

Croyland Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Unfortunately, we have had a lot of children coming into school and talking about a programme that is currently on Netflix called Squid Game. It is a South Korean thriller and features scenes of brutal violence and is rated 15. (Although I think it should be a higher rating!) It follows a group of adults who compete to win innocent-looking playground games, but who are killed if they do not succeed at the tasks.

What are the hazards for children?

Squid Game's 15 rating has not prevented clips and images from the show being uploaded onto social media sites such as TikTok, with the #SquidGame hashtag being viewed more than 22.8 billion times. There have been reports of children who have accounts on these platforms inadvertently viewing gory, explicit scenes from the programme, and parents and carers should be mindful of the prevalence of these uploads.

The popularity of the programme has also led to online challenges based on various scenes, which see people taking part in seemingly innocent children's games. On the show, however, characters are executed if they fail in the game – and videos of people pretending to kill each other after competing in Squid Game-style contests are going viral on social media, where they are easily accessible to children.

At play and lunch time, it has been reported that many children are making reference to Squid Games. Although playing age appropriate games, those losing are mimicked being shot. This is not acceptable play in any way and children who are found to be instigators in this play will lose their lunchtime freedoms

What is the Squid Game Challenge app?

Squid Game Challenge (also known as K-Game Challenge) is an app for smartphones and tablets that has been released for Android and iOs, and the two systems differ significantly on their age ratings for the game. The iTunes Store rates the app as 12+ (advising of "mild/infrequent horror/fear themes"), while the PEGI rating for Android is just 3+, which means that very young children might be able to download and play the game even with parental controls activated on their device or through Google Play. **The gameplay is frequently interrupted by pop-ups and ads (sometimes appearing while the user is rapidly tapping their screen while attempting to complete the challenge). This could easily lead to unwanted purchases or accidental visits to inappropriate sites beyond the app.**

What can trusted adults do?

As a parent or carer, keep a watchful eye on the content that your children are viewing. Speak to them openly and chat about how they have been spending time on their devices; let them ask questions, too. Ensure that the parental controls are activated on your child's device and that age-restricted child profiles are properly set up any on-demand services available through the family TV (such as Netflix, in this case) to prevent inappropriate content being streamed.

If you see your child replicating the challenges from the show or hear them talking about scenes and characters from Squid Game, it would be a timely opportunity to discuss with them that the programme is not intended for children; the content is inappropriate for their age,

Mrs Duncan

"a happy school where we become experts in lots of things"