

## Video games and keeping your child safe Digital Safeguarding – Key information for parents/carers

Kirton Lindsey Primary School is committed to keeping our children safe and to promoting the safe, responsible use of the technologies. School leaders regularly ask the children about their views and understanding about digital safeguarding. A regular issue highlighted by the children is playing video games that are not a suitable age, according to their PEGI rating.



**PEGI ratings denote the content and appropriateness of games.** Since 2003 games have been age rated under the Pan-European Game Information (PEGI) system which operates in the UK and over 30 other

countries of Europe, in addition, where a game showed realistic scenes of gross violence or sexual activity the game had to be legally classified and received one or other of the BBFC classification certificates given for videos/DVDs.

The PEGI system has been effectively incorporated into UK law and video games will be age rated at one or other of the following age levels; which you will find on video game sleeves. Ratings do not denote the difficulty or the enjoyment level of a game, but that it contains content suitable for a certain age group and above. The PEGI age ratings will enable parents and carers to make an informed choice when buying a game for their children. It is important to note that the age ratings 12, 16 and 18 age ratings are mandatory and that it is **illegal** for a retailer to supply any game with any of these ratings to anyone below the specified age. The age ratings 3 and 7 are advisory only.



A **PEGI 18 rated game** is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes gross violence and/or includes elements of specific types of violence. **In general terms it is where the level of violence is so visually strong that it would make the reasonable viewer react with a sense of revulsion. This rating is also applied where the level of sexual activity is explicit which may mean that genitals are visible.** Any game that glamorises the use of real life drugs will also probably

**fall into this category.**



In addition to age ratings, video games will include indicators of the type of content and activities that the game includes in it. The descriptors are fairly self-explanatory but should be read in conjunction with the age rating given for a video game. A violence descriptor with an 18 rated game will indicate a more extreme level of violence than a violence descriptor with a 12 rated game. Similarly a sex/nudity descriptor with a 12 rated game will probably indicate sexual innuendo but a sex/nudity descriptor with an 18 rated game will indicate sexual content of a more explicit nature.

### Parent/Carers Responsibility

- The PEGI ratings system helps you make informed decisions about which video games to choose for your family.
- A PEGI rating gives the suggested minimum age that you must be to play a game due to the suitability of the content.
- As parents/carers you can take direct control of what games your children play at home, how they play them and for how long through parental controls on video game systems such as the Xbox or PlayStation
- Choosing and playing video games as a family is the best way to understand and enjoy them together
- The stories, worlds and characters in video games offer playful ways to engage with a wide range of subjects and fuels creativity, interests and imagination

- The [www.askaboutgames.com](http://www.askaboutgames.com) website provides further information about video games ratings and offers real family stories and suggestions on how video games can be a creative and collaborative experience for all the family
- The [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) website offers parents/carers information on keeping your child safe online

Kirton Lindsey Primary School, through our Computing Curriculum teaches the children about digital safeguarding but lots of children's online experiences happen at home and so it is important that parents work in partnership with the school to help safeguard children, educate them in online safety and prepare them for their digital future.