Minecraft: A Parent’s Guide

Sutherland Dianella Primary
The basics
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
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.