Video Games – advice for parents

Children love to play video games, but there are some risks involved. The two main areas of concern are

- Children experiencing violent or sexual content beyond their age.
- Children playing online with strangers and either experiencing inappropriate language, or being groomed.
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The PEGI ratings should help you decide what is appropriate for your child

PEGI 18
The adult classification is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes a depiction of gross violence and/or includes elements of specific types of violence. Gross violence is the most difficult to define since it can be very subjective in many cases, but in general terms it can be classed as the depictions of violence that would make the viewer feel a sense of revulsion

PEGI 16
This rating is applied once the depiction of violence (or sexual activity) reaches a stage that looks the same as would be expected in real life. More extreme bad language, the concept of the use of tobacco and drugs and the depiction of criminal activities can be content of games that are rated 16.

PEGI 12
Videogames that show violence of a slightly more graphic nature towards fantasy character and/or non graphic violence towards human-looking characters or recognisable animals, as well as videogames that show nudity of a slightly more graphic nature would fall in this age category. Any bad language in this category must be mild and fall short of sexual expletives.

Further advice is available from www.askaboutgames.com which will also provide advice on setting parental controls on games consoles to help ensure that play is safe for children.

It is also important to ask your children who they are playing with. One recent, extreme example was of a 19 year old grooming a 14 year old boy, Breck Bednar before murdering him. Most parents would want to know who their children are playing with in the real world, the same should also apply to the virtual world..