



## CYBER SAFETY AND GAMES ONLINE

Fortnite is one of the most popular games on the market, attracting thousands of players each day.

Fortnite is rated T for Teen by the ESRB for violence. This means the game is appropriate for players 13 years old and older, and parents with younger children should consider this when allowing them to play the game. Fortnite also has an age rating of 12 by PEGI, which aligns with the ESRB rating.

Although Fortnite is rather tame compared to other titles. There's no visible gore or blood, but players are required to kill each other to win. This might be inappropriate for some children and parents can use the designated age rating for guidance.

Fortnite is also almost exclusively played online, meaning players will encounter random teammates in public matches. Voice chat might not be appropriate for younger players, but there are ways to disable the chat to avoid issues. Parents can also monitor their children's Fortnite experience to ensure they're not subject to any unsportsmanlike conduct or inappropriate behavior from teammates or enemies.

Roblox is an absolutely massive platform among people from all walks of life, but the majority of its player base is made up of children and young teens. However, with so many user generated experiences and player freedom, it's important to keep clued in on the Roblox age rating. So, whether you're a player or a parent, we're here to give you some advice on how to stay safe and keep enjoying that blocky fun.

There's no official age rating for the overall Roblox platform, though Common Sense Media sets it at 13+ in its Parents' Ultimate Guide to Roblox, considering that 'users of any age can create and join groups, chat, and interact with others' and 'such an open approach can pose some risks to kids, especially younger ones', though it may be suitable for younger children if parents turn the account restrictions on and pay close attention to their child's activities.

However, Roblox also has its own, in-game age recommendation settings, which Roblox claims it decided by 'examining global industry standards and consulting child development experts', so 'all users can make informed decisions about the content they interact with'.

As such, each game has one of the following age ratings attached to it:

- All ages – content is generally suitable for all ages. May contain infrequent mild violence and/or light unrealistic blood
- 9+ – content is generally suitable for ages nine and up. May contain frequent mild violence and/or heavy unrealistic blood
- 13+ – content is generally suited for ages 13 and up. May contain frequent moderate violence and/or light realistic blood

Though you should keep in mind that, due to the nature of the Roblox platform being so open to both creators and players, many user-made experiences pop up every day, and may not align perfectly with the age rating they initially acquire.



Additionally, Roblox is still predominantly online, meaning that other players of all ages have access to a plethora of experiences, chat boxes, profiles, groups, and more. This means that there's always a chance of those with bad intentions targeting Roblox due to its highly kid-focused audience, either through chat or in-game actions. As such, we always advise that parents are mindful of what they allow their children to play and consume on the internet.

If you're a young player, we also recommend that you remain cautious of who you talk to in Roblox, never share any personal information, and report anything that doesn't feel right to an adult or guardian.

Minecraft is another popular online game which comes with an age rating of 7+.

Two play options are available in Minecraft (in addition to Survival, Creative, and Adventure modes). The default is single player, in which a world is generated on the device you're playing on. This can then be explored, mined, and items built and crafted.

However, two multiplayer modes are also available. These can either be hosted on your child's device, or a remote public server. Local multiplayer is usually hosted on a single device, with other users running Minecraft able to connect. This is relatively safe, as everyone playing is on the same network, and probably in the same building.

Playing Minecraft on a public server, however, is a different matter. This is where things can become challenging from a safety point of view.

Cyberbullies and people who pose a risk to children can use game time on a public server to target children. There should, therefore, be a serious conversation between parents as to whether a remote public server is a safe gaming environment. If Minecraft can be as much fun with local gameplay, then accessing a public server is pointless.

Several cases have been highlighted over the years of children being targeted by adults while playing Minecraft online. This typically uses the messaging service provided by Microsoft which can be managed and disabled using Xbox Live's parental settings.

If you're prepared to let your children play online on Minecraft, at least take the time to disable messaging. Do this in the app via Settings > Profile > Manage who can send you invites. This will take you to the Xbox Live privacy and online safety screen. Find the Others can communicate with voice, text or invites option and set to Block. You might consider Friends an acceptable option.

If you are concerned about your child's use of online games or need more information as a parent School TV <https://www.goodnews.vic.edu.au/our-school/schooltv> has many useful resources.

