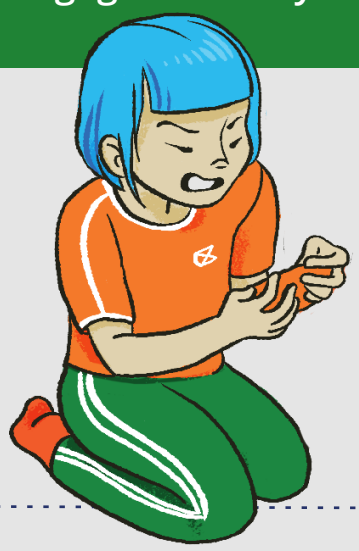
Online Safety & Gaming

SWGfL
Safe, Secure, Online

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/

or scan the QR code

Further Support

Professionals Online Safety Helpline: saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service: swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service/

Report Harmful Content: reportharmfulcontent.com

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