



MOUNT
KELLY

Boarding and Day School
Boys and Girls, Aged 4-18

Safeguarding Bulletin

ISSUE 28

Mount Kelly's Safeguarding Bulletin aims to provide parents and carers with the information needed to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with their children about potential risks and issues in the wider world and online. This week's bulletin is on the topic of Palworld.

Free online sessions for parents

Next week the South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership is putting on some free online sessions for parents. These sessions aim to address the community safety risks our young people face with tips and techniques designed to help **parents of young people with special educational needs or who are neurodivergent**. The sessions will cover topics including mental health and emotional wellbeing, anger and challenging behaviour, healthy relationships and online safety.

To sign up to these sessions please click the links below:

2nd July [Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing](#)

4th July [Anger and Challenging Behaviour](#)

9th July [Healthy Relationships](#)

11th July [Online Safety and Exploitation](#)



Palworld

Releasing in January 2024, Palworld took the gaming scene by storm, selling over five million copies in just three days. A new take on the survival genre – blending mechanics similar to games like Minecraft with the ability to catch and fight alongside creatures reminiscent of Pokémon – it saw plenty of coverage from games journalists and influencers alike.

However, despite its lower age rating and popularity with young gamers, Palworld has been criticised for its reliance on shock humour – touching on topics including animal abuse and sweatshop labour – and as a game featuring online multiplayer, one can expect certain safety concerns to arise. This week's **#WakeUpWednesday** guide dives into the risks of Palworld, offering expert tips on how to safeguard children who simply want to enjoy the game.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about PALWORLD

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

In Palworld, players head out into an environment where they must craft items and survive alongside creatures called 'Pals'. In this sense, it's similar to Minecraft: fight monsters while maintaining a base. Palworld has sold more than six million copies and often has over two million people playing online simultaneously.



MATURE CONTENT



While Palworld may look cute and cuddly, the game does have its more mature moments. For example, if you try to catch a Pal and don't succeed, the game displays a mild swear word. There are also minor references to inhumane acts like slavery when getting your Pals to perform certain tasks for you. While the presentation is intended to be humorous, this could still be seen as being in poor taste.

VIOLENCE



Palworld has been referred to as "Pokémon with guns" and with good reason. As the game progresses, Pals can be given firearms, explosives and other weapons, allowing them to fight by the player's side. There are several moments where cute animals use these guns to kill other Pals or fight against bosses. The violence is cartoonish and bloodless, but it's present.

SUGGESTIVE WRITING



Some of the Pals' descriptions – found in the game menu – can be very suggestive and adult in nature. The game makes a joke of balancing on the line between age-appropriate and mature content: playing on the contrast between the two while never being outright explicit. While it's possible that younger players won't notice this content, it's just as conceivable that they will.

ONLINE PLAY



Palworld can be played with other people online. On Xbox, players can only play with people on their friends list. On PC, however, up to 32 players can share in the same game, playing in a large online world, and these players may not necessarily be known to the host beforehand. It can be quite complicated to set up these servers. However, it can be quite complicated to set up these servers (online worlds) and they cost money to keep active.

DIFFICULTY



Despite its endearing visuals, Palworld is actually an extremely difficult game in places: defeating bosses, catching Pals and exploring the environment can all be very tricky. It takes a lot of skill – or working together with a friend – to be successful, which could be off-putting or even aggravating to a player expecting something more like Minecraft or Pokémon.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WATCH GAMEPLAY



Watching gameplay and reviews for Palworld on sites like YouTube is the best available means of gathering information on it, second only to playing it for yourself. Currently, there are plenty of videos showing this game off to the internet at large, along with detailed breakdowns of what can be found or done within it.

LEND A HAND



By learning the basics of the game – Pal catching, battling, crafting items and building up a base – you can help to lower the difficulty for younger players. This, in turn, decreases the likelihood that such players will need to look online for tips and tricks, where they could quite easily stumble across more violent and mature content associated with the game.

SET CONTENT LIMITS



As Palworld is available on Xbox Game Pass, it's easy for players to access it. Any player subscribed to this service can simply find the title on Game Pass and hit the download button. If a child or young person isn't allowed to play Palworld, the best way to prevent them downloading it regardless is to enable age limits on their account. Setting the limit below 12 will not allow users to install Palworld.

PLAY TOGETHER

By playing Palworld yourself, you'll have the best chance of catching any content that you don't think is suitable for children, as well as getting an idea of how violence is presented in the game. The conflict is cartoonish in nature – until players and Pals unlock the ability to use guns, at which point it can become more intense. It's likely best for you to give it a look and form your own opinion.



PLACE BOUNDARIES



Limit options when it comes to online play. For players on PC, they'll still be able to cooperate with friends through the game's multiplayer option, much like Xbox users. Just because they have the option to run a dedicated server that's open to anyone doesn't mean they need to take it. The risks of interacting with strangers can be significantly lowered or even eliminated entirely by playing on servers which are restricted to friends only.

Meet Our Expert

Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRecon, Lloyd Coombes has worked in the games media industry for five years. He's played every Tekken title since the series began and, as a parent, also values the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.

