Six tips for staying safe on Minecraft

In just a few years, Minecraft has become one of the world's most popular video games, especially with young children. Minecraft is rated 7 by PEGI and is generally appropriate for kids – it's often compared to virtual Lego – but as always, there are some basic safety tips to keep in mind. Here's a list of six simple ways to help young children enjoy Minecraft safely.

1. **Use single player or an age-appropriate server.**
   You can play Minecraft either in single player (by yourself) or multiplayer mode. In multiplayer, users play together in a virtual world and can use the chat function to communicate. If your child is using multiplayer, consider creating your own private server for this world or searching for an appropriate option online – there are lots with strict moderation and rules about profanity and behaviour.

2. **Remind your child to be careful about sharing personal information.**
   Multiplayer provides great opportunities for collaboration and teamwork, but if your child is playing on a server with other users, it's worth reminding them to be careful about chatting to people they don't know offline.

3. **Report inappropriate behaviour to a server operator.**
   You can't report users directly to Minecraft, but most servers have operators (or moderators) who can warn or ban anyone who breaks the rules. If someone is making your child uncomfortable they can contact the server's operator.

4. **Look for family friendly Minecraft YouTube channels.**
   Lots of Minecraft players watch fan-created YouTube videos. The most common issue with these videos is profanity, but there are lots of channels that are appropriate for all ages. You can help your child find appropriate options (like Stampy and SuperKevinCraft) and pre-screen the videos if you're worried.

5. **Turn off monsters.**
   Animals and monsters in Minecraft are called mobs, some are hostile and will attack players. They're not very realistic, but they might scare young children. You can turn them off either by playing in creative mode or by setting difficulty to 'peaceful' in survival mode.

6. **Get Minecraft Realms.**
   Minecraft Realms is being hailed as the safest way to play the game. Realms are private servers closely monitored by the developers which ensures a safe online environment that your child and up to 10 friends can use. This is a subscription service which comes at an additional price to the base game and can be bought for all versions of the game except for PlayStation 3 and 4.