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## Online and Video Gaming

Dear Parents

At Sitwell Junior School we are committed to the ensuring the safeguarding and well-being of all our children. Recently, it has been brought to our attention that a number of children are playing online apps and video games at home that are not age appropriate. I am writing this letter to raise you awareness of the content of such games.

All video, computer and downloadable games are given an age rating under the PEGI system. The age ratings are 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18.



These ratings do not indicate enjoyment or intellectual level; they mean that the content is unsuitable for anyone below that age. 3 and 7 are advisory ratings, but it is a criminal offence for a retailer to supply a 12, 16 or 18 rated game to a person below that age. As well as age ratings, games will usually include a list of types of content included. For example:



As a parent, it is your duty of care to ensure that your child only has access to age-appropriate games. A game that is rated an 18 is designed for adults and includes 'gross violence' to 'make the viewer feel a sense of revulsion'.

Many online games also allow the users to communicate with each other through 'chat rooms'.



When children join in these conversations, they can be exposed to inappropriate language and other risks, including grooming.

We know your child's safety is a high priority for you and we would urge you monitor their use of video, computer and online games at home very closely by following these top tips taken from the PEGI website <http://www.pegi.info/en/index/>

### **Tips for parents**

1. Always look for the age classification on the game package or via the search engine on this website.
2. Try to look for a summary or review of the game content or ideally play the game yourself first.
3. Play video games with your children, watch over them when they play and talk with them about the games they play. Explain why certain games are not suitable.
4. Be aware that online games sometimes enable the download of extra software that can alter the game content and eventually the age classification of the game.
5. Online games are usually played in virtual communities requiring players to interact with unknown fellow players. Tell your children not to give out personal details and report inappropriate behaviour.
6. Set the limits by using the parental control tools of the game console or pc

For further information, please read the attached 'Good Gaming Guide' or visit the following websites:

[www.askaboutgames.com](http://www.askaboutgames.com)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.pegi.info/en/index/](http://www.pegi.info/en/index/)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Thank you for your continued support.

*S. Walker*

Mrs Walker

Assistant Head