

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

## **Fortnite Online Gaming Concerns**

I am writing to you to make sure that you are aware of a game that many of our children are playing online. If your child is not playing this, then please ignore this letter and accept my apologies for having sent it when the issue does not concern you.

The game in question is called Fortnite. It is a free online survival game in its basic form, up to four players work together on various missions to collect resources, build fortifications around defensive objects, and construct weapons and traps to engage in combat with an army of zombie-like creatures that are trying to kill them. It is designed as a shooter-survival game, one version of which may involve up to 100 players fighting to be the last person standing.

It has come to my knowledge that some children are spending excessive time after school playing Fortnite. I urge you to sit with your child at some point when Fortnite is on the screen and to keep an eye on how your child is behaving online towards others, who is on their shared community at any given time and how they are behaving towards your child. Games like this expose children to images of violence and the use of foul language with one another. The online rivalry is often being carried over to school the next day, with the competing children using adverse remarks against one another.

Currently, the staff members are spending a disproportionate amount of time with some children each day, dealing with the emotional fallout from having played Fortnite the previous evening. This is obviously not the best use of the children's learning time and I'm sure that you agree that it is vital to limit the issues that are arising from this game to an absolute minimum.

Below are some guidelines and information on Fortnite that may assist you:

### **What is Fortnite?**

Fortnite is an online game, Battle Royale is a part of Fortnite where players do not have to pay to play. In Battle Royale, the free segment of Fortnite, 100 players compete against each other to be the last person standing in player vs player combat.

### **What age rating is Fortnite?**

Fortnite has a rating of 12 years of age due to the frequent scenes of mild violence.

### **Blocking and Reporting**

On Fortnite you can report players who are behaving inappropriately. Encourage your child to report bad behaviour - this might be cheating or abusive behaviour. You can report players by using the in-game feedback tool located in the game Main Menu, you can also make a report by emailing the creators of Fortnite <http://bit.ly/fortnitereport>

Make sure to include the player's full in-game name, spelled as accurately as possible. If it looks like the player is using unusual or uncommon characters in their in-game name, take a screenshot and send this too.

### **Talk and Share Information**

To really understand Fortnite talk with them about why they enjoy it. Talk about your concerns and discuss how you can work together to keep safe. Encourage them to share their gaming with you and give them the confidence to come to you if they have any worries.

### **Security, Settings and Screen Time**

To avoid children speaking to strangers during the game, set up a Party of friends before they play. This means that they are only able to communicate with people they know and other players voices will be muted.

Although children will want to use headphones during the games so they don't miss important noises, you should consider setting the sound so that it comes through the TV and headphones. This means that you can hear what is being said during gameplay.

If they're playing on an Xbox or PlayStation you can use the parent controls to limit the length of gaming sessions.

Fortnite matches can last up to 30 minutes, and children won't want to stop playing in the middle of a game as they will leave team-mates in the lurch and lose any points they've earned for that game. You could use a timer or discuss in advance how long you are happy for them to play.

If you wish to discuss this game or any problems you might be having with it at home, please discuss this with your child's teacher so that we can work together to help your child.

Thank you in advance for your support with this sensitive matter.

Yours sincerely,

Sophia Roulston  
Principal