

We are very aware that children may have been bought new devices over Christmas. Whilst we recognise that there are benefits to children playing these games there are also some real concerns over safety – both with regard to the material they are exposed to and the socialising and safety linked to this.

It is really important you monitor your child when playing these games – ensuring that the game is age appropriate, as well as talking to them about safety when socialising with others etc.

We also recognise that you may not know as much as you would like to about the various games and so we would like to direct you to the following websites to help you with this. All provide really useful information and guidance.

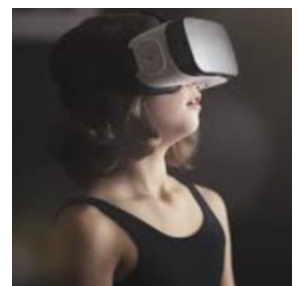
Thank you.

Kay Hemmings

Head Teacher

## Virtual Reality Headsets

With more parents more likely to buy their children VR headsets, the NSPCC have developed a guide for parents to support families buying Virtual Reality (VR) headsets for Christmas.



<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/christmas-vr-safety-advice-for-parents-metaverse/>

The Fortnite logo is displayed in a stylized, white, blocky font against a dark green background. The word 'FORTNITE' is written in all caps.

## Fortnite and Fortnite Battle Royale

Fortnite is a game for those children who are 13 years or older but I know that some of our children do access this, despite the age restriction.

Since its release in 2017 more and more children are being exposed to multi-player chatting with strangers, and financial exploitation via the game's spend-to-gain-advantage operating style. It can sometimes be very difficult to work out how to secure children's safety on games like this. Fortunately to allow for greater comprehension of reports to staff involving the game, Internetmatters.org has published a guide to understanding the game and its terms. You can find the link below:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/fortnite-battle-royal-parents-guide-keep-kids-safe-gaming/>

## A guide to online safety and gaming

As a new generation of young people arrive onto using multiplayer games and the internet in general this new year, it is more important than ever to make your pupils aware of how to stay safe online. The SWGfL has published the following poster on how to best keep safe whilst using online software and games. With advice on reporting and blocking, online socialization and the considerations on online gaming, the poster can be a useful resource for any parent or carer on the topic.

# Online Safety & Gaming

Gaming refers to playing electronic games, whether through consoles, computers, tablets, smartphones or other devices. Gaming remains one of the most popular forms of entertainment, attracting a wide range of age groups from all across the world. Gaming is always looking to develop, often improving on graphical features, accessibility and user engagement as years go by.



Unlike many other forms of media, gaming brings a sense of challenge to the player. Usually there is a degree of skill involved that players need to develop in order to progress. Depending on the type of game, it can also offer players a platform where they can be imaginative and explore their own creativity.

Some games have rich storylines and characters that are engaging and memorable. Many players also use it as an opportunity to compete and socialise with other users whether it be in person or online. More often than not though, people game, because it is fun!

## Benefits of Gaming

- 1 Can develop critical and creative skills
- 2 Can bring educational benefit and awareness
- 3 Is available to most audiences and family members
- 4 Is an easy and accessible way to socialise with others



## Considerations for Gaming

- 1 Have awareness of appropriate age restrictions
- 2 Parental awareness around purchasing
- 3 Active discussions around socialising safely
- 4 Reporting harmful or offensive content online

## Socialising Online

A staple of gaming is the community that surrounds it. Groups and audiences can gather around a specific game, character or theme to build specific fan bases that can interact with each other. Young people may like to socialise online because:

- 1 It gives them a platform to be with friends outside of school
- 2 There is usually a competitive element at play, which can feel rewarding
- 3 It can build confidence and social skills which may not be attainable physically
- 4 It gives opportunity to young people who have difficulty socialising with friends and others



## Reporting and Blocking

Gaming communities can range from supportive and educational, to toxic and harmful. In some instances, it can even lead towards more radical content being promoted. When faced with something or someone being harmful online, make sure young people know how to:

- 1 Report the player or piece of content
- 2 Mute or block the player
- 3 Manage their privacy settings or communication options
- 4 Speak with a trusted adult for support



To find out more about Gaming visit the SWGfL hub:  
[swgfl.org.uk/topics/gaming/](http://swgfl.org.uk/topics/gaming/)

or scan the QR code



## Further Support

**Professionals Online Safety Helpline:** [saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline](http://saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline)

**Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service:** [swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service/](http://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service/)

**Report Harmful Content:**  
[reportharmfulcontent.com](http://reportharmfulcontent.com)



NOMINET

# Building healthy relationships whilst socialising online

The use of the internet among young people is now everywhere. The rise in the cultural acceptance of internet relationships between young people and strangers that they play or talk with online, has opened the door to dangers. Yet it is only a small amount of these relationships which turn out malicious, but children and young people may find it difficult to understand when that arises. The Information Commissioners Office, the UK's information rights agency, has published guidance on what to look for when these relationships turn sour. And more importantly, what to do about it. To find the guidance please follow the link below:

<https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/media-centre/news-and-blogs/2022/02/respect-and-healthy-relationships-online-how-the-children-s-code-can-help/>



Opening Doors, Enriching Lives