

# What Parents need to know about Age Ratings for Social Media and Gaming

As a school, we have become increasingly aware that some pupils may be using Social Media Platforms as well as partaking in Online Gaming with age restrictions, in some cases over 10 years over the child's age. This is a huge problem which all schools are facing and we would like to take this opportunity to remind parents of the age restrictions and ratings on Social Media and games. Below is a table for age restrictions for the most popular Social Media platforms; which are 13+. As a school we would like to make parents aware of these restrictions and highlight the importance of internet safety. There are various links at the bottom of this letter which contain more information about how to keep children safe when online. If anyone is concerned about a child who has a social media account or is in need of any more information on ways that school can help, please see Miss Hodby. As a school, we will be holding an Internet Safety Awareness on the 11<sup>th</sup> February.

## Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?



Sourced from NSPCC website October 2019

## Age Ratings for Gaming

Age ratings are systems used to ensure that entertainment content, such as games, but also films, tv shows or mobile apps, are clearly labelled with a minimum age recommendation based on the content they have. **These age ratings provide guidance to consumers, parents in particular, to help them decide whether or not to buy a particular product for a child.**



PEGI 3

The content of games with a PEGI 3 rating is considered suitable for all age groups. The game should not contain any sounds or pictures that are likely to frighten young children. A very mild form of violence (in a comical context or a childlike setting) is acceptable. No bad language should be heard.



PEGI 7

Game content with scenes or sounds which can possibly frighten younger children should fall in this category. Very mild forms of violence (implied, non-detailed, or non-realistic violence) are acceptable for a game with a PEGI 7 rating.

Games which this applies to: **Minecraft**



PEGI 12

Video games that show violence of a slightly more graphic nature towards fantasy characters or non-realistic violence towards human-like characters would fall in this age category. Sexual innuendo or sexual posturing can be present, while any bad language in this category must be mild. Gambling as it is normally carried out in real life in casinos or gambling halls, can also be present (e.g. card games that in real life would be played for money).

Games which this applies to: **Fortnite**



### PEGI 16

The game contains bad language. This descriptor can be found on games with a PEGI 12 (mild swearing), PEGI 16 (e.g. sexual expletives or blasphemy) or PEGI 18 rating (e.g. sexual expletives or blasphemy).



### PEGI 18

The adult classification is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes a depiction of gross violence, apparently motiveless killing, or violence towards defenceless characters. The glamorisation of the use of illegal drugs and explicit sexual activity should also fall into this age category.

Further information can be found on this factsheet about Age Ratings.

# What parents need to know about AGE RATINGS

**bbfc** **PEGI**

If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.

## RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

### WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:

- U** Universal, suitable for all ages
- PG** Parental Guidance required
- 12** Suitable for people aged 12 and over
- 12A** Suitable for people aged 12 and over, except for material which is restricted to an adult
- 15** Suitable for people aged 15 and over
- 18** Suitable for people aged 18 and over
- R18** Restricted. Adult content only available in specially licensed cinemas and specialist retailers

### WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

### LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

## RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.

### WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:

- 3** www.pegi.info
- 7** www.pegi.info
- 12** www.pegi.info
- 16** www.pegi.info
- 18** www.pegi.info

PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:

- Violence
- Bad Language
- Sex
- Drugs
- Discrimination
- Gambling
- Violence
- In-Game Purchases

### LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.

### PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk) Source: [www.pegi.info](http://www.pegi.info)

**NOS National Online Safety** A whole school community approach to online safety  
[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)  
 Email: [nos@helpline.nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:nos@helpline.nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 306 5067

For more information about internet safety, social media age restrictions and gaming age ratings please see the following websites:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://pegi.info/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

