

MINECRAFT :

A PARENT'S GUIDE



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The basics



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What is it?

- Users explore different landscapes and build things with blocks.
- Minecraft can be played in four modes – survival, creative, adventure and spectator.

- One of the world's most popular video games.
- 'Sandbox' game – players create their own experience by interacting with the game's virtual world.



Why is it so popular with children?

- Totally customisable – encourages kids to be creative and decide how they want to play.
- Can be played socially or alone.
- Can be played at any skill level.



Is it appropriate for young children?

- Terms and conditions say users should be 13 or older, but it's rated seven by PEGI and played by lots of young children.
- It's often compared to virtual Lego – nothing about Minecraft is inherently inappropriate for children.
- If you let your child play there are lots of ways to help them stay safe.



Benefits of Minecraft

- Focus on building and exploring encourages creativity, problem solving and critical thinking.
- Children who play with friends could improve teamwork skills.
- Some parents of children with autism say the game can improve social skills and communication – there's even a server for children with autism and ADHD.
- Minecraft has been used in education to teach children about maths, computing, geography and more.

Staying safe



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Single player vs multiplayer

Single player

- Safest mode.
- Users play by themselves and can't use the chat function to communicate with anyone else.
- Might be more appropriate for very young children.

Multiplayer

- Server-based version that lets multiple users play together in a single world.
- Players can communicate using the chat function – press T and then Enter to display the chat to others.
- Has some risks but can still be used safely.

Staying safe on multiplayer

- The safest multiplayer option is a private server, where only known friends and family can join.
- You can also search for profanity-free or family friendly servers.
- The chat function is great for collaborating with friends, but remind your children to be very careful about talking to anyone they don't know.



Minecraft YouTube videos

- Some users watch fan-created YouTube videos to learn more about the game.
- These videos are very popular – 3.9 billion views in March 2015.



Minecraft YouTube videos – are they safe?

- Depends on the video – some contain profanity or sexual references, or encourage bullying.
- Minecraft doesn't have any particularly upsetting content – but the monsters that appear in some modes might scare young children.
- Lots of Minecraft YouTube channels are specifically designed to be family friendly – like Minecraft Dad, SuperKevinCraft and Stampy.



Top tips for staying safe

- Have young children play in single player or on a private/age appropriate server only.
- Remind kids using multiplayer to be careful about sharing personal information or talking to people they don't know.
- Report inappropriate behaviour to a server moderator.
- Look for family friendly YouTube channels and pre-screen them if you're worried about profanity or upsetting content.
- Turn off monsters by playing in creative mode or setting difficulty to peaceful in survival mode.

Reporting

- Minecraft doesn't have a centralised reporting function for inappropriate behaviour.
- In multiplayer you can usually report to a server's operator (or moderator).
- Anyone acting sexually inappropriate towards a child anywhere online should be reported to CEOP <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Ceop-Report/>.
- Remind your children that they can always come to you if something makes them uncomfortable.