## Your child can be talking to up to 30 strangers online!

The majority of video games released these days, are highly likely to have some form of online compatability. This means your child is playing the game against somebody else over the internet. Most of the popular games are played by both adults and children alike. Current consoles have the capability of hosting up to 30 players in each game. This means that your child is connected to and communicating with 29 strangers, of all ages. Therefore you need to be aware of who your child is talking to, especially when playing a game with mature content.

It's never a good idea to share personal information such as their name, address, email address, passwords, telephone numbers or the name of their school with people they don't know and trust in the real world. Talk to your child about how people can sometimes lie online or pretend to be someone else.

Encourage your child to only add friends they know in 'real life' and to keep gaming friends 'in the game.' Warn them not to invite gaming friends to their social networks and keep questioning who they are playing with. This is the only way to be sure of who they are talking to
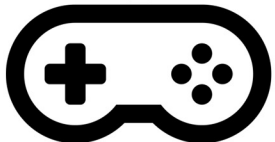
Set Boundaries

Some online games are virtual worlds which never end, where missions can take hours to complete. It's important to set limits on the amount of time your child spends playing online. Be aware of how long they spend gaming and set rules, as you would for TV. Also, ensure that they take regular screen breaks at least five minutes every 45-60 minutes.Also know what to do if something goes wrong.

Things can go wrong when gaming,whether that's someone being mean,inappropriate or asking you to do something that you're not comfortable with.It's important that you and your child know what steps you can take in the game to block and report people and how to report and seek support from other services

Parental Controls ON

Both Sony and Microsoft have parental controls in place on their consoles, enabling you as parents to have full control of what your child has access to. By following the instructions set in place by the manufacturer, you can restrict your child from playing games and viewing DVDs that are age inappropriate, disable voice chat and hide all personal information.

What restrictions can I apply?

| Inappropriate Content | Game Rating | Chatting | Privacy |

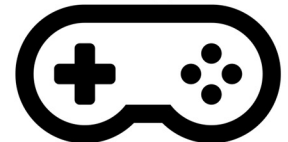For more information on parental controls please visit the following websites;

www.xbox.com/en-gb/parentalcontrols

uk.playstation.com

www.holytrinitycoe.co.uk

We need your help to enforce this at home!

THE DANGERS OF ONLINE GAMING

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PlayStation® Network

XBOX LIVE

What is my child doing online?

The most common forms of online activity for young people nowadays are:

- Socialising
- Gaming
- Talking to people
- Searching
- Sharing
- Using a Mobile Phone

Gaming

The internet has changed the way that young people play games. Games can be played against anyone in the world, at any time and for as long as you want.

In the past, computer games were something you played against the computer, or friends that came round to your house. They were also something that you 'completed' and then moved onto the next one.

Online, you can adventure in complex worlds, create characters, and meet and make friends to fight battles and go on journeys together...

Almost anything that connects to the internet will allow you to play these games – desktop computers, laptops, consoles, like Playstation or Xbox, or even mobile phones.
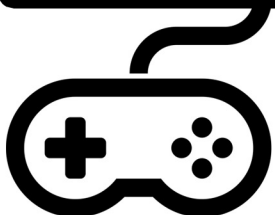
Gaming is great fun, but just as with anything online, there are risks you should help your child navigate. It's important that you're involved in your child's experiences, even if it feels like a different world! Here are some simple ways to help your child game safely.

Check The Age Rating of the Game
Just like with films, you should check the game's age rating before allowing your child to play. The organisation 'PEGI' set age ratings for games and classify their content according to what is appropriate for different age groups. The rating will help you decide whether the game is suitable for your child.

Talk to them about the games they play.
Ask your child what is hot, and what is not! Get them to tell you about the game and, if they can bear it, play against them!

You might want to ask them:

☒ What they like about it?
☒ Which of their friends play it?
☒ Who are their friends in the game?
☒ To tell you about their character and profile.

It is important to stay up-to-date and regularly ask your children about the games they play and the people they are friends with.
Look for the games advice.

When you know the kind of games your child is playing, go on and take a look.

Look to see if the game has advice for parents and carers. This can help you to assess the appropriateness and learn more about the functions of the site. In general, this advice tends to focus on the fun aspects of the game, but it should also highlight the safety measures the site has in place to protect your child and what you can do as a parent or carer to protect them, such as setting parental controls.

As part of a recent study across our federation, children were asked to identify a series of characters. To demonstrate the severity of our concerns, please ask your child to identify the character below, If your child knows who this man is, please take the time to do a youtube search (away from your child) and I'm sure you will be horrified by the results. Children as young as five have identified this character and it needs the support from you at home for this to stop.

Please be aware of the games in your child's collection and take note of some of the high risk games being played by our children;
Grand Theft Auto V, Call of Duty, Saints Row and Assassins Creed. The only way you can protect your children, is if you stop buying them these age restricted games.