Safeguarding

Spring 2023

Education Welfare Officer and Family School Support Worker

We are fortunate in the Newport Cluster of schools that we have our own Education Welfare Officer and Family School Support Worker, services that we buy as a group of schools.

Our Education Welfare Officer is Mrs Bobby Kaur. It is her job to support school attendance and she meets with Mrs Gittins and Mrs Pierce or Mrs Heeley each half term to monitor every pupil. Her primary concern is supporting children to attend school regularly and helping families where they identify difficulties. If your child's attendance has dropped below 90% or there are any patterns of absence, she may call you to see if she can help in any way. We know that families go through challenges and that children can sometimes present with anxieties or behaviours which make it more difficult for them to attend school and Bobby is there to help.

Our Family School Support Worker is Ginny Wright. Her role is to support our families where there are needs identified such as anxiety, negative behaviours, social issues or where there is a need for Early Help. Ginny works with children and their families alongside the school. We will always work with you when there is a referral to this service and you will need to consent to the request being made. Ginny aims to respond to referrals within about a week which means that we are able to address concerns very quickly. We may initially use staff within our own school to support children and their families before considering a referral to Ginny.

Online Safety

Children do not always think about the need to stay safe online. They can tell you not to speak to strangers but they will speak to them via an online platform or game. We need to make sure that our children are safe when they are playing games which take place on internet forums and educate them to keep their details safe and to stay on games and platforms which are age appropriate.



Reporting concerns

If you are concerned about a post online or any content or communication on the internet, you can report it to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Agency also known as CEOP.

CLICK CEOP
Internet Safety

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MINECRAFT

AGE RATING 7+

Minecraft is a beloved classic of modern gaming. First released in 2011, this open-ended 'sandbox' game of building and exploration still has over 140 million players who happily return to play it at least once every month. Minecraft has also been utilised for much more than just entertainment: it's sometimes used in schools to teach children coding, and it's also employed as a tool for computer-aided design, which is another valuable skill. Encouraging creativity and problem solving, Minecraft has plenty to offer gamers of all ages, and it's available on almost all video game platforms.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

PUBLIC SERVERS

Joining a public network (called a server) lets your child potentially interact with strangers through text chat. Some servers focus on building, while others are dedicated to role-playing – encouraging direct player interaction. Anyone can join public servers and connecting to one is relatively simple. Public server IP addresses (and therefore someone's location) are easy to find with search engines.

GRIEFING

Some people in Minecraft delight in purposefully damaging or destroying another player's creation. This is called 'griefing' and is a form of bullying: it intentionally spoils someone else's experience in the game by deleting hours of their work and forcing them to start from scratch. Many public servers treat griefing as a severe offence and frequently ban offenders.

ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's gameplay is relatively simple, and the outcome (when a child has built something new, for instance) can be extremely gratifying. This can make the game highly addictive. It's easy to lose track of time while playing Minecraft, causing committed young players to forget about other activities like homework or enjoying family time.

SCARY ELEMENTS

The visual design and gameplay of Minecraft is purposefully child friendly, so there's nothing too untoward in the game. However, some of the 'baddies' that can be encountered might prove a little too scary for very young players. In the game, certain enemies come out at night and are accompanied by audio – such as zombie moans and skeleton bone rattles – that may unnerve young ones.

ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

After initially buying the game, players can make optional extra purchases for cosmetic items and other bonuses. Minecraft Realms is an optional online subscription (requiring regular payments) that lets users run a multiplayer server to play with their friends. Most games consoles also need an active subscription to enable online play – so online gaming can quickly become an expensive hobby.

Advice for Parents & Carers

RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

There are a lots of Minecraft content creators who release helpful videos about the game on YouTube and Twitch. Not all of these, however, are suitable for children. Watching these content creators' channels yourself first is a safe way to find appropriate Minecraft videos to share with your children. This also helps you learn more about the game itself, and how your child plays it.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting 'Creative' or 'Peaceful' mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of moaning zombies or creepers damaging your build.

HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for your child to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given the necessary joining details. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – to ban someone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft.

ENCOURAGE BREAKS

It's easy for the hours to fly by while your child is playing Minecraft, so reminding them to take regular breaks is essential. This is a useful way for them to learn good time management, which they'll benefit from as they get older. It will also teach them to play their favourite games in moderation – limiting addictive behaviour and allowing them to manage their day better.

TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone needs to have contact with a stranger online. Talking to your child about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan in place for dealing with any hostile or difficult strangers. Ensure that your child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online, and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.

Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.

National Online Safety®

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