



The Redeemer Church of England Primary School

Online Safety Bulletin: Online Gaming

Online games can be a great way to relax and stay in touch with friends and family. However, all online games do pose risks to users. Factors to consider are:

- Age ratings
- Messaging and contact functions
- In-game purchases
- Trolling/Griefing
- How to report problems



What are the risks?

Verbal abuse

Children can be insulted for not playing a specific game, or have FOMO. They may be deliberately excluded from a game by their friends, or criticised for how they play.

Griefing

Griefers are gamers who deliberately try to ruin the game for other players. This can also be called trolling. This can make children upset and frustrated.

In-Game Purchases

Many free games are designed to make the player want to continue but need payments to make this possible, which can be very frustrating.

Talking to Strangers

Some games are played in teams or against other people from different locations. Young people can easily play with and chat to people they don't know and haven't met.

What can we do?

Check the Content

Most games have an age rating based on their themes those with violent and sexual content will have a higher rating. These do not include communication settings so a game with a low age-range may still allow children to talk to strangers.

Change Settings

Some games let players turn off communication features, mute voice chat and report other players who behave inappropriately. All major games consoles have settings that prevent children from finding inappropriate games or speaking to unknown players.

Talk to Your Child

Take time to play games with your children so that you can understand the features. You can find out if there is anything concerning you need to be aware of, or safety features or parental controls which should be enabled.

Make a Family Agreement

Consider creating a Family Agreement to establish some rules, which would include screen time, age ratings or game-playing time. Children may need fair warning (10 minutes etc.) when they need to finish a game as well as other decisions explained to them.