What you can do

- Limit gaming to set hours and in areas shared by the family
- Follow the age restrictions set for computer games
- Play the games together with your child, it will give you a better understanding on what games they play and why they are so loved by them. You'll also be able to pick up on inappropriate content this way.
- Talk to your children about the games they play both online and offline. Have a go yourself, this is especially interesting if the game is online. Wear any headsets your children may wear whilst playing and engage with the other online players.
- Ask your children about the people they play online games with. It may help make them more aware that a lot of these people are strangers to them.
- Educate yourself about potential dangers. The following section lists a number of useful places to get information.
- Show support, develop trust and be open with them so they feel comfortable about coming to you with any concerns if they need to.

Useful websites for parents

The schools website has a lot of useful information including links to useful websites. Please visit

richardavenue.co.uk/safeguarding

Other useful websites:

internetmatters.org/advice/online-gaming/

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childnet.com/resources/parents-and-carers-resource-sheet/

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saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers/games-consoles
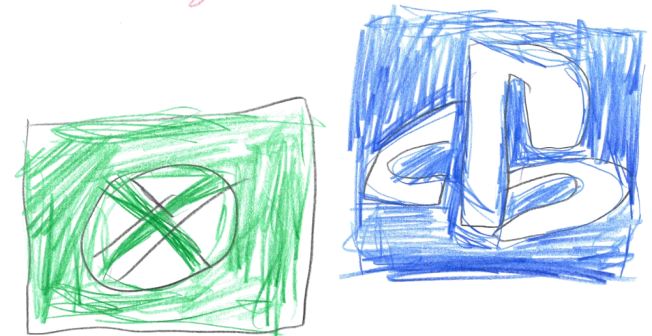
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Or you can contact the school directly for more information:

T: 0191 500 7990

E: contact@richardavenue.co.uk

RICHARD AVENUE

R A P S

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Online Gaming

Advice for Parents and Carers

Video Games Industry

Todays video game industry is huge. Children and adults alike spend hours per week playing their favourite games both offline and online connected to the internet. All genres are catered for whether that be role playing games, sports games or action games etc. the choice is as varied as movies.

How to Play Video Games

When asked, most people think of traditional gaming as that on a purpose built console, but with an increasingly portable world comes new options:

- **Consoles**: played at home connected to a TV and the internet. Examples include Xbox and PlayStation

- **PCs and Laptops**: mainly played at home using PC games or an online gaming hub like Steam.

- **Mobiles and Tablets**: Todays Android and Apple phones and tablets are gaming systems in their own right. Games are downloaded from the app stores and can include 'in-app purchases'.

- **Handheld Consoles**: Consoles like Nintendo's 3DS are very popular with children where games are either downloaded are bought as cartridges. Newer consoles like the Nintendo Switch are blurring the lines between portable and home consoles.

- **Smart TVs and Services**: Many new smart TVs include games you can download and services such as Amazons Fire TV allow children to download and play games through their TV.

What is Online Gaming

Most electronic devices are connected to the internet. This gives people greater advantages over the traditional style of gaming. People now have the convenience of buying games immediately and downloading, saving them a visit to the shops.

It also allows them to find and play against friends and other people, adding an element of fun and excitement and a sense of collaboration and teamwork.

Risks to Children

Online gaming is fun and can be a sociable way to spend time with friends and family. As with any online activity there are risks posed to children that a parent should know about:

- **Age Appropriate**: all games come with an age rating that should be followed. Not taking the guidance can expose your child to bad language, extreme violence or sexually explicit materials.

- **Online Contact**: some games allow children to interact with strangers through chat rooms or headsets and mics. This makes them vulnerable to bad language and forms of bullying.

- **Cost**: games can often have hidden charges for items and add-ons.

- **Privacy**: children are at risk to give out personal data such as name, age and address.

- **Addiction**: while playing games in moderation is fine, some children could become addicted to games causing problems in other areas of their lives.