

What parents & carers need to know about...

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

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PEGI 12

League of Legends, commonly referred to as "LoL", is one of the most popular video games in the world, with millions of monthly players. It is available on Android, macOS and Windows, and Apple recently announced during its iPhone 12 launch event that it will soon be coming to iOS too. LoL is an esports game in which two teams of five face-off in order to destroy the other's base. In the UK and Europe, PEGI rates League of Legends as PEGI 12. However, in order to play the game, the user has to accept the Terms of Use, which state that the proper age to play is 13+.

Suggestive innuendo

As a game itself, League of Legends is child-friendly and the character animations are not graphically violent. However, as it is a game designed for a male-centric userbase, some of the female costumes can be quite revealing and could be considered somewhat sexually suggestive. Sexual innuendo can also be observed in some character chat.

18+

Contact with strangers

Unless your child is playing League of Legends with a large group of friends, they will end up playing and communicating with people they don't know due to the multiplayer nature of the game. This means it's almost impossible to predict who and what they could encounter, making them vulnerable to online bullying, harassment, hate speech or even online grooming tactics.

Inappropriate chat

During gameplay, your child will be able to type messages to each teammate via the built-in chat or the accompanying mobile app, and there is also a voice chat which activates when players are part of a pre-made team. Although there's a built-in chat filter that censors any bad language, this is easily switched-off so it's possible your child could be exposed to inappropriate content.

Addictive nature

League of Legends, like many modern online multiplayer games, is addictive by nature and can require a lot of time in order for players to be successful; a typical game can be as short as 20 minutes or as long as an hour and a half, and cannot be paused mid-way through. Signs of addiction can include irritability when not playing, lying about the amount of time playing, and preoccupation with thoughts about the next gaming session.

In-game spending

Although League of Legends is entirely free to play, Riot Games lets players spend real currency in order to purchase Riot Points that allows players to purchase special costumes for their characters, or skins. These can be quite addictive. Indeed, in a US survey conducted in 2019, the average gamer on LoL spent \$119 on downloadable content and microtransactions.

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Safety Tips

Monitor gameplay

While it would be impossible to constantly keep an eye on your child, it's important you check-in and monitor the time they spend playing League of Legends. It might be a good idea to keep gaming consoles in the living room, for example, so you can supervise how long they're playing and whether they're in contact with others via voice chat.

Mute chat and report players

If your child is receiving negative or offensive messages, League of Legends has the ability to mute the chat. If they have been the victim of harassment, insulting or offensive language, you can report the behaviour to LoL who will review the game and impose penalties on the other player accordingly.

Limit spending

As League of Legends lets gamers spend real money in order to purchase add-on items, it's important you keep an eye on their spending. Disable in-game spending on consoles or mobiles if you're worried or make sure they don't have access to a credit card in order to spend in the first place.

Spot the signs

If you're concerned that your child may be spending too much time on League of Legends, and are worried it could be having a poor effect on their mental health, keep an eye out for the warning signs. They may be prioritising gaming over more important everyday tasks, such as schoolwork or sleep, or could be showing signs of irritability and a lack of concentration if they've spent too long playing.

Talk about the risks

Before you allow your child to play League of Legends, it's important you have a conversation about it first to make them aware of the potential dangers. Make sure your child is aware of the fact that they could be playing with strangers, that the game has a poor reputation for its often toxic community of players, and that it allows for in-game payments that should be avoided.

Meet our expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist, editor and consultant. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The INQUIRER, Carly now works as the news editor for Computer Shopper and IT Pro and writes for a number of publications including Forbes, TechRadar, Tes, The Metro, uSwitch and WIRED.

