AGE RESTRICTION 12+

FORTNITE BATTLE ROYALE

'Fortnite - Battle Royale' is a free to play section of the game 'Fortnite.' The game sees 100 players dropped on to an island from a 'battle bus,' where they have to compete until one survivor remains. The last remaining player on the island wins the game. Players have to find hidden items, such as weapons, to help them survive longer in the game. To make the game more challenging, there is an added twist called 'the storm' which reduces the size of the island from the start of gameplay, bringing the players closer together in proximity. The game is available on PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Mac and iOS.

What parents need to know about FORTNITE: BATTLE ROYALE

MICROTRANSACTIONS

Newly featured items are released daily and are only available to purchase within 24 hours of their release. These are cosmetic items, called 'skins,' 'gliders' and 'emotes,' which change the characters' appearance, but do not improve the game play. Once purchased, the player has full use of these in the future. The designs are attractive for players to purchase and even celebrities are endorsing them. Also available to purchase in the game is a 'Battle Pass.' When a new 'Battle Pass' is released, users can take part in a series of challenges, receiving more rewards (cosmetics) by progressing through different tiers. Whichever rewards they achieve can then be used in the game.

IT CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Games can last around 20 minutes but this varies according to the game. Children may feel angry if they lose the game and will want to continue playing until they achieve their desired result. The competitive nature of the game may make it difficult for them to stop playing halfway through as their position in the game could be affected.

IT CAN BE PLAYED ON THE GO

The game was released on mobile devices in April 2018, meaning it can be played without the need for a home games console. Some schools have reported that the game is distracting their students whilst in the classroom. As the game is available outside of the home, parents may not be aware of how long their child is playing this game.

HACKER ATTACKS

News site Forbes stated that it had seen "dozens" of online reports from people who said their accounts had been compromised by hackers, who had gained access to user's accounts in the game and accrued hundreds of pounds in fraudulent charges.

TALKING TO STRANGERS DURING SQUAD MODE

Interacting with other players in the game is part of the fun as players can communicate with their friends and other players in the game. Players will benefit from wearing headphones to hear footsteps from other players trying to compromise their game. Wearing headphones makes it difficult for parents to hear what exactly is being said and children may be exposed to inappropriate language. Fortnite includes really good reporting features for players either cheating or misbehaving, and works towards having one of the best online gaming communities.

'FREE' TO PLAY

The game IS free to play. However, if playing on Xbox, you will need an Xbox gold subscription, which does require a fee.

NO PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED

Signing up to the game is relatively simple. Users have the option to log in with either their Facebook or Google accounts or their email address. When signing up with an email address, no proof of age is required. If your child is under the age of 12, it is important to check whether your child has the game downloaded.

TALKING TO STRANGERS DURING SQUAD MODE

There are many accounts on Facebook and Twitter which claim to give away free money (known as 'V bucks') for games which will be transferred to their Xbox Live or PSN cards. Any giveaway promotion from Fortnite will be in the game. It is important to check the authenticity of these accounts before giving away personal information in order to claim 'V bucks.' The websites or accounts may ask you to share your account name and password in order to claim the money; if these offers seem too good to be true, they usually are.

AGE RESTRICTIONS

PEGI has given the game a rating of 12+. Even though the game includes violence and weapons such as crossbows, grenade launchers, rifles, pistols, shotguns and more, PEGI say "more graphic and realistic looking violence towards fantasy characters is allowed. Any violence towards human characters must look unrealistic unless it consists of only minor or trivial injury such as a slap," making the game 'suitable' for children aged 12 and over.

Top Tips for Parents

LIMIT GAME TIME

Parents can use parental controls on Xbox and PC to limit the time a child is playing games on these devices. Be aware that the game is available on iOS and will soon be available on all mobiles. With this in mind, it is worth having a conversation with your child to discuss and agree how long you would like them to play the games for. Even though the games last around 20 minutes, it may be difficult to take them away from a game mid play. It may be worth imposing a limit on the amount of matches they play rather than a time limit.

PREVENT YOUR CHILD FROM TALKING TO STRANGERS

There is an option to turn off the voice chat feature, which means your child wouldn't be able to talk to anybody, including their friends. However, they would still be able to use the in-app chat and hear other people's conversations. To turn off voice chat, open the Settings menu in the top right of the main Fortnite page, then click on the cog icon. Open the Audio tab at the top of the screen. From there, you can turn off voice chat.

LOOK OUT FOR VBUCK SCAMS

It is important that your children are aware of the scams that they may come across online in association with the game. Open up conversation with them about scams and how they should never share their username or password with people in order to gain anything for the game.

RESTRICT PAYMENT METHODS

'Fortnite: Battle Royale' is a free to play game, but there are still options to make additional purchases. If you do not want your child to make payments, ensure your card is not associated with their account. If you are happy for your child to make payments in the game, but want to restrict spending, we suggest using a paysafecard, or a games console gift card. These can be purchased in specific amounts, which will allow you to restrict the amount your child spends and removes the need for a credit/debit card to be used with their account.

SHOW THEM HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

If your child believes a player is playing or talking inappropriately, you should advise them to report them. To report a player, you can use the in-game feedback tool located in the Main Menu of the game. Additionally, you can report a player in-game when spectating them.

USE A STRONG PASSWORD

It may seem like a simple tip, but it is important that your child selects a strong password when creating an account, particularly if a credit/debit card is associated with the account. This will help reduce the risk of their account being hacked.

National Online Safety

A whole school community approach to online safety

www.nationalonlinesafety.com

Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061

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