to make a squad, and then compete against other squads in a bid to be the last ones standing.

‘Rivalling the popular game Fortnite, Apex Legends is a free-to-play Battle Royale game where players can team up with two other players to make a squad, and then compete against nineteen other squads in a bid to be the last ones standing.

Is Apex Legends appropriate for my child?

Experts here at NSPCC feel that the game is similar to Fortnite but looks to be a grittier version. PEGI determines age suitability for platforms such as Xbox, PS4, PC and Nintendo, and has rated Apex Legends as suitable for children aged 16 and over, which is higher than the age rating of Fortnite (12 and over). PEGI does not take into consideration the chat features in games, therefore children could be exposed to inappropriate language from other players.

Know the risks

- While you have to turn on voice chat to speak to others, the feature cannot be permanently turned off. There is no way of preventing players in your squad from talking to you, unless you mute them.
- The gaming platform doesn't enable players to be reported within the game, making it a harder and longer process to do so if another user is being inappropriate. Users can be reported through the Origin website



USEFUL WEBSITE

- Think U Know (Parents Section) - www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/
- Childnet (Parents Section) - www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers
- Parentzone - parentzone.org.uk/
- NSPCC (Share Aware) - www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/
- Vodafone (Digital Parenting) - www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html
- Internet Matters - www.internetmatters.org/
- UK Safer Internet Centre - <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

Top tips

Users can play and enjoy the game without using in-game chat as it has a 'pings' feature allowing users to send an automated message to their squad. This allows them to speak to each other purely for the benefit of the game, e.g. users can ask their team to revive them or to collect some weapons.

Follow TEAM tips to help keep your child safe online when playing online games:

- **Talk** to your child regularly about what they're doing online and how to stay safe. Let them know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset by anything they have seen.
- **Explore** your child's online activities together. Understand why they like playing certain games and make sure they know what they can do to keep themselves safe.
- **Agree** your own rules as a family when using sites, apps and games.
- **Manage** your technology and use the settings available to keep your child safe.

Visit an O2 Guru in store

O2 online safety Gurus are NSPCC trained advisors based in O2 stores across the UK. They can help you to set up a device so that it's safe for your child, including enabling parental controls. The service is free of charge regardless of your network.

Call our O2 NSPCC Online Safety Advice Line

If you have a question about parental controls or a concern about a social network your child uses, O2 expert advisors, trained by NSPCC, are here to help. Call them for free on 0808 800 5002. They are open Monday to Friday, between 9am and 7pm.

Visit the NSPCC website

If you are looking for more online safety support, in addition to Net Aware the NSPCC also have a wide range of resources, information and support, all to help keep your kids safe online. Just head to the online safety section of the [NSPCC website](#).



Fortnite: Season 8 released

Fortnite's latest Season 8 enables players to compete through a brand new theme. Each season is typically released every two to three months and include new features such as extra weapons, new maps and fresh new challenges to take on.

Here is what you need to know about all the seasons and if Fortnite is appropriate for your child.

What are seasons?

Fortnite: Battle Royale has a storyline, which develops and is released in seasons. The story in Fortnite doesn't have a traditional narrative; it evolves through new themes which are expressed via major events occurring at the end of each season. The seasons are typically released every two to three months and include new features such as different designs, additional items like weapons, new maps and fresh challenges to take on.

Fortnite is available to play as a mobile app (both iOS & Android), on PlayStation, Xbox, PC, Mac and the Nintendo Switch. It is a cross platform game, meaning you could be playing on a Nintendo Switch, against someone who is playing on a PlayStation.

Is Fortnite: Battle Royal appropriate for my child?

Apps stores such as Google play and Apple's app store determine their own age ratings and PEGI determines age suitability for platforms such as Xbox, PS4, PC and Nintendo. For Fortnite, both Apple and PEGI have rated Fortnite suitable for children aged 12 and over. However, PEGI does not take into consideration the chat features in games, therefore children could be exposed to inappropriate language from other players.

What features and risks are there on Fortnite?

Fortnite: Battle Royale has several features that can be fun, but there are also risks. These include:

- Players can add friends in the mobile game if they have an account with Epic, the game's developer. Friends can be added by username in the game's main menu.
- There is a chat feature in the game that allows users to contact each other using voice or text. You can disable voice chat in the game by selecting the 3 lines in the top right of the screen, select the settings icon, choose the 'Audio' tab at the top of the screen and go to the 'Voice Chat' option, where you can select 'Off'.
- There is cartoon violence in the game. You can use a variety of weapons to kill other players, such as guns and axes.
- There are in-app purchases, which can become expensive.

Players can be reported to the [Player Support team](#) if you are concerned about activity or behaviour.

