Beijing mandates game approval
Correspondents in Beijing
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STEPPING up a public morality campaign aimed at Chinese youth, the government will require official approval of all online and mobile game products before they are sold, state media reported.

More than 80 per cent of the nearly 140 online games available in China are imported. Some have content deemed violent, sexually explicit or harmful to national security, the official Xinhua News Agency said in a report on its web site.

Games already on sale must be submitted to the Ministry of Culture for approval by September 1 or they will be considered unauthorised and those caught distributing them punished, Xinhuanet reported.

The report did not specify penalties.

Games that pass the checks will be given approval codes, and it will be illegal to amend their titles or content, the report said.

The move is intended to protect children from being influenced by unwholesome online games, it cited Tuo Zuhai, an official with the Ministry of Culture’s marketing department, as saying.

The government has also recently intensified a crackdown on internet cafes, ordering them to require users to provide identity card numbers to prevent access by children.

Internet cafes caught violating rules that bar entry to anyone under age 16 face fines for a first offence and suspension or revocation of their business licenses for subsequent offences.

Authorities are also installing video cameras and high-tech software in Shanghai’s internet cafes and bars to make sure customers don’t look at forbidden web sites.

The Associated Press