

Milecastle Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs. S. Richardson

Tuesday 8th May 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

E-safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Milecastle Primary School. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and behave appropriately on line. However, we can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work together with parents and carers to ensure online safety messages are consistent. I am writing to inform you that we have recently become aware of issues in relation to the online safety of children and young people using the game '**Fortnite**'. As we are committed to promoting safe and responsible use of the internet we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a concern.

Firstly, the age rating for 'Fortnite' is PEGI12. This means that children under the age of 12 should not be using the game. One of the features of playing this game is that users can enter into online chats with other users. This potentially means your children could be speaking to people they do not know and which cannot be vetted. What is said in these online chats cannot be controlled; including the use of inappropriate language or cyber bullying.

We have posted a parent's guide to this game on our website under a **new e-safety tab**; this is somewhere where **we will add any further parent guides** we find linked to online gaming and apps the children use. For example, although the minimum age for it is currently 13, a **Snapchat guide** is also available as many of our children use the app.

Should you decide to allow your child to use social media sites, games or apps aimed at 12+ then we would strongly advise that you:

- Check any profiles your child has are set to private and that only known and trusted friends can see information that is posted
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behavior such as sharing personal information and not posting offensive messages or photos
- Carefully read and consider the advice for parents/carers by visiting any help or safety centres from apps/games or websites
- Visit Internet Matters for advice about parental controls and filtering: www.internetmatters.org
- Visit the NSPCC Net Aware site for information about social networking apps: www.net-aware.org.uk
- Set up your own account so you understand how the site works (ask them to have you as a friend on their profile) so you know what they are posting online
- Make sure your child understands the following rules
 - Always keep your profile private
 - Never accept friends you don't know in real life without speaking to a trusted adult



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- Never publically post anything which could reveal your identity or location
- Never post anything or do something online that you wouldn't want your parents/teachers to see or something which could upset somebody
- Never agree to meet somebody you only know online without telling a trusted adult
- Always tell someone (such as a trusted adult, Childline or CEOP) if you feel threatened or someone online upsets you or makes you feel uncomfortable.

We feel it important to point out to parents the risks of underage use of such sites, so you can make informed decisions as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not. These profiles will have been created away from school and sometimes by a child, their friends, siblings or even parents. We will take action, such as speaking to parents, if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or wellbeing of any of our children.

Your help is needed to talk to your children about how they keep safe and behave appropriately online.

For more advice and information visit:

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk - Visit the Parent/Carer section and use the "Click CEOP" button to seek advice and report online abuse
- www.childnet.com - Visit the "Know It All" section for an interactive guide about online safety
- www.getsafeonline.org - Free up-to-date security advice including complex passwords and managing hacked accounts
- www.inetnetmatters.org - Information from the four largest internet service providers (BT, Sky, Talk Talk and Virgin)
- www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety - NSPCC's Share Aware campaign provides information about popular social media sites, apps and games
- www.saferinternet.org.uk - Parents guides to safety tools on popular devices and signposts report mechanisms including Instagram

We recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents . If you have any concerns or queries regarding E-Safety or cyberbullying then please contact us.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs S Richardson
Headteacher

