SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

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Helping our children navigate sexism and misogyny

In recent years, schools across the UK have seen a rise in children repeating sexist language, stereotypes and harmful attitudes, sometimes without fully understanding what they mean. These ideas don't appear out of nowhere. Many children are encountering them online, often through platforms and personalities that can seem harmless at first glance.

Where are children hearing these messages?

Children of primary school age are increasingly exposed to content through:

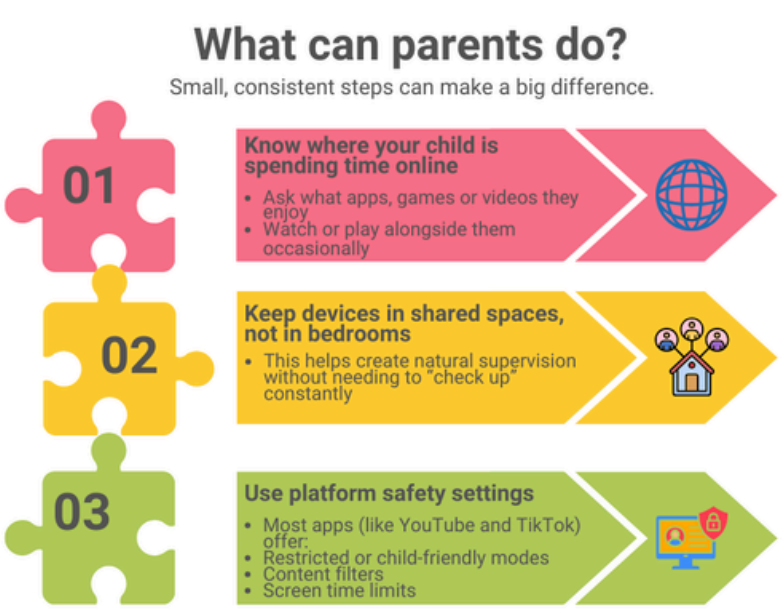
- **YouTube -** Videos, 'shorts' and gaming content can sometimes include sexist jokes, stereotypes or influencers promoting harmful views about girls and women.
- **TikTok -** Short, fast-moving clips can expose children to trends or influencers who normalise disrespectful attitudes.
- **Snapchat -** Private sharing and stories can spread unmoderated content between peers.
- **Roblox and Fortnite -** Chat functions and user-generated content can sometimes include inappropriate language or ideas. The games available on Roblox can often encourage harmful attitudes.
- **WhatsApp groups -** Even younger children may be part of group chats where videos, memes or comments are shared without adult oversight.

How might this show up in school?

In the classroom and playground, these influences can appear as:

- Boys and girls repeating phrases they've heard online without understanding the meaning.
- Comments that suggest girls are 'less than' boys or should behave in certain ways.
- Exclusion or teasing based on gender.
- Increased use of disrespectful or sexualised language to other children and staff.

Often, children are not intending to harm - they are experimenting with language and ideas they've picked up elsewhere. However, it is important we address this early so it does not become normalised.



How to talk to your child about sexism and misogyny

These conversations don't need to be formal or difficult; the most effective approach is calm, open and ongoing.

Start with curiosity

- "I heard some children are using certain words online - have you come across anything such as that?"

Keep it age-appropriate

- Explain that sexism means treating someone unfairly because they are a boy or a girl
- Emphasise kindness, fairness, and respect

Challenge ideas, not the child

- If they repeat something inappropriate, respond with:
  - "That idea isn't fair - why do you think someone might say that?"

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Understanding Roblox: What parents need to know

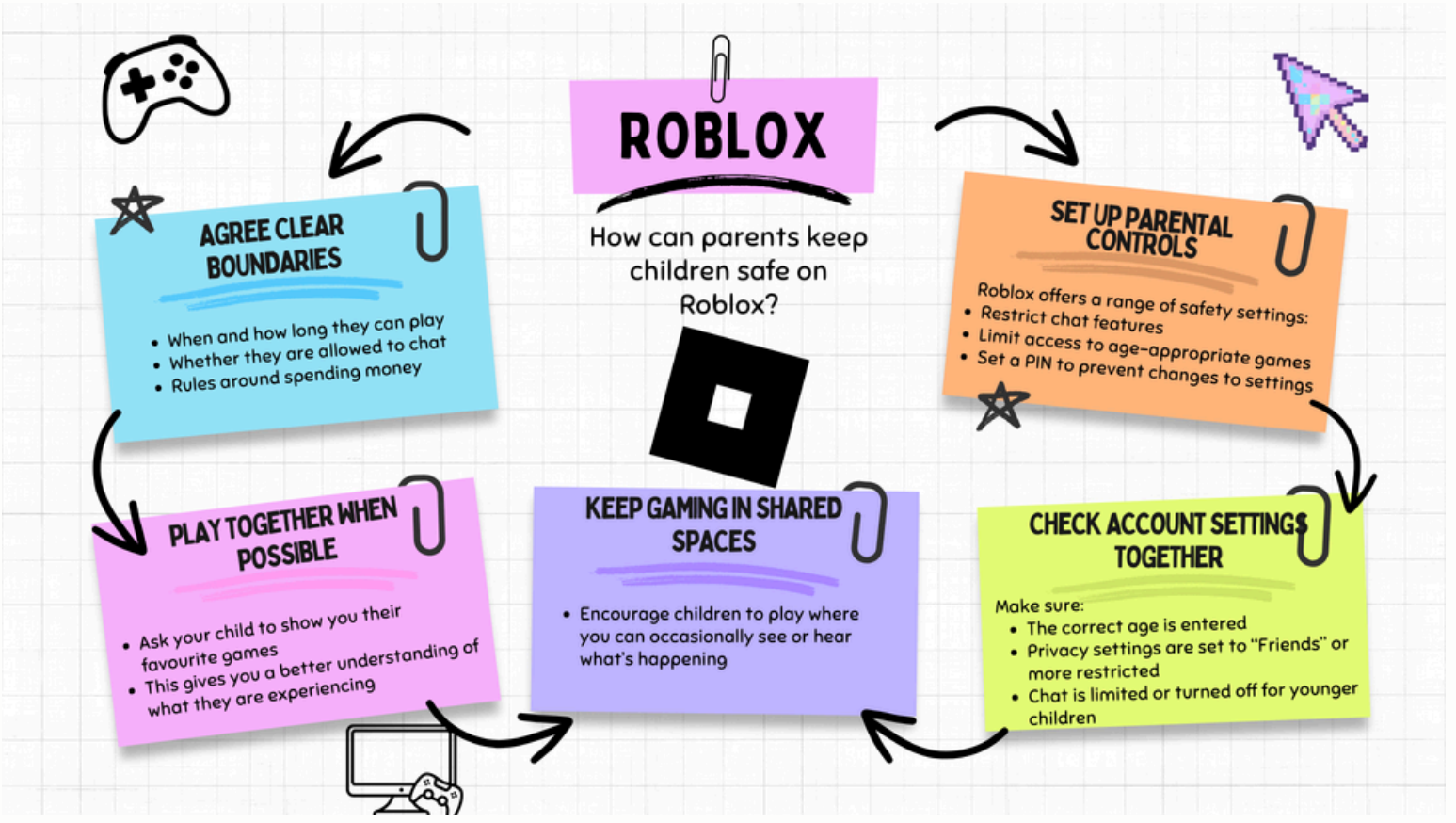
Many children talk about 'playing Roblox' as if it were a single game - but it's important to understand that Roblox is actually a platform where users create and upload their own games.

This means that when children are on Roblox, they are not just playing one controlled experience, they can move between millions of different games, created by people from around the world.

Why does this matter?

Because Roblox is user-generated, the quality and safety of content can vary widely.

While some games are creative and age-appropriate, others may include:

- **Inappropriate language or themes** not suitable for younger children
- **Unmoderated chat features**, where children can communicate with strangers
- **User-created games with hidden content,** which may not be obvious at first
- **In-game purchases and pressure to spend money** (using Robux)
- **Attempts to move conversations to other platforms** (a common online safety risk).

Even when Roblox removes inappropriate content, new games are constantly being uploaded, which makes it difficult to filter.