

Online Safety 4 Schools

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Fortnite

Parents - everything you need to know about the free, multiplayer game

What is Fortnite?

Battle Royale is a free, multiplayer game that is incredibly popular with students. The concept of the game is simple – the last player to survive the battle wins. But this is not a traditional war game. Fortnite Battle Royale is set in a colourful, surreal world where players can dress their avatars up in silly costumes, dance, and have fun while trying to survive. Snapchat is a popular photo, video, audio, and live messaging app - Fortnite is an online game released in 2017

What Age ?

Apple App Store Rating: 12+

Google Play Rating: T (Teen)

There are 3 main game options:

1. Fortnite Save the World

- Similar to Minecraft, the game play on Fortnite Save the World emphasizes exploring and building
- The player's objective is to stockpile resources and build shelters that will help them survive a zombie apocalypse
- As zombies attack, players shoot at them to try to survive

2. Fortnite Creative

- The Creative mode lets players gain access to their own private island
- Players can design their own game elements (including new structures, parks, deathmatches, etc.)
- Users can invite friends to come play their creations

3. Fortnite Battle Royale

- Fortnite Battle Royale is a multiplayer shooting game with as many as 100 players per round
- At the beginning of each round, players jump out of a plane onto an island
- There are weapons and resources hidden around the island
- Players fight each other until only one player is left
- Players can arm themselves or use the resources they find to build a shelter for themselves
- Over the course of the game, the gameplay area shrinks so players are pushed closer together

Why is Fortnite Battle Royale so popular with students?

- Players can chat with other players using headsets or text

- Silly humour is very much a part of the game
- Players can wear funny costumes and perform dance moves
- Friends can team up together in duo mode or squad mode
- Fortnite Battle Royale is one of the first games to let players play together across most platforms. So, for example, players on mobile can play with their friends who are playing on an Xbox
- The Party Royale mode (launched in 2020) lets players hang out with friends, play nonviolent games, and watch virtual concerts, shows, and even movies

Why should parents care?

- Fortnite is incredibly popular with children
- The developers add new features and play modes every week to entice people to play more
- Games can last up to 20 minutes and cannot be paused
- The games are designed to keep players coming back, which can be difficult for teens and tweens who have not yet developed a healthy relationship with screen time
- Users can chat with strangers while playing and can come across profanity or inappropriate language
- Upgrades can add up. In addition to purchasing Premium Battle Passes, players can also buy 3rd party add-ons to make gameplay easier or to get certain upgrades
- Some of these 3rd party upgrades have been reported as being malicious in nature
- Hackers have targeted Fortnite accounts and large amounts of money on in-game purchases

What can parents do?

- Familiarise yourself with Fortnite to help protect your children
- Listen to your kid's conversations when they are they playing the game. Are they using appropriate language with the other players?
- Understand the terminology of the game (skins, avatars, how much adds-ons cost, etc.)
- Limit your child to play only with friends you know (no strangers)
- Understand that what happens when playing the game with friends can/may carry over to school (fights or disputes over tactics or who won/lost)
- Put a time limit on the game. Fortnite can be addictive
- Restrict method of payment
- Restrict who your child can talk to during the game, open the settings menu on the main Fortnite page, click on the "cog" icon, open the audio tab, and turn off the voice chat. Then your child will not have the option to talk while playing.
- Encourage a healthy balance when it comes to screen time and time spent offline
- Discuss the difference between virtual violence and real life
- Teach children to never share personal information with strangers online or on games
- Set spending guidelines with your child and ensure that they ask before downloading any new apps or making any in-app purchases
- Download Fortnite and play it before deciding if it is appropriate for your child
- Play the game with your children
- Tell them to come to you if they ever feel uncomfortable on Fortnite
- Embracing your child's engagement with platforms and games like Fortnite
- Fortnite offers a great incentive to increase account security by allowing players to enable 2-factor authentication.

Conclusion

Snapchat can be fun for students if they are using it responsibly. Parents should stay vigilant and closely monitor exactly what their kids are doing on Snapchat to help keep them safe.

Children (users) can get in trouble on the Fortnite app when they do not regulate their screen time, play, and chat with strangers, make purchases without their parents knowing, or purchase malicious 3rd party upgrades. Game play can also carry over to school and can cause animosity among friends over winning/losing.

If a Parent/Carer decides to allow their Un 13 Child to use Snapchat (NOT ADVISABLE)

- If you and your Un 12 child decide to use Fortnite, then make sure you know and always know your child's profile name, password etc. This allows you to have control and allows for periodic checking of your child's use of Fortnite, their contacts, and closed groups.
- Create the profile together and keep the log in details secret. Social Media, Gaming and App usage is not a right it is a privilege, so children (especially those under 12) should earn the right to spend time with their parents using Fortnite, stay in control and share the experience.