

## Simmondley Primary School

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Dear Parent/Carer

### **Video Games and keeping your child safe: Online Safety - key information for parents/carers**

Simmondley Primary School, working in partnership with our parents/carers, is committed to keeping our children safe and to promoting the safe, responsible use of the technologies available.

In the run up to Christmas, we hope you will find the information below useful as we are aware that many parents feel under pressure to purchase age inappropriate video games. The age rating is a clear indication of the suitability of content and we hope that the information below will help you and your child to choose games which are appropriate for their age.

#### **1) 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 other inappropriate 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. You will find these levels

displayed 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.



**An 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.

**Any game that glamorises the use of real life drugs will also probably fall into this category.**

## **2) Content Indicators**



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. For example, 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.

## **3) Parental 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 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 Ask About Games website ([www.askaboutgames.com](http://www.askaboutgames.com)) 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
- We also recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)) for more information on keeping your child safe online.

## **4) School support and action**

Simmondley Primary School has a focussed Online Safety week each year, as well as discussing Online Safety issues throughout the year.

With thanks for your continued support,

Debbie Greaves  
Headteacher