

# Safeguarding Newsletter

February 2023

## Online Safety Update: 'The Game' on Roblox

**WARNING: This article contains descriptions of self-harm and suicide. Discretion is advised. This information has been shared from Safer Schools. Safer Schools is a partnership between Zurich Municipal and Ineqe Safeguarding Group.**

We have received reports of a viral post circulating on social media about an alleged [self-harm](#) 'game' being shared on popular gaming platform [Roblox](#). Known as 'The Game', the post claims that the game appears through private chats in an attached Word document that contains the rules and instructions.

While it is unclear who made the original post and who took the screenshot of the document, it has been noted by several media outlets and concerned parents and carers, which has increased the sharing of the screenshot. There are multiple risks that come with this, including potential physical harm to children and young people, as well as inadvertent exposure to harmful online content.

Currently, our online safety experts have not been able to substantiate reports on the validity of this so-called 'game' or the claim that children and young people are sharing it. Due to the potentially dangerous and worrying nature of this game, we understand the concerns that parents, carers, and safeguarding professionals may have. That is why we have provided you with practical advice to help you care for the children and young people in your life.

**Our online safety experts will continue to monitor this situation and keep you informed of any significant developments.**

### What is 'The Game'?

According to the Facebook post, 'The Game' is a list of self-harming actions for children and young people to complete, often in view of their family and friends. It is allegedly shared via Word document on Roblox and [Snapchat](#).

Two images of this document have been circulating in the posts on social media. One is a screenshot of the document itself. The other is a photo of a person holding a phone with the document on screen. **Neither photo has been authenticated.**

In the photos, the document is dated September 16th, 2022 and is titled 'The Game'. Actions include self-harm prompts, such as cutting, overdosing, starving, and bruising. There are multiple references to "[ending your own life](#)" with one part stating the "only way to win [the game] is to die". It also states different methods of suicide, as well a timeline for when to do so during the game.

Most notably, there is a reference to 'players' receiving an anonymous message in Snapchat that includes the word 'dare', with further self-harming instructions. It also encourages the person to involve or harm other people, such as siblings and friends.

According to the document, the 'normal' age range to join in this behaviour is "10-15 years old" but there are also "people as young as 9" who are playing.

## Raising Awareness vs. Sharing Harmful Content

We understand that this topic is extremely concerning, especially as it is targeted at children and includes explicit instructions for acts of self-harm and suicide. This can inspire people who see the posts to reshare them and warn others to try and protect as many children and young people as possible.

While the intention behind this may be noble, it can have **harmful effects**, such as:

- Encouraging others to look at the image and/or post and share it with others.
- Building online attention to the content in the post, which increases the overall risk to children and young people.
- Inadvertently sharing harmful content with children or young people in their audiences, or who they do not realise have access to a parent or carer's account.

The best way to **raise awareness** without encouraging panic or fear is to:

- Check the facts before you share. Does the post only seem to want people to be worried? Or does it attempt to educate and inform in a calm way?
- Think about the platform you are sharing on and who your audience is. How many parents or carers do you know? Is there any way the content in this post could reach children and young people?
- Share advice that does not use the photo or document to help others learn about this online harm without exposing them to harmful content. [having options](#) or more constant communication.



## What you can do

- **Do not share the post.** We advise against sharing any post containing the screenshot of 'The Game' on social media. Instead, share information and advice that will educate others without relying on fear or outrage.
- **Pause, think, and plan.** It's important to go through [these steps before having a conversation](#) with your child about any online challenge.
- **Discuss Trusted Adults.** Have your child outline who they would talk to if they encountered something upsetting or worrying online, and encourage them to always do this first.
- **Focus on online safety.** Discuss online behaviour like harmful content and bullying. Remind them not to share any of their account names or mobile numbers with strangers, and to keep personal information private.
- **Do not directly mention 'The Game'** – unless your child is the one to bring it up. Mentioning it may encourage them to seek it out or ask their friends, which might increase interest.
- **Talk about the risks.** Choose a comfortable, non-hurried place and time to have a conversation about online harms. Use open-ended questions and try not to directly mention any specific incidents (unless necessary).
- **Highlight helpful sources.** Encourage them to use helpline like [Childline](#) or [Papyrus](#) if they are worried about their mental health and need to speak to someone, but are afraid of what a close friend or family member might think. It is anonymous and available 24/7!

**If you think your child or another child is in immediate danger, call 999 to speak to emergency services.**

**Please contact the safeguarding and welfare team if you would like any more support with this.**

