

## 1. Set the parental controls before they unwrap the gift!

All phones, tablets and games consoles include built-in parental controls and restrictions, but they're always switched off by default. So before your child gets anywhere near it, it's important to set them up appropriately.

Since many devices no longer come with a printed manual, use the links below to discover how to set the parental controls for the most common equipment. Left to right, the links are for Apple products; Android products; Microsoft Xbox; Nintendo Wii; and Sony PlayStation. The links are QR codes. If you don't know how to use them, ask a young person to show you (keeping the irony of the situation to yourself of course).



Wii



## 2. Heed the age ratings on video games and game apps

All video games and downloadable games must by law be age rated. The most common method in use is the PEGI ratings system:



12, 16 and 18 are legally enforceable: it is a criminal offence for a retailer to supply such games to anyone below the intended age. Please don't purchase such games, or permit them to be purchased, for children below these ages.

The police are recommending to schools that, where they are aware that a parent has permitted a young child to play an 18-rated game, they consider making a referral to social services on the grounds of neglect.

Of course, a child might still borrow an unsuitable game from a friend, but if you've heeded point (1), it won't do them any good, since if they're below the target age, the device will refuse to let them play it.

### **3. Involve yourself in their online world**

To the current young generation that has grown up with social media, there is no "offline". So it's important to factor that in to how you relate to your child, regardless of the extent to which you share any similar enthusiasm or aptitude.

Be interested in what they're up to; ask questions about what they like to do and who with, and get them to show you how it all works. Most children like showing older people things that they know and you don't, so use that as a way to gain insight into their whole world. That way, you're much more likely to be on their radar when it comes to sharing any concerns they ever have with you.