



Computing News

Spring 2018

In this second issue of our Computing newsletter, we focus on **Online Gaming**.

Online Gaming

Online gaming means you can play in real time with people across the world through a computer, games console, tablet or smartphone via the internet.

Games can offer your child a world of adventure to immerse themselves in, but it's important to understand how they can stay safe and what games are appropriate for their age.

What do I need to know about online gaming?

Gaming is a fun and sociable way to spend time, encouraging teamwork and developing skills.

This is all great, but there are a few things you need to be aware of:

- **Get involved** by finding out what type of games your child enjoys and making sure they're **appropriate for their age**.
 - Some games let children play and chat with **anyone in the world**. This means they might come across **offensive language** and **bullying**.
 - Not everyone online is who they say they are. Remind your child **not to give out personal details** that could identify them or their location.
 - Some games encourage players to **buy extra elements** during the game. Ensure your child is aware of this so they don't run up large bills without realising.
 - In extreme cases, bullying can be used as a tactic to win games. Children may find themselves either **bullying or being bullied**.
- **Find out what sort of games** your children enjoy – do they prefer role-play games, sports games, strategy and quest games or first-person shooter games?
 - **Ask who they play with online**, who they meet and talk to, and what kind of language is being used in live chat. Gaming sites often have ways of reporting abusive chat and excluding anti-social players. Make sure your child knows how to do this.
 - Especially for younger children, **change the settings** on your tablet or smartphone to 'airplane' mode. That way, they can play the game offline without making accidental purchases or connecting with someone they don't know.
 - Make sure you and your family **agree what games can be played** and that your child understands why some games are allowed and others aren't. Agree how long they're allowed to play for.
 - **Teach your child to protect themselves** – remind them not to share personal information and to keep gaming friends in the game only (and not adding them to their other social networks).
 - **Read each game's advice for parents** and play the game yourself to help you understand more about how the game your child is playing works and its appropriateness.

Keeping your child safe whilst online gaming

Try joining in some of their online games to find out just why they find them such fun. Here's how to keep their experience healthy:

Check out the PEGI rating

Every game as a PEGI (Pan European Gaming Information) label on its packaging. This will give an age level and a description of the main reasons why a game has received a particular age rating (for example, bad language, discrimination, drugs, fear, gambling, sex, violence and online gameplay with other people).

Please also note that these age levels do not relate to the complexity of a game. They are not an indication of how difficult or easy the game is to play.



Further information

The information in this newsletter comes from the Internet Matters website: www.internetmatters.org.

This is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to help keep children safe in the digital world. They are supported by prominent internet organisations, including BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media, as well as leading child online safety experts.

What can I do if I am concerned?

If you have any concerns about your child's online gaming experiences, you can report it directly through CEOP (the police's Child Exploitation and Online Protection service).

Just go to our website and click on **Internet Safety** on the **Quick Links** drop down menu, or visit www.ceop.police.uk.

If you have any comments or queries about Computing at Handsworth, please contact us via the school office: school@handsworth.waltham.sch.uk.

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