Information for parents on popular games this Christmas

This guidance is based on information supplied by Catherine Shaw, RESH Coordinator, Darlington Borough Council.

Call of Duty, Modern Warfare. Pegi rating 18. The brand new Call of Duty game from the popular series that's often referred to as COD. Features a graphically impressive campaign that's not for the faintheartedd. This first-person shooter sees you fighting terrorists on the streets of London and fighting alongside a local militia in a fictional middle-eastern country. The game also has a lot of online multi-player options. **We would strongly recommend that no one buys this for their children**. This is an 18 years rated game and the campaign is brutal depicting many horrors of modern conflict and terror such as gas attacks and civilian causalities (including men, women and children). It's rated18 for a reason and is a very realistic looking game.

FIFA 20, Pegi rating 3 – The popular football series returns for another year and not much to say really it's football and if you like football then you will probably love it. The game features a host of features and game modes including online play. The game is rated for ages 3 and up and while the content in general is suitable for all ages care needs to be taken especially if playing online. The average age of an online gamer is around 36 years of age so don't always expect your child to be playing with children their own age. Another thing to watch out for is in game purchases as it is possible to spend real money on building that dream team you've always wanted. Make sure your consoles are set up with parental controls to prevent unwanted purchases being made.

Star Wars, Jedi Fallen Order, Pegi rating 16. It's Star Wars and children of all ages love Star Wars . This game is going to sell loads this Christmas especially as there is a new movie coming out as well. This game is also packaged with a lot of console bundles this Christmas. While Star Wars has always been popular with children for the past four decades please note the age rating of 16 years and up. The game is a single player game and while it lacks the blood and gore of many games it still features a lot of violent content. The game is also pretty difficult to play so if you buy this for a young child expect them to become frustrated and lose interest as it features very challenging combat and game physics.

Red Dead Redemption 2, Pegi rating 18. While not a new game (it was released in 2018) this will still sell loads this Christmas and it's another game that is often included in bundles when you buy a console. Red Dead is from the same team Rockstar Games who also make the popular but not suitable for children Grand Theft Auto series. Set in the American wild west in 1899 you

play as outlaw Arthur Morgan a member of a notorious gang of killers and thieves. While not as controversial as the GTA series this game still features a great deal of violence, bad language and adult themes throughout. **Again definitely not suitable at all for primary aged children.**

Fortnite, Pegi rating 12. You will probably have heard about Fortnite. It has been a huge success and its popularity with primary aged children doesn't look like it's going away anytime soon. One of the reasons it's become so popular is because the Battle Royal game is free to download and play. This may sound like a parents/carers dream a free game but be warned as the game contains a large number of in game purchases. Using the in game currency called VBucks which you use real money to purchase you can buy countless cosmetic items called skins and celebration animations and dances. We have known children run up bills of **hundreds of pounds** without permission. Again parental controls are a must and can easily prevent unwanted spending.

As for the gameplay the idea is to be the last man standing and eliminate 99 other players. While the idea is to kill your opponents the game is very cartoon like to look at and doesn't feature any blood or gore. The game doesn't have bad language in it but you can expect other players to use it during in game chat. This can be heard when using a headset or through the TV. In game chat can be disabled and caution must also be used as not everyone your child will be playing with will be around their own age.
We have experienced children as young as 7 years of age playing with strangers much older than them who have gone on to ask the child for personal details such as address in return for the promise of free VBucks.
Fortnite is another popular game bundle with consoles and its popular as it often comes with bundled VBucks.

Another popular game bundle this year is the **Xbox 0ne Gears 5 and Rage 2 bundle**. The bundle offers great value for money and can also be purchased with headset as well. While it's tempting to go for a great deal caution must be used as both games are rated **18** and feature violent game play with blood and gore and adult themes throughout.

Nintendo Switch Console bundles – Purchasing Switch bundles is a little bit easier as Nintendo is famous for its family suitable games some of which are fantastic, imaginative and fun to play. Again we recommend you research the games on offer as you can still play 16 and 18 rated games on the Switch but the most common bundles offer great suitable games for all ages.
Popular bundles this year include Luigi's Mansion 3 and Pokémon Sword and Shield. Fortnite bundles can also be purchased but in game chat on the Switch is not as easily done as it is with the Xbox and PS4.
Whatever bundles or games you decide on this Christmas remember to set up parental controls and research any purchases you plan to make.