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**GAMING  
DISORDERS**

**ENGAGING PARENTS AND GUARDIANS**

**Safe Online Gaming Information for Parents**

**A Workshop**



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# Introduction

**Gaming is loved and enjoyed by children and adults across the world with around 38 million people playing games including 81% of 11- to 14-year-olds and 69% of 6 to 10-year-olds.**

**However, whilst it can be a way for children to socialise, learn new skills, be part of a team and relax, it also carries risks.**

**The objective of this WORKSHOP is to offer an understanding of gaming, offer support, advice and provide resources available for parents of gamers to connect, share experiences, and support each other .... safely.**

# What to Expect

This is what Parents can expect from the Workshop.

- Understanding the reasons children are drawn to gaming.
- Helping parents understand their child's interest in gaming while providing essential information to ensure their child's safety.
- Protecting your son/daughter by recognizing potential risks, fostering open conversations, and implementing safety measures and controls.

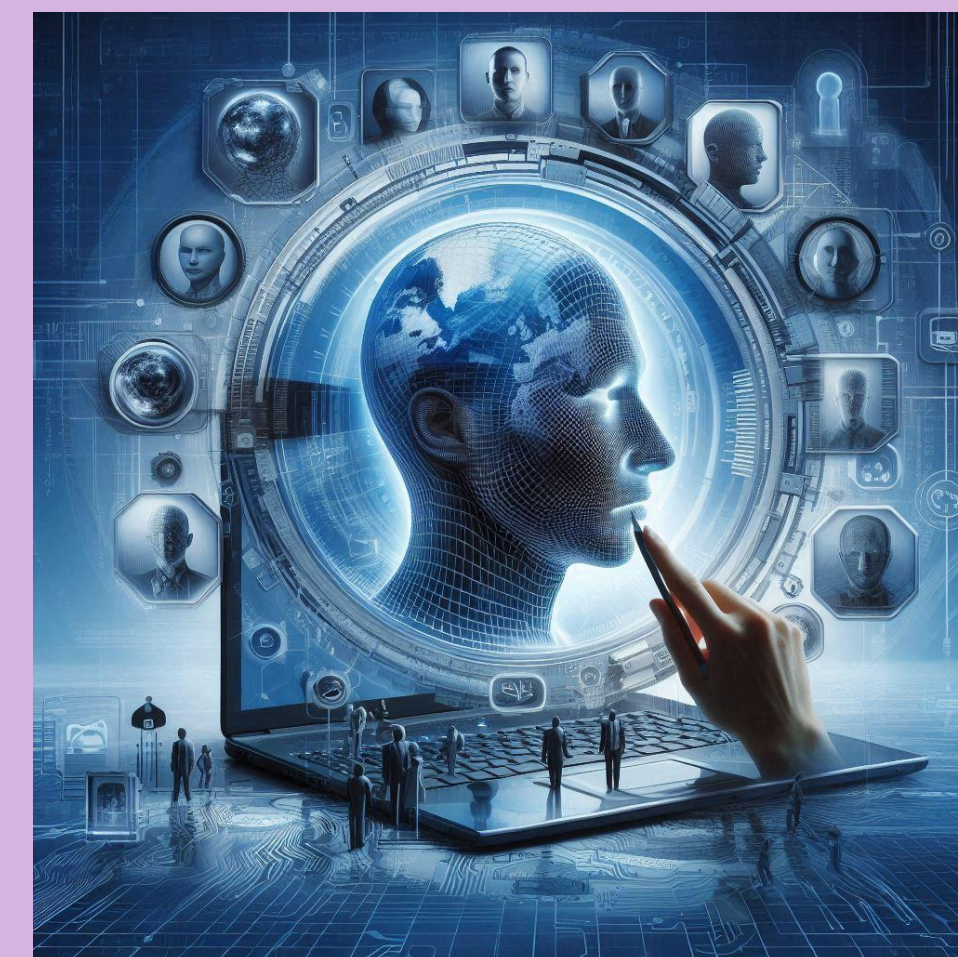
# Understanding Why Children Game

- **Escapism** – You're not just escaping your surroundings, you're escaping yourself. In movies and books, you get to see into another world, in video games you get to be.
- **Exploration** – It can often feel like we don't have a lot of control over our life, but with games can be in control. We get to choose the games we play, and we get to choose the way we engage in them, giving young people a sense of autonomy.
- **Risk Taking** – Young people are more likely to take risks than adults, and in games, if you die, you just press restart and try again. It doesn't really impact your physical life as much as for example, failing a test at school. .
- **A chance to create** – The opportunity to create new worlds and have control over them can be very attractive in games like Minecraft for example. You can't really do that in the physical world, and certainly not to the same scale.
- **Socialise** – Whilst playing online you don't just get to build on existing friendships, you get to establish new ones. With online forums, live streaming and Esports channels, you're a part of a culture and a community that is larger than yourself or any single game.
- **Stress Buster** – We all need to take a break from daily life at times and how we choose to do that can differ. Gaming can be a way to escape these pressures, but if it is causing you not to deal with the things you need to deal with, that can be a problem.

# Building a Virtual Identity

## What is a Virtual Identity

- Digital or virtual identity refers to the way individuals present themselves and are perceived in online environments. It's essentially an individual's "digital self," shaped by information they share, interactions they have, and content they create on the internet. This identity can be consciously crafted or shaped naturally over time through various digital interactions.
- Digital identity can vary widely from a person's "real-world" identity, either intentionally or unconsciously. It can also influence self-perception, social interactions, and, in some cases, personal and professional opportunities.
- Balancing authenticity with privacy and security has become a key consideration in managing digital identities effectively.



# Building a Virtual Identity

## Key Aspects of a Virtual Identity

- 1. Personal Information:** Includes details like your name, age, location, profile photos, and any other personal data you share on social media, websites, or online forms.
- 2. Social Media Profiles:** Your online presence on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook contributes to your digital identity. These platforms often capture different facets of your identity (e.g. Instagram for your personal life).
- 3. Behavioural Data:** Online behaviours, such as the types of content you like, share, comment on, or buy, also contribute to your virtual identity. Algorithms can use this information to create a digital “profile” of you, often used for targeted ads or recommendations.
- 4. Digital Persona and Avatars:** In virtual spaces, such as gaming platforms or virtual reality, you might create avatars or pseudonyms, which reflect an alternate or exaggerated version of yourself.
- 5. Privacy and Security Settings:** The way you set privacy controls and manage your data also defines part of your digital identity, reflecting how much of your real self you are willing to share online.
- 6. Reputation and Digital Footprint:** Over time, the cumulative effect of your online actions, interactions and shared content forms a digital footprint. This footprint impacts how others view your digital identity and may have lasting implications.

*Building a digital or virtual identity while distinguishing it from your real identity involves several steps. The handout suggests some key strategies - A Discussion Guide for Parents: Virtual Identification*

# Building a Virtual Identity

## Virtual Identity Questionnaire

Here's a questionnaire designed to explore perceptions, experiences, and practices surrounding digital or virtual identity.

It covers various aspects such as personal expression, privacy, authenticity, and digital footprint.

### Instructions:

- Please answer the questions honestly.
- Hand the questionnaire back to me..
- After a quick analysis we will then discuss the issues most affecting you all.

Your responses will help better understand perspectives on digital and virtual identity.



# Start the Conversation

As a parent you might be worried about the games your child is playing, who they are playing with or how long they are playing for. But how do you start the conversation and how do you know if their experiencing harm?

**Right time, right place** – Start the conversation while doing an activity and avoid one-offs to create an environment where they feel comfortable coming to you.

**Focus on the behaviour** – Make it clear that the behaviour is the problem, not your child.

**Explain** – Help them understand the impact of their actions. For example, the impact their mood swings when come off games has on others.

**Be curious and empathetic** – Don't judge, focus on listening and trying to understand things from their perspective. Reassure them that you want to help them manage the situation.

**Get Involved** – Find out what games your child enjoys and make sure they're age appropriate. Play together with your child and keep the technology in shared family spaces rather than bedrooms.

**Stay safe** – Be clear what information is and isn't appropriate to share, particularly personal details, share how to set privacy settings and how to block or report an issue.

**Talk finance** – Discuss the costs of games and in-game purchases and agree spend limits.

**Set boundaries** – Agree how long is appropriate to play in one session and how many sessions in a day. Then setup these restrictions in parental settings with your child.



# Signs of potential gaming disorder

This list is not exhaustive but to provide some general pointers. Remember there may be other reasons why your child is behaving in a particular manner so as always it is good to have open and honest conversations with your child.

## Emotional signs

- Preoccupation with gaming
- Downplaying the amount of time they spend gaming
- Unable to set game time limits
- Avoiding family and or friends
- Being overly defensive

## Physical signs

- Headaches or migraines
- Neglecting hygiene
- Extreme fatigue
- Carpel Tunnel Syndrome



# Online Harassment/Cyberbullying

Parents play an important role in guiding young people to recognise and respond to online bullying.

## 1. Have Open Conversations about Life Online

- Encourage open and honest communication with your son/daughter regarding online bullying. Let them know that they can come to you, if they experience or witness anything online that worries or upsets them, including online bullying. Create a safe and non-judgmental space where they feel comfortable sharing their concerns.

## 2. Help them to Identify Online Bullying

- Because young people are not always aware of how their activities might be unsafe online, it is crucial that parents begin to teach young people how to identify signs of online bullying.
- Parents should ask them how they would feel if they received bad messages, spread things that are not true, or experienced someone sharing embarrassing or unkind content on the internet about them.

## 3. Empower them to Seek Help

- Parents should assist their son/daughter in recognising the warning signs of cyberbullying. These might include sudden shifts in mood or behaviour, reluctance to use electronic gadgets, withdrawing from social activities, or a drop in academic achievement.

## 4. Encourage Empathy and Kindness

- Teach your son/daughter the importance of empathy and kindness online. Encourage them to treat others with respect and compassion and to stand up against online bullying when they see it happening.

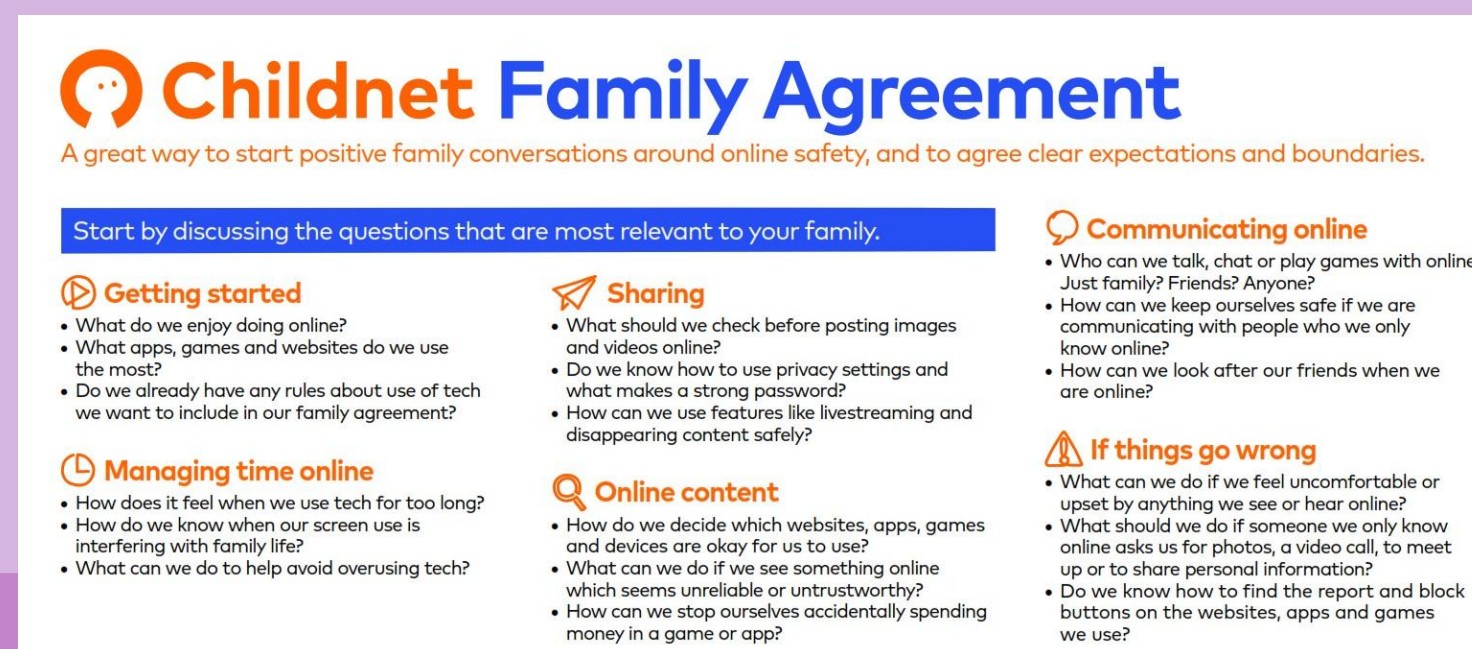


# Family Agreement

**Childnet's Family Agreement** is a practical tool that parents may use to facilitate communication about online bullying and staying safe online. This is an excellent tool for exploring how your entire unit can work together to create a safe online experience through digital resilience and kindness.

By taking a moment to think before getting involved in any online activity your son/daughter can make smarter choices and help them create a safer and more responsible digital space. Providing a place for open discussion between parents and your son/daughter may help to provide guidance and a path for any concerns presented by the young person.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement/>



**Childnet Family Agreement**  
A great way to start positive family conversations around online safety, and to agree clear expectations and boundaries.

Start by discussing the questions that are most relevant to your family.

- Getting started**
  - What do we enjoy doing online?
  - What apps, games and websites do we use the most?
  - Do we already have any rules about use of tech we want to include in our family agreement?
- Managing time online**
  - How does it feel when we use tech for too long?
  - How do we know when our screen use is interfering with family life?
  - What can we do to help avoid overusing tech?
- Sharing**
  - What should we check before posting images and videos online?
  - Do we know how to use privacy settings and what makes a strong password?
  - How can we use features like livestreaming and disappearing content safely?
- Online content**
  - How do we decide which websites, apps, games and devices are okay for us to use?
  - What can we do if we see something online which seems unreliable or untrustworthy?
  - How can we stop ourselves accidentally spending money in a game or app?
- Communicating online**
  - Who can we talk, chat or play games with online? Just family? Friends? Anyone?
  - How can we keep ourselves safe if we are communicating with people who we only know online?
  - How can we look after our friends when we are online?
- If things go wrong**
  - What can we do if we feel uncomfortable or upset by anything we see or hear online?
  - What should we do if someone we only know online asks us for photos, a video call, to meet up or to share personal information?
  - Do we know how to find the report and block buttons on the websites, apps and games we use?



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Activity

**Family Digital Use Discussion Guide/  
Family Agreement**

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# Personal Experiences

We have asked 3 parents to each give a short presentation about their personal experiences when dealing with gaming issues at home.

**We will then discuss .....**



# Final Thoughts .....

Young online gamers face unique challenges, including harassment.

However, there are effective strategies and tools to safeguard the gaming experience and maintain a positive, empowering presence.

Those who experience cyberbullying from games can experience depression, isolation and anger due to the toxicity.

Children play games for their enjoyment and to make friends but many experience isolation as they avoid interaction to minimise experiencing harassment while gaming.

**It's important for parents to be aware of, and be able, to address the issue of excessive gaming and online harassment as it has become disturbingly normalised within the gaming community.**

# Helpful Resources

## **Online Gaming Safety - Advice for Parents**

<https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/internet-gaming-tips-for-parents>

This article dives into online gaming safety, highlighting both the risks and benefits of online gaming for young people. It also offers practical advice for parents to ensure their children's safe gaming experiences.

## **Online Gaming - Parenting Generation Game - Internet Matters**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/research/parenting-generation-game-report>

This research focuses on parents' perspectives about their children's relationship with online gaming. It covers concerns about gaming addiction, online grooming, and the developmental benefits of gaming for children.

## **Online Safety and Gaming - Teen Health**

<https://www.teenhealth.org.uk/health-topics/online-safety-gaming-parents>

This resource emphasizes the importance of educating young people about online safety and provides advice for parents on how to help their children navigate the online world safely.

## **Video Game Addiction: A Parent's Evidence-Based Guide**

<https://parentingscience.com/video-game-addiction>

This guide examines the signs of video game addiction and helps parents understand when gaming behaviour might be pathological. It offers evidence-based advice on managing gaming habits and promoting a balanced lifestyle.

## **Gaming and Mental Health: Parent Guide To Support**

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/gaming>

This resource provides insights into how gaming can affect children's mental health and offers practical advice on setting healthy boundaries and supporting your child to game positively.

## **Gaming Advice for Parents**

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/online/gaming>

This article looks at the positive and negative sides of gaming and the reasons why gaming can be addictive. It also includes tips on talking to your child about gaming and managing their screen time.

## **Gaming Advice for Parents**

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# Workshop Feedback

## Workshop Feedback Questionnaire

Here's a questionnaire designed to get your thoughts on the Workshop.

### Instructions:

- Please answer the questions honestly.
- Hand the back to me.
- Your responses will help us all make any improvements to future Workshops.





# Thank you



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# SAFE ONLINE GAMING – A PARENTS WORKSHOP

[Date]  
[Time] [Duration]  
[Venue]

## What to expect

- ✚ Understanding the challenges faced by gamers
- ✚ Understanding the difference between a hobby and an addiction
- ✚ Exploring the impact of online harassment
- ✚ Learning best practices for creating safer gaming environments
- ✚ Empowering gamers with tools and resources
- ✚ Interactive and Experiential sessions

**Make a difference in the gaming community.  
Join us and help create a safer and more inclusive space for everyone!**



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To register contact **[Insert Contact Information]**



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# Virtual Identification – Parent Questionnaire

Here's a questionnaire designed to explore perceptions, experiences, and practices surrounding digital or virtual identity. It covers various aspects such as personal expression, privacy, authenticity, and digital footprint.

*Instructions, Please answer the following questions. Your responses will help us better understand perspectives on digital and virtual identity.*

### **Section 1: General Information**

1. Your Name:
2. Age(s) of your children:
3. How often do they use social media or digital platforms?  
 Daily  
 Weekly  
 Monthly  
 Rarely  
 Never or Not Sure

### **Section 2: Understanding Digital Identity**

4. How would you describe your child's "digital identity"? (e.g., How they present themselves online, whether it aligns with their real-life personality)
- 
5. To what extent do you feel their digital identity reflects their real-life personality?  
 Completely  
 Mostly  
 Somewhat  
 Minimally  
 Not at all – Do Not Know
  6. Do they manage multiple digital identities or personas across different platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram)?  
 Yes  
 No  
 Sometimes, Do Not Know
  7. How do they usually choose the content you share or post online?  
 Based on their interests  
 For audience engagement  
 To create a specific impression  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know

### Section 3: Privacy and Control

8. How concerned are you about the privacy of your child's personal information online?
- Very concerned
  - Somewhat concerned
  - Neutral
  - Not very concerned
  - Not at all concerned
9. How often do you review or help them adjust privacy their settings on your social media or digital platforms?
- Regularly
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Never
10. Have you ever felt that their digital identity or content was misused or misrepresented?
- Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

### Section 4: Authenticity and Expression

11. To what extent do you feel your child is pressured to enhance their digital identity (e.g., through filters, selective posting)?
- Very high
  - High
  - Moderate
  - Low
  - None
12. Do you feel your child is more comfortable expressing certain aspects of themselves online than in real life?
- Yes
  - No
  - Sometimes
13. In your opinion, does maintaining a digital identity impact their self-esteem or mental health?
- Positively
  - Negatively
  - Both
  - No impact

### Section 5: Digital Footprint and Future Considerations

14. How often do you think about the long-term impact of your child's digital identity (e.g., digital footprint)?
- Often



- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

15. Would you consider using an online tool or app to monitor and manage your child's digital identity?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

### Section 6: Open-Ended Questions

16. What is one positive experience your child has had with their digital identity?

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17. What is one challenge you've faced in managing your child's digital identity?

---

18. How would you ideally like your child to be perceived online?

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# A Discussion Guide for Parents: Virtual Identification

It is important that your son/daughter builds a digital or virtual identity that distinguishes it from their real identity.

**You should discuss this with your son/daughter.**

### 1. Define Your Purpose and Audience

- **Purpose:** Determine why they need a digital identity. Is it for personal branding, or social interaction?
- **Audience:** Identify who they want to reach. This will guide the tone and content of their digital presence.

### 2. Choose Your Platforms Wisely

- **Personal:** Platforms like Instagram or Facebook are suited for personal connections. You may wish to discuss this with your child.

### 3. Create Consistent Branding

- **Username:** Use a consistent username across platforms to make it easier for people to find them.
- **Profile Picture:** They should choose VERY CAREFULLY an appropriate photo for their personal platform.

### 4. Personal Account

- **Personal Accounts:** Share personal interests, hobbies, and social activities.
- **Privacy Settings:** Use privacy settings to control who sees their personal content.

### 5. Engage and Interact

- Interact with friends and family, join interest-based groups, and share personal updates.

### 6. Monitor and Manage Your Digital Footprint

- **Regular Updates:** They should keep their profiles updated with current information.
- **Search Yourself:** You, and they, should regularly search their name to see what information is publicly available about them.
- **Clean Up:** They should move, or update outdated or irrelevant content.

### 7. Use Different Email Addresses

- They should use a separate email for personal accounts and subscriptions.

### 8. Be Mindful of Security

- **Strong Passwords:** They should use strong, unique passwords for different accounts.
- **Two-Factor Authentication:** Encourage them to enable two-factor authentication for added security.

### 9. Stay Authentic

- Encourage them to share real moments and thoughts but be mindful of oversharing!



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# Family Digital Use Discussion Guide/ Family Agreement



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***A supportive tool to help families talk about technology, agree on rules,  
and build safer digital habits—together.<sup>1</sup>***

Start by picking the questions that matter most to your family. There's no need to cover everything at once—just open the conversation and agree on what works best for you.

---

**Getting started**

- What do we enjoy most when using the internet or our devices?
- Which platforms, games, or tools do we use often?
- Do we already follow any digital rules that we want to keep?

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**Balancing Our Time**

- How do we feel after spending a long time on a screen?
- What are the signs that our device use is affecting sleep, school, or family time?
- What can we do to avoid overusing screens or losing track of time?

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**Posting and Sharing**

- What should we think about before posting a photo or video online?
- How can we make sure our accounts are private and secure?
- What should we know before using livestreams or temporary posts?

---

**Choosing Content  
Wisely**

- How do we decide what apps, games, or websites are okay to use?
  - What can we do if we see something online that looks suspicious or upsetting?
  - How can we avoid accidentally spending money while gaming or using apps?
- 

<sup>1</sup> This guide is inspired by the Family Agreement created by Childnet International (© 2022 Childnet International [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) | Registered UK Charity: 1080173 V09.22), adapted for use in educational projects promoting digital wellbeing and safety for families and young people.



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### Talking and Playing with Others

- Who is it okay to talk to online? Friends? Classmates? Strangers?
- How do we stay safe when communicating with someone we don't know in real life?
- What can we do if a friend is having a tough time online?

---

### When Things Go Wrong

- Who can we turn to if something online makes us feel uneasy or unsafe?
- What should we do if someone asks for private information or personal photos?
- Do we know how to block or report someone on the apps or games we use?

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### Reviewing Our Agreement

- Could parental or safety controls help us stay on track?
  - What should happen if someone forgets or breaks a rule?
  - How often should we check in to see if our agreement still works for us?
-

# Our Digital Habits Plan

## Who's Involved?

*Let's list the people in our household who are part of this agreement and what each of us is responsible for when it comes to safe and respectful technology use.*

Family Member	What I'm Responsible For (e.g., being kind online, managing screen time)

### If the Plan Isn't Followed...


*Let's agree together on what should happen if someone forgets or ignores part of our plan. This isn't about punishment—it's about learning, talking, and getting back on track.*


**What will we do if something goes wrong?**

**How can we support each other to follow the agreement?**

### Keeping It Up to Date

Let's revisit this plan regularly to check that it still works for everyone.

 **Date agreed:** \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

 **Next check-in:** \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

 **Signed by all family members:**



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Safe Online Gaming – A Parents Workshop

# Workshop Feedback



This questionnaire is designed to get your thoughts on the Workshop.

**Instructions:** (i) Please answer the questions honestly (ii) Hand the questionnaire back to me  
(iii) Your responses will help us all make any improvements to future Workshops.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Overall Satisfaction

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the workshop?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

### 2. Content and Relevance

The workshop content was relevant to my needs and interests.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### 3. Presentation and Delivery

The presentations were clear and well-organized.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### 4. Speaker Effectiveness

The speakers were knowledgeable and engaging.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### 5. Interactive Sessions

The interactive sessions (group discussions, Q&A) were valuable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### 6. Logistics and Organization

The workshop was well-organized and ran smoothly.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### 7. Facilities and Venue

The facilities and venue were suitable for the workshop.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### 8. Overall Experience

Would you recommend this workshop to others?

- Yes
- No

### 9. Comments and Suggestions

What did you like most about the workshop?

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What did you like least about the workshop?

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Any additional comments or suggestions:

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**Thank you for your feedback!**