

What parents need to know about Roblox

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many games which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about ROBLOX

Roblox is one of the most popular video games on the market. By 2020, the game's makers were claiming that more than half of children in the USA play it. As a 'sandbox' title, Roblox offers a huge amount of creative freedom: it lets players create their own gaming experiences with the Roblox Studio to build custom levels and games, which can then be shared with other players online. Roblox fosters creative thinking and enjoys a robust online community of fans.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS
Roblox encourages players to communicate online (including a group chat facility). This could expose children to risks such as scammers, online predators, harassment, griefers and more. The in-game chat has some filters, but isn't perfect. Players can still send harmful messages to others – such as scam links or general hostility – while predators can reach out to children directly.

ONLINE DATERS
These are also called 'ODers' and are quite common in Roblox. An ODer is an individual who joins a game with the intention of finding someone to date online – and eventually meet in person. Such online dating is against the Roblox community rules, but this usually doesn't deter Oders. Some player-built games, words have even been designed with online dating specifically in mind.

IN-APP PURCHASES
Roblox is actually free to download and play, but bear in mind that there are some hidden costs. Players are encouraged to make purchases in the game, for example, using real money. People can also buy extra Robux (the in-game currency) to spend on cosmetic items in the game, while it's possible to purchase a private or VIP server.

PUBLIC SERVERS
Roblox has private or VIP servers which allow people to play exclusively with their friends, but this costs money. Most Roblox players will instead be on public servers that anyone can join. Servers can host games which focus on all kinds of aspects, including direct player interaction. Some games and servers, therefore, will put children more at risk of contact from strangers than others.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET PARENTAL CONTROLS
Roblox comes with several parental control options, which are explained well on the game's official website. It is essential to enter the correct date of birth for your child, as that allows Roblox to automatically apply the appropriate chat filters. The game also allows parents and carers to set monthly spending restrictions and monitor their child's account.

DISABLE PRIVATE MESSAGING
Roblox's private messaging function raises the risk of children being contacted by people they may not want to speak with – potentially leading to bullying, harassment, toxicity and scam attempts. The game allows you to disable messages from anyone who hasn't been added as a friend on your child's account.

PRIVATE SERVERS
If your child has some genuine friends to play Roblox with, paying for a private or VIP server decreases the risk of contact from strangers. Even then, however, some players could invite other people – who might not necessarily be child-friendly – into the private server. If your child is a Roblox fan, it's important to talk with them regularly about how they are playing the game with.

MONITOR SPENDING
If they don't understand they're using real money, it's easy for children to accidentally spend a sizeable amount in the game. Using parental controls to place limits on their spending will help avoid any nasty financial surprises. Ensuring that you have two-factor authentication on your payment accounts also makes it harder for your child to spend money inadvertently.

DEALING WITH STRANGERS
At some point in their development, your child will need to learn how to deal with strangers online. Show them how to block and report any users who are upsetting them or asking uncomfortable questions. Talking to them about what's OK to discuss – and what they should never tell a stranger online – will help them understand how to communicate with other people online safely.

Meet Our Expert
Clare Goodwin (a.k.a. Lunavox) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunavox Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.

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Over the past decade, Roblox has become one of the world's most popular platforms for young gamers. It's certainly among the most commercially successful: during one three-month period in 2020, for example, players spent a staggering £200 million on in-game purchases. The possible financial costs, however, aren't the only area to have caused concern.

How are some sections of Roblox unsuitable for young players? Why aren't private or VIP servers a water-tight defence against strangers? Who are Oders and why should children be wary of them? Why is it a good idea to disable the private messaging function? Updated for 2022, our #WakeUpWednesday guide to Roblox has the answers.

On the one hand, Roblox encourages creativity and teaches game design. On the other, however, it's dogged by reports of inappropriate content and online predators. The platform aims to provide a child-friendly environment, but with the majority of Roblox players being under 13, the worries of parents and carers are easily understandable.

In this week's #WakeUpWednesday guide, we've got tips and advice for enabling children to enjoy Roblox more safely. We'll explain what the platform's parental controls can be used for, what options exist for blocking or reporting other players who are being offensive, and how conversations about Roblox can help youngsters learn to deal with strangers online.

Please [click here](#) to download the guide.