Online safety at home:
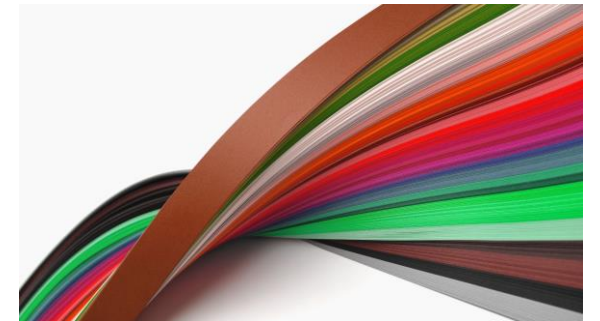
Carre's information for parents and carers

February 12 2021
Online Gaming

Keeping Safe online: online gaming

Safer Internet Day 2021 | **Tuesday** 9th February

Together for a better internet

This week saw the 18th edition of Safer Internet Day, with actions taking place right across the globe. With a theme once again of "Together for a better internet", the day calls upon all stakeholders to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, and especially for children and young people. So, in this third of four publications for parents we will explore how we are best able to support young people with appropriate use of online gaming and what do to if concerns are raised. The article outlines how you are able to make informed decisions about your child's use of different online gaming platforms and explores what do if you needed to report an issue to a online gaming site. We know that technology is hugely valuable for education as well as keeping young people connected. However it's important we all consider how we can help keep young people safer online during this lockdown, and always. Here's some information about what your child may enjoy online and what you can do to help keep them safer. This week we will be exploring the use of social media.

In the last of these four publications after the half term break we will feature Live Streaming. We hope you find this a useful and timely resource in the current remote learning environment.

Online gaming

ask about games
From The VSC Rating Board

What is online gaming?

Online gaming describes any video game that offers online interactions with other players. Video games used to be classified by an Online Content PEGI descriptor to signify whether they were online or not. The PEGI (Pan European Game Information) rating system can be a useful tool to help you decide what online games are appropriate for your child.

However, as most games now provide online interactions this distinction is no longer used. What is still different game to game, is the level of interaction on offer. How much information players share and how many people they interact with are the two key factors for parents to be aware of.

Offers clear benefits for children

Online games are important to understand because they offer a huge amount of fun, enjoyment, teamwork, collaboration and imaginative adventure for children. Played healthily they contribute an essential part of children's development and socialisation. However, it's important for parents to understand online gaming so they can encourage safe and healthy habits in children and technology from a young age.

Online games are social activities, and most have features that allow young people to chat with others whilst they play.

Gaming is popular with both children and adults and can help to cure that lockdown boredom! If your child is gaming, you may have some questions about how to keep them safer. If so, check out – gaming: what parents need to know.

For a guide on the apps, sites and games your child might enjoy, visit: Net Aware. For information about the positives of gaming, the risks of 'in-game chat' and measures you can take to help protect them, watch this short video: In-game chat: a guide for parents and carers .
For more information on the PEGI system and other factors to consider before deciding what's suitable, read Gaming: what's appropriate for your child

Steps you can take to help keep your child safer online: Part 3 – online gaming

You may have introduced boundaries at home about when and what type of games your child is allowed to play. Remember to talk to your child about these rules and set out expectations if they stay with family friends or child care.

Encourage your child to talk to you about the games they play and how they feel after playing them. Children are sometimes frightened by games but won't tell anyone in case they take the game away. While children are still learning to distinguish between reality and fantasy, it's important to talk to them about what they see in games.

Learn together. You can use our resources to teach your child about safer gaming at all ages. For primary age children you can use our Jessie & Friends (ages 4–7) and Play, Like, Share (ages 8–10) resources. Secondary age children can access advice about gaming through the Thinkuknow website, as well as through on-going conversations with you.

Set boundaries and safety settings. Internet Matters make it easier to put safety settings in place, providing step-by-step guides for each console or device. Spend time setting these up with your child and make sure they know how to block and report on the games they are playing. You should also talk with your child to create an agreement for gaming; think about how much time they can spend, which games they can access, if you will allow in-app purchases and what spaces they can play in. For primary aged children it is advisable to have them play in shared spaces/the same room as you

More information?

- Remember - If you are worried that a child is being [groomed](#) in a game, or on any other online platform you should seek support. You can contact your local police by calling 101. If you believe a child is in immediate danger call the police on 999.

- If you would like to talk to a professional about any other online concerns, you can call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000.