

Gaming and Young People

There are many ways for users to play games online. This includes free games found on the internet, games on mobile phones and handheld consoles, as well as downloadable and boxed games on PCs and consoles such as the PlayStation, Nintendo Wii or Xbox.

Some of the most common devices on which online games are played are listed below.

Consoles: These games are played on home entertainment consoles designed to work with a TV. Consoles like these are capable of connecting to the internet via a home network just like other computers. This allows users to download games or 'expansions' to existing games as well as playing online, although a subscription may be required for this.

PC Games: These games are played on a personal computer the same way as other software programmes. They can be bought from shops or purchased and downloaded directly from the internet. Many PC games make use of the internet, and many 'Massively Multiplayer Online' (MMO) games, where gamers interact together in virtual spaces, are PC games.

Web Games and Applications (apps): Applications can be accessed through, and downloaded to, social networking profiles which allow users to play games on their profile as well as enabling them to play games with their friends, generally for free. In contrast to console and PC games, many web games and downloadable app games are not rated.

Mobile Games: Mobile games can be free or chargeable. There may be costs associated with mobile gaming, as within some games, even free ones, there are opportunities to purchase added functionality such as 'in-app' purchases.

Handheld Games: Handheld games are played on small consoles or other devices like the iPod Touch or iPad. These devices can also access the internet wirelessly, and allow for playing games with others online.

Gaming and Parkside

Parkside Junior School is committed to keeping our children safe and to promoting the safe, responsible use of the technologies available.

Some pupils are playing age inappropriate video games, watching films and using apps. The age rating is a clear indication of the suitability of content and we suggest that you monitor content which is appropriate for their age.

Sometimes they have been exposed to violent games due to older siblings. We ask parents to be vigilant.

SMART Rules:

- **S**afe - Staying safe involves being careful and not giving out your name, address, mobile phone no., school name or password to people online...
- **M**eeting someone you meet in cyberspace can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents'/carers' permission and then when they are present...
- **A**ccepting e-mails or opening files from people you don't really know or trust can get you into trouble - they may contain viruses or nasty messages...
- **R**emember someone online may be lying and not be who they say they are. If you feel uncomfortable when chatting or messaging end the conversation...
- **T**ell your parent or carer if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.

Parkside Junior School

Cokayne Avenue
Ashbourne
Derbyshire
DE6 1EJ

Phone: 01335 342891

Email: info@parkside-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk

Parent and Carer Gaming Guidance



This leaflet offers some insight to parents and carers around the dangers of gaming and ways in which to tackle and prevent it.



What is Gaming?

Online gaming is hugely popular with children and young people. Recent research shows that gaming is one of the top activities enjoyed online, with gaming more popular than social networking.

From sport related games to mission based games and quests inspiring users to complete challenges, interactive games cater for a wide range of interests, and can enable users to link up and play together.

Games can provide a fun and social form of entertainment often encouraging teamwork and cooperation when played with others.

Just like offline games, they can have educational benefits, and be used, for example, to develop skills and understanding.

Traditionally, games could be bought from shops, often in the form of a disk for use on a PC or console. Now, games can also be downloaded online. Games are played on many platforms, with those bought in shops often having an online component to them.

Internet connectivity in a game adds a new opportunity for gamers as it allows players to find and play against, or with, other players from around the world (in a multi-player game).

This guidance aims to:

- Define online gaming and how children and young people use this
- Explain the risks of online gaming
- Explain why games have age ratings and why it is important for children to not be playing games that are rated above their own ages
- Clarify what the school does to tackle and prevent the risks of Gaming.

Risks of Online Gaming

Internet safety advice is directly applicable to the games environment because risks of Content, Contact, Conduct and Commercialism also apply to games.

Content: Inappropriate material is available to children online. The quality of graphics in many games is very high. Some games might not be suitable for your child's age – they might contain violent or sexually-explicit content.

Contact: Potential contact from someone online who may wish to bully or abuse them. If your child takes part in multi-player games on the internet (where they play against other people, potentially from all around the world) they might be at risk of hearing offensive language from other players, being bullied, or making themselves vulnerable to contact by those with a sexual interest in children if they give out their personal details.

Conduct: Children may be at risk because of their own and others' online behaviour, such as the personal information they make public. Specific conduct risks for gamers include excessive use to the detriment of other aspects of their lives. This is sometimes referred to as 'addiction'.

Commercialism: Young people's privacy can be invaded by aggressive advertising and marketing schemes. Children and young people can get themselves into difficulty by inadvertently running up bills when playing games online.



How can you help?

Since 2003 games have been age rated under the Pan-European Game Information (PEGI) system which operates in the UK and over 30 other countries of Europe.

Parental responsibility

- The PEGI ratings system helps you make informed decisions about which video games to choose for your family
- A PEGI rating gives the suggested minimum age that you must be to play a game due to the suitability of the content
- As parents you can take direct control of what games your children play at home, how they play them and for how long through parental controls on video game systems such as the Xbox or PlayStation
- Choosing and playing video games as a family is the best way to understand and enjoy them together
- The stories, worlds and characters in video games offer playful ways to engage with a wide range of subjects and fuels creativity, interests and imagination
- The askaboutgames.com website provides further information about video games ratings and offers real family stories and suggestions on how video games can be a creative and collaborative experience for all the family
- We also recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online www.thinkuknow.co.uk

