

Top tips for Xbox 360



This guide provides some specific advice about setting up parental controls on your Xbox 360. To learn more about safe and responsible gaming read our **How to Stay Safe Guide**¹.

The Basics

The Xbox 360 provides a wide range of exciting activities for young people. The Xbox 360 has in-built wireless so can connect to your home internet or other wifi hotspots if you sign up to Xbox LIVE. While this doesn't allow you to browse the internet, with an Xbox LIVE account there are many other online functions; for example, playing with people online, viewing films and TV, purchasing games online, accessing Facebook and Twitter, and chatting to friends via text, voice and video chat.

The Xbox 360 has a range of free parental controls. These can be found on the Xbox LIVE account (to cover all of the online services) and on the Xbox 360 console (for offline functions). You need to activate the console parental control settings, for example, to prevent your child playing age-restricted games or to set up a Family Timer. Xbox LIVE parental controls are a bit easier; by registering with your child's correct age for their Xbox LIVE account there will be automatic safety settings in place, for example, preventing your child from communicating by video chat.

What is Xbox LIVE?

Xbox LIVE is an optional, subscription based service which uses your broadband internet access to offer online multiplayer gaming, voice, text and video chat, and multimedia downloads such as games, movies, and TV shows.

Three steps for parents

1. Understand the capabilities of gaming devices and how you as a parent can support your child to be smart and safe in their gaming. To help, read our **How to Stay Safe Guide**¹.

2. Find out about the parental controls available - it helps if you are the one to set up the gaming device so you are in control of these. Gaming devices have parental controls to help parents manage their children's gaming; see the advice below for the Xbox 360. Find out about **PEGI age ratings**² to help you decide which games are appropriate for your child's age.

3. Talk with your child about safe and responsible gaming and agree a set of family rules. Perhaps you could agree rules with your child about how long they are allowed to play for, how they should behave towards other gamers and agree rules about not meeting up with people they have only met online. See our **Family Agreement**³ for more ideas. Remember that gaming devices like the Xbox 360 connect to the internet, so the same advice and rules for keeping safe online apply.

Understanding parental controls on the Xbox 360

The Xbox 360 has a range of free parental controls. These can be found on the Xbox LIVE account (to cover all of the online services) and on the Xbox 360 console (for offline functions).

1. Registering with Xbox LIVE sets up automatic parental controls

The Xbox 360 can connect to the internet by joining Xbox LIVE, allowing a range of online functions, such as playing games against other people and communicating with them by text, audio or video chat. Parental control options allow you to manage how your child uses their device. If you decide to sign up to Xbox LIVE, then when you register, automatic parental control settings will be set up for children.

Set up Xbox LIVE so that parental control settings are automatic

As a parent, you should be the one to set up your Xbox LIVE subscription so that you are in control of your child's account.

Make sure you register each of your children with their correct age, so that automatic parental control settings are in place.

You will then be prompted to provide parental consent and asked to create your own Xbox LIVE account so you can manage your children's accounts.

How to find the parental control options:

By registering your child's Xbox LIVE account with their correct age, parental control settings will automatically be in place. For example, video chat and profile sharing are blocked automatically for children. **See the Xbox explanation of automatic, or 'default', online safety and privacy settings**⁴.

You can check the automatic online safety and privacy settings and make any changes:

- » On your Xbox 360, sign into your adult Xbox LIVE account.
- » Go to **My Xbox** and select **Family Centre** or **Family Settings** (depending on your membership type).
- » Select the child account you would like to place restrictions on.
- » Go to **Online Safety**.
- » Select **Change Settings**.
- » Choose which parental controls you wish to change.
- » To save your changes, click **B** on your controller and click **Save and Exit**.

1 www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/a-parents-guide/gaming-devices/how-to-stay-safe

2 www.pegi.info

3 www.digizen.org/digicentral/family-agreement.aspx

4 www.tinyurl.com/btkif7r

Think about the following options on your child's Xbox LIVE account:

- » **Playing games online with other Xbox LIVE players:** This is automatically allowed for all age groups. You can set up a parental control to prevent this by selecting **Online Gameplay** and then choosing **Block**.
- » **Friends:** As a parent, you must approve all Xbox LIVE friend requests for your children, so it is important to think about who you allow onto this list. 'Friends' would be able to contact your child, for example through voice and text chat, and also would have access to personal information in your child's profile. Look at the '**Default online safety and privacy settings**'⁵ to see what is automatically shared with either 'Friends Only' or 'Everyone', and see which functions are 'Blocked'. You could change any of these default options if you think this would be helpful for your child.

2. Select parental controls on the Xbox 360 console

You can put in place settings on the console to control which games, films and TV can be accessed, how long each family member can use the console and whether or not the family member can access Xbox LIVE. The parental control settings on the console are not set up automatically, so you will need to change the settings as appropriate for your child.

How to find the parental control options:

- » On your Xbox 360, go to **My Xbox**.
- » Select **Console Safety** and select **On**.
- » Enter a 4-digit PIN, called the **Pass Code**.
- » Choose which parental controls you wish to switch on (see below for advice).
- » Select **Save and Exit** to save any changes.

These parental control options are particularly helpful:

- » **Ratings and Content:** select the **PEGI age rating**⁶ that is appropriate for your child. This ensures your child only plays games that are appropriate for their age. To play games that have a higher age rating you will need to enter the 4-digit pass code.
- » **Xbox LIVE Membership Creation:** this prevents your child creating a new Xbox LIVE account. (Without this setting, children could just create another Xbox LIVE account with an incorrect age to bypass any parental controls on their 'child' Xbox LIVE account).

Consider whether these options would be helpful for your family:

- » **Family Timer:** You can select this option to set up a Family Timer which allows you to decide for how long the console can be used on a daily or weekly basis. There are notifications to warn the player that their time is running out, and then when the time expires the console shuts down and can't be used again until the timer resets the next day or week. You can prevent this by entering the pass code.
- » **Xbox LIVE Access:** You can select this option to prevent anyone connecting to Xbox LIVE from this Xbox 360.

3) Know what to do about inappropriate contact

With Xbox LIVE you can chat to and message your Xbox LIVE friends and with upgraded membership you can also video chat with Video Kinect, play games with friends online and socialise on Facebook and Twitter.

To begin a conversation with your child about what they could do if someone behaves in a negative way towards them, you could talk to your child about their own conduct and the behaviour they should expect from other users by looking at the **Xbox LIVE Code of Conduct**⁷ together.

There are several steps you can take if someone has behaved inappropriately towards your child. You should decide the appropriate action to take in the particular circumstance.

1. **Mute the player:** From the Xbox Dashboard, open the player's profile (select **Guide** then **Friends** and then select the player) and select **Mute**. You will no longer hear them in the game, but they will still hear you. To hear them again, open their profile and select **Unmute**.
2. **Block communications with the player:** From the Xbox Dashboard, open a message from the player and then select **Block Communications**. The player will not be able to send you any messages until you send them one first.
3. **Avoid the player:** From the Xbox Dashboard, open the player's profile (select **Guide** then **Friends** and then select the player) and then select **Submit Player Review**. Select **Avoid This Player**. Select a reason and specific reason why you want to avoid the player.
4. **Report the player:** If you feel that an Xbox LIVE player has violated the **Xbox LIVE Code of Conduct**⁷ you can file a complaint against that player (Note: File a player review if they haven't violated the code but you want to avoid them). From the Xbox Dashboard, open the player's profile (select **Guide** then **Friends** and then select the player) and then select **File a Complaint**. Select the reasons why you are filing the complaint. Select **File Complaint**. Note that filing a complaint doesn't mute, block or help you avoid a player, so you should also take the above three steps to prevent the person communicating with you.
5. **File a complaint from within the game:** Some games have a complaint option. Refer to the documentation that came with the game.

You can also see the Xbox Support pages on **filing complaints and controlling communications**⁸.

If you suspect that your child is or has been the subject of an inappropriate sexual contact or approach by another person you should report this to Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at **www.ceop.police.uk** in the UK, or internationally at **www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com**.

Further Information

Childnet's gaming leaflet, **www.childnet.com/downloads/Online-gaming.pdf**, offers advice about gaming, covering consoles and web games and apps.

Video games trade body UKIE offers advice about how to play games safely and sensibly **www.ukie.info/playsafe**.

Visit the Pan European Game Information website **www.pegi.info** to find out more about age ratings.

Check out the Xbox LIVE family site **www.xbox.com/en-GB/Live/Family**.

To find out more about social networking, see Childnet's guide for parents **www.childnet.com/downloads/blog_safety.pdf**.

For more advice for parents about online safety see: **www.childnet.com/kia**.

5 www.tinyurl.com/btkjf7r

6 www.pegi.info

7 www.tinyurl.com/7ebsulh

8 www.tinyurl.com/757qp3n

