

St Joseph's RC Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year to everyone and welcome back to school. We are all looking forward to the Spring Term.

The newsletter this month will be concentrating on the issue of staying safe while gaming online. It contains interesting information from some online sources, and also stresses the importance of paying attention to the age ratings of the games children play. Happy reading!

Online Safety

Over the break the issue of online safety was in the news and the childrens' commissioner has stated that children as young as 4 years old should be taught about online safety. I would like to take this opportunity to assure all of you that online safety is taught to all classes here at St Joseph's Primary School. The lessons are taught from Reception to Year 6 inclusive and is taught under the new curriculum heading of Digital Literacy.

At the start of each term before full hands on computing lessons resume there is always a unit or two on how to stay safe when using technology and the internet. These lessons cover different scenarios involving the different ways we interact online and how we should engage and behave with different media. It also covers our own responsibilities about our behavior in our online communities as well. Why not have a conversation about it with your children? You might be surprised at what they already know!



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Child Safety Online – A practical guide for parents and carers whose children are gaming.

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For access to gaming information for parents and carers, go to:

www.internetmatters.org/

then click on the 'Advice' tab and select 'Online Gaming'.

This newsletter is available on the Online Safety page on the school website.

Parents Guide to Online and Offline Gaming –

Taken from an article submitted by Caroline Knorr to Common Sense Media – url:
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/gaming-tips#>

From [virtual worlds](#) to multiplayer online games, motion-control consoles to [mobile apps](#), there's no limit to how or where kids can play [video games](#). For adults, all the options can be overwhelming. But there's some good news for parents of gamers: With so many options, it's a lot easier to find great games.

Video games have come a long way. Parents today don't have to choose between wildly violent [first-person shooters](#) or dull educational titles. There are [many exciting and engaging games](#) that can enhance what kids are learning in school and [help them develop skills for future life and work success](#). Some of the best video games can help kids develop their communication, team building, and problem-solving skills. And more games now include physical activities that [get kids moving](#).

That said, the positive aspects of gaming also come with some risks. Many video games have violent themes, and some studies link kids' exposure to violent video games with increased aggression and lack of empathy. And gaming isn't cheap. With new titles coming out regularly, the costs – as well as the time kids spend on these devices – can add up quickly.

Tips for primary school ages

- **Make sure games are age-appropriate.** Know the content of what your kids play, both at home and at friends' houses.
- **Establish limits.** Be firm from the beginning about how much time kids can play. Some parents set an overall daily media usage time and let kids decide which of the many forms of media they wish to use on a given day. And, of course, be very clear about what games your kids can play
- **Find good stuff.** While it might seem like kids' video games are all about shooting, you can find games that provide rich, engaging experiences that broaden kids' horizons. Common Sense Media is a great place to [start finding these games](#).
- **Be aware of multiplayer options.** Games often involve some form of player interaction, multiplayer gaming, or player-generated content that kids can upload and download. Watch out for open chat and user-generated content that isn't monitored.
- **Talk about online ads.** Most online games offer lots of free giveaways and downloads that are often full of spyware and malware and will crash your computer sooner or later.
- **Get screen savvy.** Games are available on every device that has a screen – including phones. And screens are everywhere. Count that screen time toward your kids' total game playing for the day.
- **Set multiplayer controls you're comfortable with.** [Preteen](#) and teen games offer additional player interaction, multiplayer action, or player-generated content that kids can upload and download. But these features can be controlled by the player, so set the controls you're comfortable with.
- **Watch language.** The language in multiplayer games can get pretty intense. If you aren't comfortable with what you hear, use the parental controls that disable online play.
- **Be on the lookout for violence.** Violence ramps up quickly in many games. Check what your kids are playing, and limit those games that you feel are excessively violent.

BE AWARE OF THE **PEGI** RATING FOR THE GAMES YOUR CHILDREN PLAY

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All About PEGI

PEGI is the Pan European Game Information system. It provides parents and carers with information and recommendations on video games. The information includes the age group the game is suitable for, and may also contain some description of the type of content included. This is usually found on artwork of the game itself, as well as gaming magazines and website reviews. All games from the major companies like Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo are PEGI rated. Also, all PC games from the main American and European games makers are also rated.

The ratings are as follows: - (All information is copied from the PEGI website)



The content of games given this rating is considered suitable for all age groups. Some violence in a comical context (typically Bugs Bunny or Tom & Jerry cartoon-like forms of violence) is acceptable. The child should not be able to associate the character on the screen with real life characters, they should be totally fantasy. The game should not contain any sounds or pictures that are likely to scare or frighten young children. No bad language should be heard.



Any game that would normally be rated at 3 but contains some possibly frightening scenes or sounds may be considered suitable in this category.



Videogames that show violence of a slightly more graphic nature towards fantasy character and/or non graphic violence towards human-looking characters or recognisable animals, as well as videogames that show nudity of a slightly more graphic nature would fall in this age category. Any bad language in this category must be mild and fall short of suggestive expletives.

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This rating is applied once the depiction of violence (or sexual activity) reaches a stage that looks the same as would be expected in real life. More extreme bad language, the concept of the use of tobacco and drugs and the depiction of criminal activities can be content of games that are rated 16.



The adult classification is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes a depiction of gross violence and/or includes elements of specific types of violence. Gross violence is the most difficult to define since it can be very subjective in many cases, but in general terms it can be classed as the depictions of violence that would make the viewer feel a sense of revulsion.

There are additional pictorial descriptors on the backs of packaging to indicate why a game has got a particular rating as follows:



Game contains bad language



Game contains depictions of, or material which may encourage, discrimination



Game refers to or depicts the use of drugs



Game may be frightening or scary for young children



Games that encourage or teach gambling



Game depicts nudity and/or sexual behaviour or sexual



Game contains depictions of violence



Game can be played online

Let's try to keep our children safe and protected. Always show an interest in what they do online.

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Age restrictions for Social Media Platforms

A majority of 10 to 12-year-olds use social media despite being below the age limit to have an account, a survey has revealed. What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media websites and apps? Here are the guidelines:

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Twitter
Ask.fm
Facebook
Instagram
Pinterest
Google+
Tumblr
Reddit
Snapchat
Secret
ooVoo
Voxer

**13 with
parents'
permission
(otherwise
18)**

Youtube
Keek
Foursquare
WeChat
Kik
Flickr
Musical.ly

14

Linkedin

16

WhatsApp

17

Vine
Tinder
Yellow

18

Path
Yik Yak?

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