Fortnite: Are your children safe?

The overnight gaming sensation of 2018 and into 2019 has to be Fortnite. In less than a year since launch it has attracted over 125 million users. Although the game is aimed at the teen market (in the UK the Video Standards council rate Fortnite as PEGI 12 for frequent scenes of mild violence), we understand that many children of all ages are playing this game. Which is often evidenced by the dance crazes sweeping our playgrounds! Floss anybody?

With the huge success of online games, comes an increased risk in allowing children to play. To ensure that your children are safe whilst playing these games there are several things you can do to ensure they stay safe.

Monitoring who they are talking to: Along with checking the games' suitability, it's worth checking the online communication settings on the game to ensure children aren't talking to strangers. It is possible without these restrictions in place for strangers to talk to your children and there is no screening or monitoring.

Managing in-app purchase on the game: The game, although free to download, has considerable in-app purchases that you need to be aware of as well, which means (unless password protected) your children could purchase and spend real money to buy new items within the game.

Setting time limits or game limits on Fortnite: Finally, it's important to have some limits in terms of play time for the game. This is something you can agree with your child. The longest a game lasts is 20 minutes, but that is only true if they survive to the end. Many games will be much shorter depending on the player's ability.

Ultimately, families will get the most out of the game where parents understand and join in with what their children are playing and turn it from something played in bedrooms to a game for the family room that everyone enjoys. We hope you will speak to your children about Fortnite (if they are currently playing) and check that you are happy with them continuing to play going forwards.