The DISP Guide to Managing Your Child's gaming during the Lockdown
As many of us find that we now have to stay at home during the pandemic we are having to find things to fill our day. Playing video games can be a great way for families to spend time together, for children to keep in touch with their friends as well as pass some time. So here are some simple DISP tips on how to keep your child safe while gaming and make sure there playing age appropriate games.

Age Appropriate Titles
Knowing if a game your child wants to play is age appropriate is lot easier than you may think.
The first thing to do is have a look on the games box and look for the Pegi age rating on the bottom right corner of the box. On the back of the box you will also see content boxes that tell you what type of content you will find in the game.

Pegi also have a very good app that you can use https://pegi.info/news/app it contains all the information you need about a particular games age rating and content.
The app also has some great guides on setting up parental controls on all the different games consoles and devices your child might use.
If you buy your games digitally from the game stores on your console the purchase page also contains all the details on age ratings.

YouTube is also a great site to use to find out about the games your child wants to play. All you need to do is in the search bar add the title of the game and you will be able to watch videos of the game running and judge for yourself if the game is appropriate for your child or not.
We also recommend visiting https://www.askaboutgames.com/ a gaming website that is packed full with useful guides, information and reviews of all the popular video games.

Set Some House Rules
A great way to keep your family safe online and while gaming is by having a family meeting to agree on some house rules.
DISP have created a very easy to use tool to help you set rules called the Family Media Plan which can be downloaded by visiting http://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/10103/family-media-use-plan-blank-logo.pdf
Completing a plan will allow you to set and explain what games you are happy with for your child to play and you can also set some time limits on how long they play. We would also recommend you set some rules around behaviour while playing games to reduce game rage and other negative reactions. Other things you can also add are who they can and cannot play with online and rules around voice chat.
With all this free time available it's a great idea to set some boundaries and rules that limit flashpoints and tensions. Everyone should agree and follow the rules and to back up the rules we also recommend setting up parental controls on all devices.

Parental Controls
Setting parental controls can seem like a daunting task but the truth is it's getting easier all the time. All the major games consoles allow you to set parental controls and there are also a growing number of apps out there to help you with setting up the controls for you and your family. These can be found in all the popular app stores by searching parental controls.
Parental controls allow you to set time limits, set age restrictions, set how much money they can send in game stores and within games like Fortnite. You also turn off voice chat to stop them talking to people they don't know.
One of our favourite sites for setting parental controls is https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/ here you will find easy to follow step by step picture guides on how to set up controls on a wide range of devices and gadgets.

We hope this guide helps and while it may be that your child has up to now had free reign on the games console just remember it's never too late to set up controls and put in some rules.
For more information on keeping your child safe online visit www.darlington.gov.uk/disp